

Between mixing chocolate malts and stuffing foot-long hot dogs into crusty buns, **Marvin Garriott** picks up his guitar and belts out an Elvis tune. Customers seated on naugahyde stools tap along to the beat and small children giggle in the nearby booths. Shoppers peak out from rows of antiques and passersby on the street pause for a moment.

And not just because it's a touch unusual to hear live, enthusiastic Elvis music in downtown Black Diamond at 3 p.m. on a Monday. This guy is good.

Garriott owns and operates **Marv's Classic Soda Shop** at 121 Centre Ave. (933-7001), and he's having a ball doing it. A former professional musician, Garriott purchased the soda shop two years ago with the intent of making it as authentic as possible. He bought equipment dating back to the 1920s, acquired cookbooks on soda fountain cuisine, and searched for suppliers to provide the proper products.

His hot dogs and hamburgers are specially made by **MG Quality Meats** in Turner Valley, his sodas are concocted from syrups, and his malt is shipped in from Wisconsin. Milkshakes and malts are served in heavy glasses with metal containers on the side, and when Garriott is too busy scooping to pull out the guitar, a nickelodeon plays in the corner.

Aside from the food and drinks and rows of vintage candies, the loonie-operated nickelodeon is worth a visit in itself.

Adapted from a former player piano, it includes an accordion, drums, tambourine and other musical instruments all programmed to play classic tunes. So there's rarely a quiet moment at Marv's. And no one leaves without a smile on their face.

Marv's is not the only culinary delight in Black Diamond. Right next door, the **Black Diamond Bakery & Coffee Shop** (119 Centre Ave. 933-4503) offers a stunning array of baking that is rivalled by few bakeries in Calgary. Owner **George Nielsen** is an accomplished Danish baker who can handle anything from an elaborate



Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald

Marvin Garriott, owner of Marv's Classic Soda Shop in Black Diamond, with his famous hot dog and soda.



JOHN GILCHRIST

OFF THE MENU

wedding cake to a simple dinner roll. And it's the only bakery I know of that offers three varieties of cinnamon buns in five sizes.

Nielsen bought the bakery in 1985 and has been churning out rye breads and Eccles cakes ever since. His shop also does daily lunches, including a

couple of house-made soups and an award-winning chili.

The award was for the First Annual Cowboy Trail Chili Cook-Off in 2001. This year's event is coming up Sept. 13, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A couple dozen Black Diamond businesses will offer free samples of their chili during the event.

One of the other entrants will be **Michelle Portsmouth** of **Prod-Jus Organic Market & Cafe** (126 Centre Ave. 933-7676). She'll whip up her popular vegetarian chili using soy meat replacements.

The native of Dallas opened Prod-

Jus two years ago to supply the burgeoning interest in organic products in the Black Diamond and Turner Valley area. She does lunches of wraps, sandwiches, smoothies and salads and has a small organic market in a back room. And true to her Texas heritage, she also makes one of the few real glasses of iced tea in our area.

The sweet, smoky smell of barbecue will fill the air around the Eau Claire Market today as the 11th Annual Barbecue on the Bow stokes up the coals. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 15 teams will

compete for the right to represent Alberta at the Kansas City Royal barbecue championship and the Jack Daniels Invitational competition.

Last Year's champs — **Rockin' Ronnie's Butt Shredders** — will be back to defend their title against teams from Seattle, Sandpoint and Vancouver as well as a number of local entrants. Live entertainment will be provided by **Amos Garret** and his **Eh! Team**. Admission is free.

The results are in from the most recent food competition to be held on the plaza outside Eau Claire Market. More than 46,000 hungry Calgarians attended the Taste of Calgary earlier this month and devoured a mountain of food.

The four-day event saw the consumption of 5,000 squid, 420 dozen Jamaican patties, more than 500 pounds of salmon and tons of beef ribs.

Tied for the most popular dish were the butter chicken from the **Bombay House** (last year's winner) and the Jack Daniels barbecue ribs from **Cactus Club Cafe**.

In second place were the beef ribs from the **Bow River Barley Mill** and in third was the marinated and broiled salmon from **Barclay's** in the Sheraton Eau Claire.

Continuing with awards, the Wine Spectator seems to like what's happening in our restaurants. Last week, I wrote about a number of new awards from the big American wine magazine.

This week, there's more news to report: **Catch**, after only a year in business, has been given an Award of Excellence for its wine list. And two Banff eateries — **Eden** at the Rimrock Hotel and **Buffalo Mountain Lodge** — have been elevated to the Best of Award of Excellence. Congratulations go out to all three.

JOHN GILCHRIST REVIEWS RESTAURANTS AND BROADCASTS A NATIONAL FOOD BUSINESS COLUMN FOR CBC RADIO ONE. HE CAN BE REACHED AT ESCURIAL@TELUS.NET OR 235-7532.