Aunt Carrie’s makes diners as happy as clams
By Patricia Harris and David Lyon
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. — Who would think such a small state could make clam chowder so complicated? There must be a recipe for every Rhode Island clam, but they fall into three main categories: red, white, and clear.

Naturally, Aunt Carrie’s, which entered the pantheon of the James Beard Foundation’s America’s Classics in 2007, carries all three.

In fact, if there’s any problem with Aunt Carrie’s, it’s that portions can be generous. The standard order of clam cakes, for example, is six. Given that each is nearly the size of a tennis ball, that should be enough to feed a family. You can also order an expensive combo plate of three clamcakes with a bowl of clam chowder.

Even one of the rare newcomers to the menu practices overflow. The plate. The lobster BLT was added in 2011, says Foy, at the suggestion of her then 16-year-old son, “We’re from northern Vermont, and we have no bacon on ever- anything.” She says. To his credit, the sandwich has proven to be very popular. Served on toasted braid made in-house, the sandwich piles on crispbacon, crunchy lettuce, big slices of tomato, and a pickled lobster meat. It’s a big mouthful, and you’d better wrap the mouth around it. “You can even order it on a roll if one of you little kids is too much,” says Foy.

Both are made fresh on the premises, and every morning, toasted bread made in-house. To her eyes, this is where it’s at. “I keep hearing people say they’ve lived around here and looked at these islands all their lives,” says Captain Tom Davis as he wipes the Uncle Oyster, a converted lobster boat operated by Rye-based Island Cruises, which runs between Rye and Star Island. “Then after they visit, they usually say they wish they’d come sooner.”

Nearly four centuries after John Smith set foot on this marina of Narragansett, a family—now run by the same name—still uses the same rocks that recall the grand wooden hotels of 19th-century coastal New England.

“I love the people you meet the love where they live, and look at these islands all their lives,” says Captain Tom Davis as he wipes the Uncle Oyster, a converted lobster boat operated by Rye-based Island Cruises, which runs between Rye and Star Island. “Then after they visit, they usually say they wish they’d come sooner.”

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