

A Fairly Good Place For Quite Some Time

AVON, MINNESOTA MIDDLE SPUNK LAKE

FISHER'S CLUB

George "Showboat" Fisher had just retired in 1932 from ten years of major league baseball, playing for the Washington Senators and the St. Louis Cardinals. He was 33, loved hunting and fishing, and didn't want to get tied down with a year-round job so he opened Fisher's Club on the northeast shore of Middle Spunk Lake. The dance floor by the jukebox was added in 1937, and the sale of cold beer and playing of slot machines made the summer-only bar a popular place. So popular, that Showboat would spend most summer nights sleeping by the front door, with his shotgun and hunting dog as his only companions. This was to protect the day's gambling takes.

Back then, ten-year-old George Jr. and his brothers Lewis and Dick would fish area lakes all week for Sunfish, Northerns, and Crappies, "Anything that would bite," said Junior. His dad would give the fried fish away free at the bar until one summer night a savvy nightclub owner from St. Cloud walked in and told Showboat, "You should get walleye and sell it." He took her advice, created a secret breading recipe, and the legendary Fisher's Famous Walleye began. That recipe is used here today. It's still a secret, and no, we won't tell you what is in it.

Fisher's was closed during the final two years of WWII, reopening in the summer of 1946. The Bottle Club feature was added then, and Flo cooked fish and sandwiches in a tiny kitchen space behind the current bar wall. The main dining room was added in 1953, and the porch in '54. Junior came home from a construction job in Greenland to work with his dad at The Club. "Stick around to help me here at The Club or I'm going to sell it," Junior says his dad told him. So he stayed.



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In 1959, Junior and his wife Sally took over the operation of Fisher's Club, expanding the current kitchen and adding their own touches to the place. This includes the celebrated red wallpaper in the bar area, bought by Flo and Sally and hung with the help of friends Hazel Lundberg, Marge Blattner, and Joy Netter. Sally and Hazel spent one long, hot summer making batch after batch of potato salad until they arrived at their now-famous recipe, which we faithfully follow. Fisher's children Tammy and Bing both spent many of their summers working all aspects of the restaurant business.

The Club sits across the road from the Lake Wobegon Trail, which passes near the town of Lake Wobegon, here in the heart of Central Minnesota. A legendary resident of that town, Garrison Keillor, became one of the owners of Fisher's Club in 2005. During the winter of 2006, minor updates and the addition of an outdoor lakeside deck were made. Spending hot summer nights on the lake with fine friends, good food, and a cool beverage is what Fisher's has always been about.