

57th Fighter Group Marks Major Anniversary

After 30 years, it's still the 1940s at this eatery on the edge of the PDK runway.

By [H.M. Cauley](#) | [Email the author](#) | January 22, 2011



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Though the [57th Fighter Group](#) restaurant at [DeKalb Peachtree Airport](#) has been around in various incarnations for 30 years, it's still one of those dining spots that's loved by many but unheard of by most.

"It's a really neat place, but so many people don't know that it's here," said general manager Tricia Clancy. "Sometimes people think it's only for officers, since it's at the airport."

In fact, the Fighter Group has a loyal following among the local business community as well as diners looking for a destination with a bit of extra cache. They'll find it here - where the focus is as much on nostalgia as it is food.

Tucked into a building designed to look like a French chateau, the eatery transports guests back to the World War II era. In the lobby, the chatter between pilots and the tower comes through the sound system. [Winston Churchill's](#) somber addresses are piped into the rest rooms. And in the dining room, the music is strictly big-band. Throughout the building are pieces of '40s memorabilia, much of which was donated by members of the real 57th squadron.

The most captivating feature is the dining room's wall of windows that looks over the adjacent runways. Diners get a close-up view of the planes that keep PDK a busy airport.

"We even have headphones you can put on to listen to the air controllers," said Clancy. "It's an attraction for all ages. We've had 2-year-olds' birthday parties as well as anniversary dinners. The older folks like the time period; the younger ones like the planes."

The romantic lighting and fireplaces throughout have made the restaurant a popular place for engagements as well as weddings. It's also fun just to sit by the fire pit on the patio and watch the planes while sipping a cocktail. Along with the relatively unchanged ambiance, the restaurant has stuck to a popular menu of American classics in steaks, seafood and chicken. The signature dish - a beer cheese soup made with Sam Adams, cheddar, onions and cream - has been on the menu since the doors opened. The chefs are also renowned for the prime rib. The entrees, priced from \$14 to \$30, also include sea bass, duck breast, pastas and pork chops.



To mark the 30th anniversary, the restaurant is serving a \$19.81 menu of specials, each accompanied by a glass of wine. The chefs will also bring back some old favorites from the original menu and bar. If items such as the crab-stuffed mushrooms, fried zucchini and grilled chicken with ham and cheese are a hit, they may be come permanent additions, said Clancy.

Three top prizes will be awarded in a swing dance competition. Don't know the moves? Instructors will be on hand to give lessons to those who want to learn. And all diners will be entered in a contest to win a ride in a P-40 Warhawk plane.

The 57th Fighter Group is located at 3829 Clairmont Road. Lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Dinner begins at 5 p.m. every evening. Sunday brunch lasts from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For more information visit: www.the57threstaurant.com

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