

AS SEEN IN
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Dining

BY EMILY BETZ TYRA



FIND

Opa! Coney and Grill

Opa! chef-owner Paul Barbas admits the perennially popular gyro will always be the dish that keeps the lights on, but let him fix you a Greek dinner proper. He left the lemon groves of a small village outside Macedonia at age two with his parents, who started as dishwashers in a Detroit barbecue restaurant and eventually opened a restaurant of their own. The Barbas clan's cooking chops continue on in T.C., with skilletts of *florines piperies* (house-roasted red peppers with a delicate, herbed ricotta-and-feta filling) and moussaka, subtly seasoned with cinnamon, nutmeg and red wine and baked with *kefalograviera* cheese that crisps on the edges.

Barbas rotates specials such as lamb shank with Ionian sauce and desserts like the farina-flour based and simple-syrup soured revani cake with strawberries. There is always orange-scented baklava. Get it with a demitasse of rich Greek coffee, served sweet with a glass of ice water.

For those craving ethnic authenticity, know that Barbas's 100-percent Polish wife Brigitte (their wedding had 300 people, a Greek *and* a Polish band)

ABOVE: Opa!'s apps: three kinds of homemade hummus; deeply spiced falafel with tzatziki sauce; dill-laced dolmades; and spanikopita hand-rolled cigar-style.

put her homemade pierogies on the menu. 1752 S. GARFIELD AVE. (CHERRYLAND CENTER), TRAVERSE CITY, 231-947-6721, OPAGRILL.COM