

## BOBBY'S CAFE SERVES UP SIGNATURE THEME

Famous 'Bobs' sign photos for eatery

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SPECIAL TO THE U-T

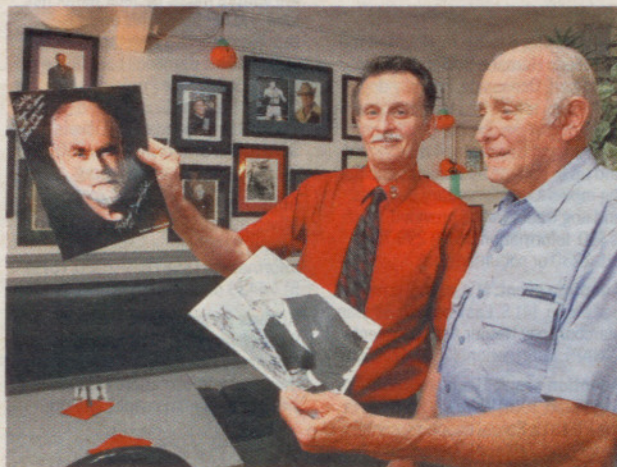
### CARLSBAD

You might say the place has more bobbies than a London police station.

Or it would be a great site for that old college drinking game, "Hi, Bob."

Bobby's Hideaway Café in Carlsbad is big on Bobs. If your name is Robert, Bobby, Bob or even Roberta, you'll be treated as a VIP. In fact, your picture will likely join the hundreds of "Not-So-Famous Bobs," as owner Bobby Sliwa calls them, plus some famous Bobs, on the dining room wall.

Sliwa, 56, opened the homey diner on El Camino Real just south of Tamarack Avenue in 1995 after a restaurant career that included launching 150 Sbarro pizzerias over eight years. Just before opening, his wife and brother suggested they decorate the space with a few photos of celebrities named Bob. Numerous local Bobs soon joined those.



Cafe owner Bobby Sliwa, left, and customer David Mirisch with photos. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

And then about six months ago David Mirisch came along. A longtime Hollywood press agent, Mirisch decided to jump on the Bob-wagon.

"I stopped in one day for breakfast and saw all these pictures of celebrities — many of whom I knew — but none with a signature," said Mirisch, 76, a Carlsbad resident. "So I asked if he would like for me to get some signed to him."

Since then, Mirisch has provided more than 20 signed photos for the Hideaway's collection, including

actors Bob Saget, Robert Hays, Robert Wuhl, Robert Wagner, Robert Morse and Robert Loggia. This week Bob Barker and Robert David Hall from the show CSI took up residence.

"Many of these are friends of mine, and I have other friends in the business I can reach out to," Mirisch said.

Sliwa diplomatically declined to reveal which celebrity Bob photos he would like to add. Instead, he expressed regret that Bob Hope — perhaps his favorite Bob — fell ill and died before he could make a planned trip to the Hideaway with a friend.

"Probably our funniest Bob is our signed Bobby from 'King of the Hill,'" Sliwa said. "We tell all the kids he actually signed it."

Children are also greeted with a free cookie from a Spongebob Squarepants talking box.

Mirisch is now a weekly early-morning patron — and not just to drop off more signed glossies.

"I found a chicken-fried steak that (Sliwa) cooks that's better than any place I've had in my life," he said. "You can't even get in there on the weekends, the food is so good."

Sliwa, who works 80 to 100 hours a week at the restaurant preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner, said he's toyed with having a "Bob-fest" in the parking lot, welcoming back all the Not-So-Famous Bobs whose pictures grace his walls. But while he would love to expand, don't look for him to open a new place and duplicate his efforts using his middle name, he said:

"I don't think Gerard would have the same impact."

Christy Scannell is a freelance writer from San Diego.