



Pineville Tavern

CENTRAL BUCKS COUNTY IS HARDLY SYNONYMOUS

with low-budget dining, but if you happen to be tooling around the New Hope area and want to eat hearty with no frills, even with an ornery child or two in tow, go where the locals-even the foie gras fanciers-go for homemade, cheap and very good food. Don't lose your nerve when you see all the pickup trucks in the parking lot and the neon beer signs in the narrow windows of the Pineville Tavern, for inside it's a comfortable and (unless football's on TV) relatively civilized dining room. The walls wear dark paneling and an intriguingly garish print of a gypsy maiden in an off-the-shoulder blouse. The waitresses are super-efficient, pleasant and seemingly unruffiable. They'll hand you a cursory little menu that appears to have been written in the '50s (liver and onion sandwich, \$1.95; large pizza; \$3.75), which you can largely ignore in favor of the blackboard selections. They're likely to include those barroom classics pick 'n' peel shrimp (\$3.50); steamed. clams (\$4.75) and chicken wings (\$3.75). Proceed directly to the soup, 95 cents for a big dinerware cup full, \$1.75 for a bowl. With any luck, it will be one of the most satisfying, peasantry potages you'll enjoy this winter.

On my visits, the soothing, mellow chicken broth with little spicy veal meatballs and lots of green escarole was almost as good as the savory cabbage, cooked practically to melting, with chunks of bacon, white beans, garlic and lots of freshly ground pepper. Don't expect much of the supermarket Italian bread except that it be warm and abundant; salad, included with blackboard entrees, is noteworthy because it's made with chicory. The frizzy, dark, slightly bitter green is tossed with carrot and red cabbage julienne in an aggressive vinaigrette. The \$6.50 chicken special seems to be a Pineville Tavern dinner standard. One night it was half a bird simmered to falling apart tenderness in bright, garlicky tomato gravy, with a side dish of pencil points thick, quill-shaped pasta. Another night it was a charmingly retro chicken divan, with neat slices of breast meat and a shower of chopped, lightly steamed broccoli in rich, cheddary mornay sauce over white rice-the perfect antidote to every pretentious, over priced entree you've ever suffered through. At one meal, my petite dining companion, one of those people so uninterested in food that they "forget" to eat from day to day, was quite satisfied with her \$3.50 crab cake and french fry dinner. On another, my large, discriminating partner was enthusiastic about his sirloin steak (\$7.50), cooked just as ordered and running with juices.

For dessert, we had chocolate heath bar pie on a buttery crumb crust, and a great big wedge of apple pie, warmed in the microwave on a styrofoam plate.

-JANET BUKOVINSKY

Pineville Tavern, Route 413, Pineville, 1-598-3890.

L- daily noon-4:30; D-daily 5-11. No cards.