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## Lake Country Reporter

### Palmer's Steakhouse in Hartland offers relaxing holiday hearth



By Sheila Nero Dec. 16, 2014

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Palmer's Steakhouse in downtown Hartland, a high-end steakhouse in the supper club tradition, is a restaurant that's genuinely restful. Along with its top-notch dinners that draw customers from a wide area, its charming atmosphere sets it apart. The Palmer's experience in December is a bit like stepping into a quiet holiday snow globe for grown-ups.

#### The setting

Last Tuesday night outside Palmer's, 122 E. Capitol Drive, the Bark River rippled alongside the steakhouse, which was opened in 2006 by experienced restaurateurs Jerry and Marie Arenas. The street itself, with no parking meters and an old-time barbershop pole across from the steakhouse, is a nostalgic backdrop.

In the wintry darkness, the restaurant's front was a bank of white lights, white birch, red poinsettias and pine boughs, featuring two nutcrackers taller than many adults. The tasteful glow carried inside with illuminated large holiday decor throughout; several diners paused to take in the scene. A floor-to-ceiling cobblestone fireplace is a vestige of the restaurant's former life as the Cobblestone Inn and original to the 1903 building.

#### The menu

While it's beyond the scope of this article to review the food, it's important to note that Palmer's popular dinners are all-inclusive and come with soup, house salad or cottage cheese, choice of potato, side of pasta or vegetable, and bread and butter. Steaks include a 6-oz. petite filet mignon, 12-oz. New York strip, 12-ounce big filet mignon, 16-ounce ribeye and a 24-ounce big porterhouse. Walleye, seafood Alfredo, ahi tuna, lamb chops, ribs and chicken breast piccata are a few of the other menu items. Fish and steak specials, and fresh oysters, are offered every night.

Virtually all tables ordered wine at Palmer's, which won the Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The wine list covers the entire back side of the menu. Along with a full drink menu, diners will find supper club traditions such as a hand-muddled brandy old-fashioned and ice cream drinks.

#### The background

Palmer's is a family business. Many nights, Marie Arenas hostesses and Jerry Arenas cooks. Their son, Tony, handles marketing and the wine department. Daughter Lisa Hedrick, principal at St. Bruno Parish School in Dousman, hostesses one night a week. Jerry Arenas said, "We've been in this location for eight years and this community has made us feel so welcome — what great people." Palmer's gives back to the community and lists charitable giving on its website.

#### The atmosphere

The dress is business casual, with men wearing mostly sweaters and khakis. A few jeans were seen but no sneakers. Women wore mostly basic black with touches of glam. Not seen? Cellphones.

From 6 to 8 p.m., most of the 17 tables were full with a mature adult crowd, including one group of nine. The servers were attentive and prompt. The tempo of the two dining rooms and bistro tables in the lounge was unhurried, with jazzy carols in the background.

*The Restaurant Scout profiles Lake Country restaurants to describe ambience, cuisine, price range and clientele. This is a destination feature rather than a food review. Send questions or comments to restaurantscout@gmail.com.*

#### Good to know

- Palmer's Steakhouse**
- 122 E. Capitol Drive, Hartland, WI. 53029
- Phone: 262-369-3939
- Website: www.palmersteakhouse.com
- Fare: Steak and chops, fish, poultry, ribs.
- Hours: Opens at 5 p.m. seven nights a week.
- Price range: A sautéed mushroom appetizer is \$5. The big filet mignon (12-ounce) is \$38. An entrée special of scallops and turf is \$40.
- Reservations: Highly recommended. Suggest seven days ahead for weekend seating.
- Wheelchair access: Yes.
- Gluten-free options: Yes.

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- Featured this week:
- Country Christmas Outdoor Drive-through Lights Display:** Through Dec. 31, 5-9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays, 5-10 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. Country Springs Hotel, 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee. Wisconsin's largest drive-through holiday lights event features more than 1 million holiday lights along a mile-long trail that winds through the woods. Includes animated figures and holiday scenes. Call (262) 970-5398 for details. \$15 per carload, \$25 limo, mini-coach or large van. www.thecountrychristmas.com
  - Andrea & the Mods:** 9:30 p.m. Dec. 27, Delafield Brewhaus, 3832 Hillside Drive, Delafield. For more information call (262) 646-7821 or visit Delafield-brewhaus.com.
  - The Ricochettes:** 8 p.m. Dec. 31, Hollywood's Road House Bar and Grill, W332N629 Cty C, Nashotah. The Best of The British Invasion era music performed for listening and dancing.
  - Planetarium Programs:** 11 a.m., 1 p.m. Dec. 27, Charles Z. Horwitz Planetarium, S14 W28167 Madison St., Waukesha. "Winter Wonders," a children's program, explores treasured Christmas traditions and how other countries celebrate winter solstice. It starts at 11 a.m. "The Star of Wonder," for all ages, investigates the true date for Christ's birth and the mysterious Christmas Star. It starts at 1 p.m. \$4.
- Updates to this calendar are made weekly Monday afternoon.
- All weekend happenings.

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