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Owners and husband and wife Charles Lloyd and Lucy Chesshire toast the opening of their Monterey Coast Brewing Company pub in 2002 in Salinas' Oldtown.

Restaurants offer tasty dining options

Salinas-, Marina-area eateries give hungry patrons choices, service

By **SUE DeROY BRENES**
For The Salinas Californian

For decades, some people in Salinas believed the only way to entertain out-of-town guests or grab some upscale grub was to head west on Highway 68 and hit the Monterey Peninsula.

Monterey, Carmel and Pacific Grove have always offered upscale dining and entertainment. But Salinas is improving and expanding its own fine-dining alternatives and giving locals a chance to create loyalty in their own back yard.

Just a few of the Salinas restaurants with culinary credentials include Hullabaloo, Monterey Coast Brewing Co., Salinas Valley Fish House, Pajaro Street Grill, and at the southern edge of town, the 30-year-old Gino's.

These restaurants offer Salinas diners creative and interesting choices. Here's a glance:

Hullabaloo Restaurant at 228 Main St. in the central Oldtown business district (757-3663). From Monday through Friday, lunch is from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and dinner is served nightly.

It's in a prime, downtown location serving the best of America's bold flavors and has won multiple dining awards in The Salinas Californian and other publications since its opening in 2000.

Owners Will Reynolds and Todd Fisher also own Chicken Scratch Flats Rotisserie & Brick Oven at the National Steinbeck Center.

"Hullabaloo just won the Small Business of the Year award with the Salinas Valley Chamber, as well as the Small Business of the Year award for District 19 for the state of California," Reynolds said.

"We're very civic-oriented, community involved and we donate to just about everything. And the food's pretty darn good, too. We serve creative, innovative food, and the service is great. It's an upscale, large-city restaurant in small town."

Pajaro Street Grill at 435 Pajaro St. (754-3738) has been open for 6½ years and has developed its own "incredibly loyal and friendly customer base."

"We're here for the long run," owner Deamer Dunn said. "We like being in downtown Salinas in a unique building, and it's fun to be the kind of restaurant that makes people feel like they 'discovered' us."