

Fresh Fresh worth second look



Kristofer Marsh/The Towerlight

Above, a crab cake at Fresh Fresh Seafood in Towson. The family-operated restaurant, located up on York Road near the Towson Circle and Recher Theatre, serves homemade seafood and other dishes.

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After a week of old pizza from The Den, expensive meals at Paws and stale... well, everything from the Glen, Fresh Fresh Seafood is the perfect pick-me-up for a college student on a budget.

Up York Road, just past Towson Commons, in a rush to the mall or the Recher Theatre you might miss this delightful little establishment.

Run by husband-and-wife team Darlene and Ricky Parker, Fresh Fresh has been in Towson since 2000. Darlene works as hostess and waitress, while Ricky is head chef, preparing every meal fresh (as if it needed saying again) to order.

"It's been so wonderful being in Towson," Darlene said.

"I get to see some of the kids when they want to eat fresh and healthy food."

My boyfriend and I saw plenty of Darlene as we dined. She was more than willing to give us a brief history of Fresh Fresh, as well as tell us the ingredients of every dish we were interested in and the ways it would be prepared fresh for our dining experience.

"Everything is done homemade and full of quality," she said.

We started with soup for an appetizer. My boyfriend ordered Maryland



crab (\$5.95 a cup) and I got cream of crab (\$5.25 a cup).

The Maryland crab was just as Darlene promised us when we ordered: full of fresh vegetables and lump crab meat.

It was spicy and flavorful, and my boyfriend had no trouble finishing his whole cup.

The cream of crab was sublime, with jumbo lump crab meat, and enough taste without too much salt, something a lot of the soups on campus overdo.

For our main course, my boyfriend ordered fried shrimp (\$13.95), which came with freshly cut fries and steamed broccoli, crunchy or soft according to order.

I asked Darlene for a recommendation, to which she offered the jumbo lump and lump crab cakes, which have been featured in both local newspapers and nationally recognized magazines.

I took her advice and got the lump crab cakes (at market price, \$19.99) with a garden salad and homemade macaroni and cheese.

We were treated like royalty as we dined. Our water glasses were filled

after every sip and Darlene came out to check on us occasionally, but not enough to interrupt what made a perfect date setting.

Unlike a chain restaurant waiter, Darlene genuinely seemed interested in what we thought of our meal, and served each dish with a smile. We were even presented with our main course by head chef Ricky, completing the "Mom and Pop" feel of the restaurant.

The side orders were as promising as Darlene made them out to be. At the first bite of my salad, a strange taste offset me for a moment. Suddenly it dawned on me - this is what fresh quality food tastes like. After weeks and weeks of dining hall food, I had almost forgotten.

My boyfriend's fried shrimp were lightly breaded, but heavy on flavor.

My lump crab cakes (made with no fillers, breadcrumbs or crackers, Darlene assured me) were sublime, and the macaroni was cheesy and light on salt.

We left the restaurant full and happy, with a bill of \$45.69. Fresh Fresh Seafood also accepts Towson's OneCard, which makes it ideal for Towson students.

Fresh Fresh is the perfect setting for a date, dinner with visiting relatives, or just lunch with friends when you have to get off campus.