



'Pockets' Track Kitchen

By Ben Baugh

It's a place where horsemen congregate, to discuss a morning work out, the events of the day and of course to have a good meal.

The Track Kitchen has managed to retain an imprint of Aiken's past, while serving American fare that's timeless and true in a welcoming, inviting and comfortable atmosphere. The restaurant is always three feet deep with horsemen, tourists and long time Aikenites, and the dining rooms are buzzing with jokes, good stories and good friends.

The restaurant's proprietor is James "Pockets" Carter, whose pleasant personality and welcoming smile, immediately put diners at ease. The walls of the eatery are decorated with framed pictures of human and equine athletes participating in various disciplines.

"The Track Kitchen has a casual type of atmosphere," said Carter, and diners have been dazzled by the professionalism and passion of this man for more than a quarter of a century. "Pockets" or "Champ" has owned the Track Kitchen since 1980.



Nestled in close proximity to the Whitney Trust barns, diners can visit with horses in the paddocks adjacent to the restaurant before enjoying the many signature items that make dining at the Track Kitchen a pleasurable experience.

"We welcome everybody," said Carter. "People can help themselves to coffee."

Pocket's received his now famous moniker from Hall of Fame thoroughbred trainer Mack Miller. "There were two James' on the job, and Mr. Miller called out James, and we both said yes, and he said 'I mean the James with his hands in his pockets.' He's a great man. I worked for him for the longest time."

The Track Kitchen is open seven days a week, and is open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Track Kitchen is located at 420 Mead Avenue. For more information, call 641-9628.