

Media's a dining star

■ 'Dining Under the Stars' on State Street in borough has been a delicious hit this summer.

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MEDIA — When the stars come out on Wednesday nights in this Delaware County town, so do the diners, but so do those who just enjoy strolling down State Street in what has become the second "Dining Under the Stars" this summer.

Last summer, Dining Under the Stars offered visitors a 13-week dining spectacle in which restaurants offered curbside dining and music and song filled the air. This year, the outside tables have been expanded to the Wednesday extravaganza and Corvettes have been rolled in to fill the space between the various restaurants' tables.

"It's to give the surrounding communities a different taste of Media," said Monika Rehoric of Kenny's Flower Shoppe, who is president of the Media Business Authority. "We're trying to give people a different sense of what it's about."

She said the approach was to give Media a relaxed, European feel with the street closed down.

"People come out just to walk down the middle of the street," she said. "It gives people a different sense of freedom about the town. This kind of stops the clock. People love it."

From not worrying about finding a parking space to allowing kids to draw chalk figures on the street, the night has its own flair.

"It's become more like a family night," said Zubair Khan, executive director of the Media Business Authority, adding that a table of eight can easily afford a dinner at Dining Under the Stars.

It's all meant to showcase the borough and its assets.

"This is a different way of life and Media can offer it," Rehoric said, adding that those looking for a romantic adult-oriented evening are welcome to visit the borough on Fridays and Saturdays.

Rehoric explained that the event-planning group wanted to celebrate Media's strengths at other times than just holidays and weekends.

So, they created Dining Under the Stars.

"What happens on a Wednesday night?" Rehoric asked. "Not much. Why not do something different?"

Khan said they decided to focus on summer.

"We knew it would work," Rehoric said. "We just had to show people."

Khan said hundreds packed State



Joe and Joanne Tumelty stand in front of their Corvette on State Street in Media recently.

Dine under the stars

"Dining Under the Stars" is featured on State Street in Media from 5-10 p.m. on Wednesdays through Sept. 16. The street is blocked off to traffic and restaurants put tables outside. For more information, visit www.visitmedia-pa.com

Street this past Wednesday.

"(Wednesday) night, it was like the boardwalk," he said. "There were so many people."

In addition, he said visitors are drawn to the outdoor seating. "People will wait 45 minutes to sit at a table outside," he said.

Anthony Bellapigna of Fellini's Café Trattoria is a Media restaurateur who's ready to please the crowd.

He said he's ready to hoist 80 granite tables to make customers have the ultimate outdoor dining experience.

"Last year, at one point, we put all of our tables out front," he said. "There's nothing like dining outside when the weather's right."

Bellapigna described Dining Under the Stars as tremendous.

"I love it," he said. "It brings so much to the town. It kind of brought the town together. It gave us the opportunity to meet other merchants and other restaurants. I think it's how it's meant to be in this town."

It's also a chance to have families come out for a night and enjoy dinner, entertainment and the atmosphere.

Even retailers such as Ten Thousand Villages and Earth & State are participating by extending their Wednesday hours.

"They realize there are people out

on the street," Khan said.

And, of course, there's the food.

"It's the best chance for my chef to shine," Bellapigna said. "It's fun."

Dan Brodeur of Brodeur's on State Street said he's exhibiting a Caribbean theme with appetizers such as coconut shrimp and Caribbean pizza with mango, papaya and shrimp. He's also featuring a variety of special martinis and hard-shell crabs and grilled lobster with herb butter.

"People are coming to enjoy a cocktail or two, an appetizer or two," he said. "That's what the economy is bringing to us right now."

Something new this year is the weekly show of Corvettes lining the street between restaurant venues.

"As soon as we put the cars out there," Khan said, "it fills up the gaps."

Brodeur added that the entertainment, headed by Jon Schaeffer of Schaeffer Sound, has been expanded with the Shining Stars group from the Upper Darby Performing Arts Center set for July 15 and with other jazz ensembles, street painters and caricatures expected at other times.

He highlighted Dining Under the Stars' ability to showcase the town.

"Media's still here, we're still alive, we're still vibrant," Brodeur said. "It just creates electricity. It gives everybody an opportunity to show their best parts."

Khan said the event creates an excitement in the middle of the week during the summer.

"The whole thing has turned out to be an injection in the middle of the week," Khan said. "Every Wednesday, we see an increase in traffic. It does have the potential to become a great community event."