

Ski Inn completes its reincarnation

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

Eight years after a large, 150-year-old ponderosa pine tree fell on the original Ski Inn located on East Cascade Avenue, the newly redesigned and rebuilt lodging and dining establishment is in full swing on the same site.

After several months of delay, the Yozamp family, owners, have most of the opening kinks worked out — notwithstanding the nationwide labor shortage that has been a challenge for the operators to meet. Some hours have been curtailed to give the staff a needed break.

The original, opened in 1972, was a plain-looking edifice common of '70s design. It was a popular breakfast and burger spot. The regulars would show up almost every day at 6 a.m. to dine on omelets, biscuits and gravy, hash browns and other breakfast staples with praise for their bacon and ham. Despite its name, it never was an inn with lodging.

Today's Ski Inn Tap House & Hotel, over a year in the making, is in every sense of the word Five-Star as defined by the hospitality industry. That is, when referring to the lodging side of the business. The



PHOTO BY BILL BARTLETT

The Ski Inn, once crushed by a falling tree, has been reimagined and reborn as Ski Inn Tap House & Hotel.

2,670-square-foot second floor, offers six boutique-class rooms, one of which is ADA compliant. The rooms are surrounded by a wide, wooden deck and railing, with doors from each of the rooms opening onto the deck. The largest room, located at the front of the building, has a kitchenette. All six feature a king bed, seating area, designer furniture, and walk-in shower.

"Tap House" is an apt part of the business name. And taps there are: 16 in fact, rotating regional craft beers and ciders. Four wines, vinted in the Pacific

Northwest, are in the mix to pair with the pub-fare eats. That's half as many as the ultra-large, high-definition TVs inside playing eight different games in differing sports at one time. A ninth giant-screen TV is outside in the patio area.

The restaurant can seat 86 inside and almost 60 outside. The indoor and outdoor space is all one when the 20-foot-wide roll-up doors

are opened, making it an open-air setting during good weather.

Ski Inn is also a study in craftsmanship and attention to detail. No expense was spared in fulfilling the vision of Pacwest Builders, also owned by the Yozamps, with an assist from Hayes Building and Design. From floor to ceiling the result is an architectural masterpiece. Examples include reclaimed

barnwood and brick, divided-glass windows and doors, ironwork by Ponderosa Forge, and clever use of Western-themed elements such as a bicycle rack made of old, iron wagon wheels.

The exterior is corrugated steel with a natural rust patina and rough-sawn cedar boards with a burnt-wood finish. Handrails are galvanized pipe and fittings. But it is the sound engineering that gets the most kudos from the room guests. Considering that the first floor is a packed pub every night until at least 9 p.m., engineering was needed to make sure lodgers didn't leave with a bad taste in their mouth, or in this case a bad ring in their ear.

A layer of concrete sits on top of sound board, which sits on a wooden floor. Below that is a two-foot acoustic air chamber before two layers of drywall and the barnwood plank ceiling.

Observers note that there is rarely a time between noon, when Ski Inn opens, until closing that it is not full of patrons. With a 12-foot-long, gas-fired warming table, the owners expect the outdoor area will be in use year round.

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— The Ski Inn Team