

Food makes the club

By Frank Biancamano

Today's country club manager is confronted with demands for variety in menus by the members of his club. Knowing this he must make an effort to serve his members dishes that escape the ordinary.

"Good food makes a country club," says Stanley Gray, manager of Green Brook CC in North Caldwell, N.J. "I believe this is a basic rule of all club operations," he adds. He's in an excellent position to judge, having been a club chef and club manager most of his professional life.

In today's mobile society, explains Stanley, the average club member gets around the country and even the world, and is exposed to a variety of foods and dishes that have elevated his palate from the plain to the fancy. Many of these foods were traditionally reserved for those people with the means to indulge an extravagant gourmet palate. Now they are within the reach of all.

Among club members may be a business man who does business in Europe, vacations in the Caribbean and is looking to expand his business in the Orient. He travels to all these places, logging more hours in the air a year than his counterpart of a few decades back did in a lifetime. In these travels he is introduced to new and exotic foods and dishes. When he is at home these encounters with the unusual have wrought subtle changes in his tastes that are still very much with him and will remain with him. As a general rule there is no returning to the plain after becoming acquainted with the fancy.

"A manager must realize that these changes are taking place among his members all the time,"

Green Brook's manager sees that club's food is on a par with the best

explains Stanley. "A club manager who wants to see his club remain active and of interest to its members must be aware that all these outside influences are constantly changing the members' wants and desires.

"The central idea of a country club is golf but there are many other activities that surround club life," Stanley says. "If a member enjoys his club and all it has to offer he will take advantage of each and every opportunity he has to use the club." This seems to be borne out by lunch time attendance at the club. Even on a gray day in December several members had guests at Green Brook for lunch.

The site of Green Brook is certainly a great help in establishing a charisma for its membership. Nestled in the wooded northern hill section of New Jersey it is in a rustic atmosphere that seems to shut out the hustle and bustle of adjacent New York and the fast pace of New York life that often spills over into the outlying districts surrounding the big city.

"When a member comes here, whether to play golf or have dinner or just a drink, I think he's most interested in getting to a place that is a quick and complete change in pace. I also feel it's important to make sure that this change of pace is made possible." The physical layout of Green Brook unquestionably invites that kind of relaxed atmosphere. From the main clubhouse and dining hall with its majestically styled arched

and beamed ceiling to the main dining area dance floor, the club says to the member—relax.

"To carry out my idea that food is what makes a country club a good one I then try to keep a supply of food on hand from which we can make up most dishes that might be ordered. We have installed equipment for keeping many frozen delicacies. We try to stay with fresh foods if we can, but we serve dishes that contain Alaskan king crab and this is not offered in this area fresh.

"We also try to take advantage of new methods for preparing food. We've recently installed an electronic radiant oven in which we can prepare a steak and baked potato to individual order in 20 minutes. We make every effort to give our members what they order—be it Hungarian goulash or *coq au vin*. I think it's the high performance level of our staff here at the club that makes it possible," he adds. "The successful running of a club is tied directly to how good a staff the club has. It may be immodest to say so but I think we've got one of the best around, certainly the best in my club experience. Our chef and his assistants take great care in the preparation of food. We keep the kitchen staff aware of this need for care of preparation partly by creating an atmosphere in which they can all function well.

"The members reflect their appreciation of this something extra through their graciousness and obvious good feeling about what we prepare and serve here. I think this attitude among the members brings them here to dine and use our facilities often—the most important indication of their pleasure

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Brook holds many twilight tournaments. The twilight concept enables a member to put in almost a complete day at his office and then journey to the club for a round of golf, followed by drinks and hors d'oeuvres and a full course sit-down dinner.

The planned menu for such an event incorporates all the pre-dinner dishes associated with a dinner and then offers entrees as variegated as roast Cornish hen and red snapper with caper sauce. In the more routine run of things, Green Brook's kitchen may offer a dinner menu to members who may drop in of an evening that includes broiled lobster tail, brook trout, ragout, beef prime ribs, roast Long Island duckling, sirloin steak and cold salmon in aspic all served a la carte or as a full dinner entree.

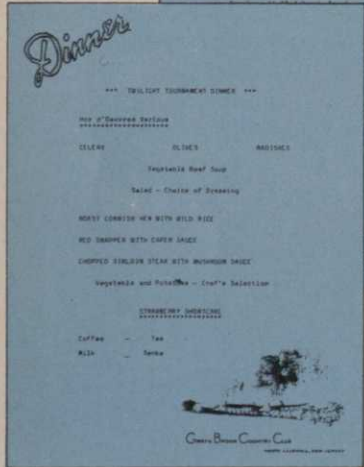
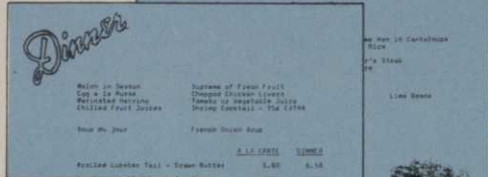
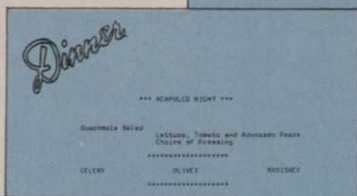
"Because our members are so involved with the club and the life of the club, we have many special events throughout the year which always culminate in a dinner," says manager Gray. "As an example we recently held a Scandinavian night for which our kitchen concocted a Smorgasbord that included no less than 30 different dishes running from meat to fish. We know our members have a taste for variety and it's our job to see that something as complex as a Smorgasbord menu is executed as completely as they would expect to get at any of New York's fine Scandinavian restaurants."

Mr. Gray keeps abreast of what he considers to be the problem of finding kitchen personnel, such as good chefs, by having instituted a training program. At present the club is supporting a scholarship for a young man Mr. Gray thinks will someday make an outstanding chef. Green Brook's management is underwriting a course at a well-known chef's school and hopes to have a highly skilled chef at the completion of the program.

Careful planning and an eye to the wishes of his club's members have given Stanley Gray the touchstone of efficient management that has made Green Brook one of the most inviting clubs in Northern New Jersey. □



THANKSGIVING DINNER - NOVEMBER 20, 1966
 SUBSIDIES OF FRESH FRUIT
 TURKEY
 CHICKEN LIVER & SAUCE
 BREAD CRUMBS
 BUTTER
 SWEET POTATOS
 CABBAGE
 CARROTS
 CELERY
 CORN
 PEAS
 POTATOS
 RICE
 SALAD
 BEAN SALAD
 PUMPKIN PIE
 APPLE PIE
 CUSTARD
 ICE CREAM
 COFFEE
 TEA



Various "nights" featuring different cuisines are held weekly during the season. Among the popular ones are Acapulco, French, Hawaiian. Special events such as Thanksgiving Day dinners add to the variety.

with the club and how its staff performs."

Of course, the world of the country club is essentially the world of golf, and the wise club manager will have his preparation of dinner and other related menus reflect this atmosphere. At Green Brook the membership is very much a part of the mobile, swinging world of today—dynamic and involved in the very busy world of our growing society and economy. This presents manager Gray with the constant challenge of creating culinary delights that will not pale or seem rather ordinary in the eyes of his members.

In the height of the golf season there are many opportunities for Stanley Gray to offer imaginative menus to diners or on other occasions for special events. During the normal summer season Green