

POTPOURRI

Boat show Saturday

IF IT floats, it's likely to be at the 31st Houston International Boat, Sport and Travel Show, which begins Saturday in the Astrohall/Astroarena and Expo Center.

All makes, models and sizes of power and sail boats, motors, trailers, water skis and marine accessories will be on view. Travel, sport, hunting, camping and fishing exhibits will complete the panorama of aquatic aids.

Among the new sailing craft will be the ultralight weight MacGregor 26 and the first Ericson 34 to be shown in the area.

You may have missed your chance to buy a yacht as a major tax write-off, but if you're looking for one for pleasure try the new Tartan 34.

Show dates and times are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Jan. 17 and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Jan. 18.

Tickets are available on site during show hours and are \$3.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children under 12. For more information, call 526-6361 or 439-5890.

RESTAURANT REVIEW: U.R. COOKS

IF YOU'VE EVER wanted to see how much havoc you can wreak when left to your own devices to cook a sizable hunk of meat, here's your chance. U.R. Cooks (what, no Steaks R Us?) will bring out the frustrated backyard barbecuer in anyone.

The gimmick is this: Pick out a cut from U.R. Cooks' impressive display, which ranges from 14-ounce filets to 26-ounce T-bones. Then toss that baby onto one of the three communal grills, and you're free to burn it to a cinder, if that's the way you like your steak. Regardless of the size or cut of meat, the price — including baked potato and salad bar — is \$11.95. If two people share a steak, it's \$8.45 per person. For just the potato and/or salad, it's \$4.95.

If this defeats what some see as the purpose of eating out — to let someone else do the cooking — a chef will grill your steak for an additional \$2.

My initial impulse upon entering the restaurant was something along the lines of "OK, Marines, hit the beef!" But there's no rush. The meat's not going anywhere. The display cases are regularly refilled with some of the 200 to 300 pounds of steaks and chicken (arranged on skewers with onions, tomatoes and peppers for chicken kabobs) that U.R. Cooks goes through each day. Taking a hectic approach can result in a lot of trips between your table and the grill — sort of like barbecuing in a bus station.

So first things first. You want a salad? Get one from the salad bar, sit down and eat it. Then grab a steak and start cooking. The grills are stocked with buckets — and I mean buckets — of melted butter for slathering the

meat and the thick slices of bread that are available for making garlic toast. For seasoning, there are shakers of seasoned pepper, seasoned salt and garlic salt. If that's too much sodium for you, garlic powder and onion powder are on hand for the asking, as well as Worcestershire, teriyaki and soy sauces and red wine vinegar.

The grills are set at a moderate heat, so you don't have to worry about your meat being charred in no time flat. The staff at U.R. Cooks is very helpful in giving advice to novices, and you're welcome to sip a drink while you keep an eye on the fire. Just before the steak or chicken is ready, step over to the potato bar, which is next to the grill. You're all set. As one amateur chef remarked: "You feel like you've accomplished something."

Beyond the grill-it-yourself angle, however, there's not much to U.R. Cooks. Most of the menu is taken up with such frills as special drinks and desserts. The latter consist mainly of ice cream sundaes. The cheesecake (\$2.50, \$2.95 with strawberry or chocolate topping) has an odd coconut taste to it. The ice cream drink called "U.R. Cookies 'n' Cream" (\$3.50) adds a touch of liqueur to what is basically a cookie shake. Tastes better than it sounds.

Corners are cut on the salad bar by mixing slices of bell peppers and carrots with the lettuce. The dressings range from the bland to the cloyingly sweet. The decor in the large dining room is rather sparse. Instead of pictures on the walls, U.R. Cooks solicits signs and logos from local businesses. How inspiring is it to look up from your steak and see "A Judwin Property"

staring down at you? With restaurants actively seeking the patronage of Mr. and Ms. Disposable Income, U.R. Cooks (which is also in Austin and San Antonio) has a neat little hook in letting those who eat out more often than in get a charge out of standing over a hot grill. (I wouldn't call it "slaving" when a waitress is always at the ready to bring another beer or mixed drink.) On the average, three out of every four customers do the cooking themselves. It can be fun, especially with a few friends, and best of all you don't have to worry about the cleanup.

All that's missing are those barbecue

aprons with pithy sayings on them, like: "Oh, how I suffer."

(This article reflects the reviewer's opinion based on food and service in relation to price and compared with similar restaurants in this area. The reviewer makes every effort to remain anonymous and be treated as any other customer. The reviewer makes no fewer than two visits and more if necessary, all of which are paid for by the Houston Chronicle.)

SUMMATION
U.R. Cooks: Very few complaints to

the chef.
Price: Moderate.
Service: Good.
Address: 6100 Westheimer in Briar-grove Plaza.
Credit cards: American Express, Carte Blanche, Diners Club, MasterCard, Visa.
Hours: Open seven days 5-11 p.m.
Wheelchair accessible: Yes, except for grill area.
No-smoking section: Yes.
Phone: 266-9750.
Reservations: Necessary for groups of 10 or more.

NEW RESTAURANTS

New restaurants in the Houston area may submit the following information for publication: name, address, phone number, major cuisine, entree price range, opening date and hours of operation. Information must be submitted in writing at least one week in advance to: Restaurant listings, Weekend Preview, P.O. Box 4260, Houston, Texas 77210. Listings will run as space allows.

266-9750.
THE GREAT GREEK: Greek and American. Entrees: \$8.95-\$12.95. Hours: 11 a.m.-2 a.m. daily. 80 Woodlake Square (Gessner at Westheimer). 780-4980.

THE RED BALLOON CAFE: American cuisine. Entrees: \$5.50-\$12.95. Burgers, sandwiches and luncheon specials. Hours: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; 5:30-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5:30-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday; and 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. 1530 S. Dairy Ashford. 497-5581.

BRANDING IRON STEAKHOUSE: Steaks. Entrees: \$4.25-\$6.95. Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. 9600 Bellaire Blvd. 778-1818.

BLACK LABRADOR PUB: Homemade soups, salads, burgers, ribs, steaks, seafood and chicken dishes and daily English specials. Entrees: \$5-\$12. Hours: 11:30 a.m.-midnight Monday-Thursday, 11:30 a.m.-1 a.m. Friday and Saturday,

noon-10 p.m. Sunday. 4100 Montrose Blvd. at Richmond Avenue. 529-1199.
GUGGENHEIM'S AMERICAN DELI: Delicatessen. Entrees: \$1.45-\$4.75. Hours: 10:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 10:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Sunday. 1708 S. Post Oak at San Felipe. 622-2773.

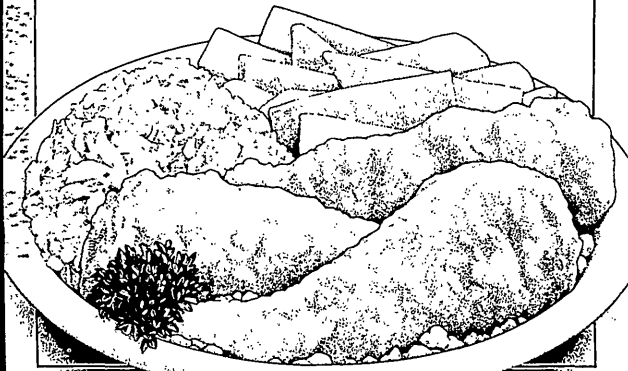
RENU'S: Thai (new location). Entrees: \$4.95-\$12.95. Hours: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 5 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday 2907 W. Alabama. 528-6998.

HARD ROCK CAFE: Hamburgers, ribs, sandwiches. Entrees: \$4-\$7. Hours: 11 a.m.-midnight Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-1 a.m. Friday-Saturday. 2801 Kirby. 520-1134.

THE BAGEL MANUFACTORY: Bagels and sandwiches. Entrees: 52 cents-\$3.55. Hours: 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. 2438 Rice Blvd. 520-ROLL.

All-You-Can-Eat Chicken Planks Dinner \$3.99

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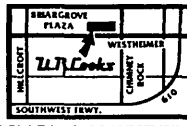
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U.R. COOKS
STEAKS-SPIRITS



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Houston's tradition of fine dining since 1953.
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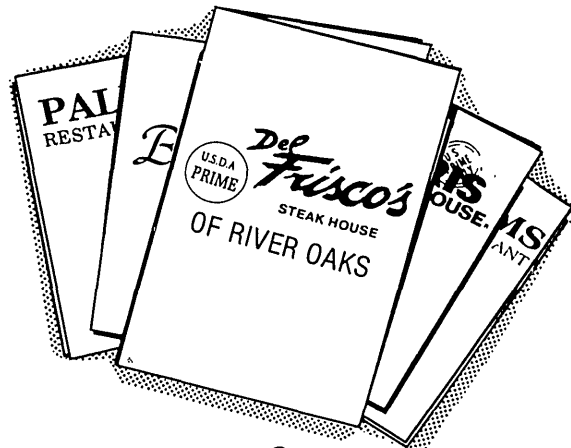
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OPEN SUNDAYS
Fandango's
\$6.95
Reg. \$12.95
With this ad only Expires Wednesday Jan. 21, 1987-10 P.M.
Margaritas \$1.50
On the rocks frozen 2 1/2 oz. extra
The order not good for takeouts
On West Belt between Memorial & Katy Fwy behind Walgreens 932-9195

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When it comes to HOUSTON'S outstanding STEAK HOUSES

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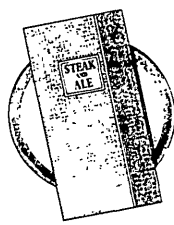


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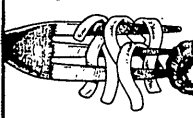
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