

COSTS, THE ECONOMY, A SEAFOOD DIET AND THE FUTURE FIFTEEN

Sounds like quite a mouthful from Clawed this issue, a virtual Stew, Chowder or Potpourri. I'm covering the gambit and run the gauntlet all in 500 words or more. Look at it as a bunch of snacks or small plates, topical tapas, grazing if you will, rather than one center-of-the-plate entrée.



Let's start with food costs and the economy, the former on the rise and the latter still stagnant at best. What's a small business owner to do? Well, in case you missed it a couple of years ago when this whole "bottom falling out" economic slide started, the approach we chose was to flood the value areas of our menus. We created the Soup & Salad Combos, the Blue Plates Specials and added Mid-size portions of some of our most popular dishes. Now we're expanding these areas. "Seafood is expensive anytime—good times and bad—but that's where we've staked our reputation and we're stickin' to it! Refusing to compromise our quality after 13 years by substituting frozen for fresh or artificial (i.e. crab with a "k") for real, we painstakingly looked for ways to give greater value, retain our high quality and offer reasonable prices." I wrote that two years ago (on our website, see "Eating Our Way Through a Depression," from Vol. 22, Spring 2009) and we're living by it today. Yes, you will find some higher prices...out of necessity. All around us, it's happening daily - fast food (McDonald's, Burger King), casual dining (Outback, Texas Road House), grocery stores (Kraft, Sara Lee)—it's in the news almost every week, all over the media! Successful folks are using the same approach we do; holding prices wherever possible and flaunting that, but doing what's prudent to insure staying in business. There is still much "herd thinning" going on and we don't want to be one of the dead cows, or is that crustaceans, alongside the economic highway!

On a positive note, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans advises everyone, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, to eat SEAFOOD at least twice a week. (SeaFood Business, March 2011) That's 100 times a year...minimum! Now, if the Chowder House can be so bold as to ask that you let us do that for you a mere one-third of the time, that gets you in here three times a month! Too bold a request on our part? Just thought we'd offer!

And finally, the future fifteen...a little scary when you think about it! In 2026, will we be as successful as we have been since 1996? How will Clawed and Lady be holding up, with our kids in their 30's, 40's and 50's? How do we stay on our toes? Will we keep up with our grandkids?

Well, we know some things for sure. The Chowder House will continue to emphasis quality, value and relationships. They got us here...and they'll take us there! Striving to develop more guests just like you and keep them coming back will remain our focus. We always look for ways to improve, ways to move forward and more ways to pay attention to details...and to pay attention to you.

Thanks for 15 great years. We are very thankful, deeply humbled and quite appreciative.

Cap'n Clawed Lobster & Lady Bisque

