

Tewksbury Town Crier



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Betsy's Best Bets

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What is it about golf that bothers me? I just don't get the attraction, the obsession for some, the interest in dragging one's self over hill and dale – oh, I mean over perfectly manicured grounds, for hours, usually in the hot sun – no trees. Then there's all that "standing around" which frankly would wear me down more than running a race. And it takes a long time to correctly align the body, placing the feet just so – whacking the ball with all your might, following it with your eyes, looking up, up...then casually walking all the way across the fairway to wherever the ball lands, to repeat this seemingly tedious exercise! Wasn't it Mark Twain who said, "Golf is a good walk spoiled." Amen. And from what I've read, golf courses are environmentally unfriendly, using a ton of water and chemicals to keep the velvet whiffle-short grass green.

But even with such a jaundiced eye, there is one thing that I do like about golf. Although too formal for my personal taste, I'm taken in by the tranquility of the landscape – the quiet and calmness of the terrain. So, for a non-golfer, an outsider by choice, there is a way to savor the scenery without setting a shoe on the showy sod.

Sitting in the Tew-Mac Tavern feels cozy and comfortable. You would never guess from the outside of the Tewksbury Country Club, right on Rt. 38, that such an intimate little restaurant was tucked away in the back. Full windows from end-to-end look out onto a soothing panoramic view of the golf course, with fountains and flowers and fluttering leaves in the breeze. The dining room is square and small enough so wherever you sit, the outdoors is in front of you. An antique-looking tin ceiling above the corner bar area, attractive woodwork, exposed beams and an elaborate fieldstone fireplace add to the warm and snug surroundings. Pictures of the old Tew-Mac Airport, paintings and murals, mix and blend the past with the present.

The menu, like the décor, merges a medley of the modern with the tried-and-true. Classic hearty sandwiches, tasty-trendy appetizers and traditional dinner entrees, with a gourmet touch, plus lighter fare – pizza, soups and sassy salads that are all top quality and cooked to order.

I've tried just about everything at the Tew-Mac, and as someone who lives to eat, I can honestly say, I'd be happy to hit this hospitable haunt every day. The atmosphere is relaxed and neighborly and the food tastes real – you know what I mean ... the way food tastes when it's cooked from scratch, with care, by someone who knows the difference between a microwave and an oven.

More than once I've ordered the turkey wrap as an open-face, hold the wrap, add a cooked vegetable. Or when I can't make up my mind between fries or a vegetable, I've asked for "a little of each." How about splitting a main dish? You would probably hear, "Sure," or "No problem," or "We can do that." I'd say special orders don't upset them.

And there's a pretty patio for outside dining, weather permitting – a perfect respite for those soles locked inside day-to-day, needing some fresh air and a lunchtime getaway.

But for many of us, the "airport" restaurant is more than a place to meet and eat. The memories go back to a time when being entertained was simple and satisfying. For kids in the area, riding your bike over to the Tew-Mac, looking at the small, impressive parked planes, watching them take off and land, some of them coming close over the tops of the cars on Rt. 38, was an innocent pastime, in an era when life seemed slow and uncomplicated.

The little 20-acre airport was officially recognized in 1951. Being right on Main Street, it drew much attention because it was so visible. If you're a Tewksbury/Wilmington Townie, you've heard the history of Tew-Mac – the names MacLaren and Hupper are familiar. There are lots of great "flying" stories, facts and now folklore about the beloved airport. It was so much a part of the community and it represented so much of what was great about the past – I'm sure more than a few tears were shed when it closed (sigh).

Whenever I'm at the Tew-Mac Tavern, tiny flashbacks of the old airport cross my mind. And what better place to reminisce, to look back, kick-back and relax, reminding myself that these days will be the good old days of tomorrow. Funny how time slips away.

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