

■ Last call

# Samurai Duck keeps community atmosphere with alternative music

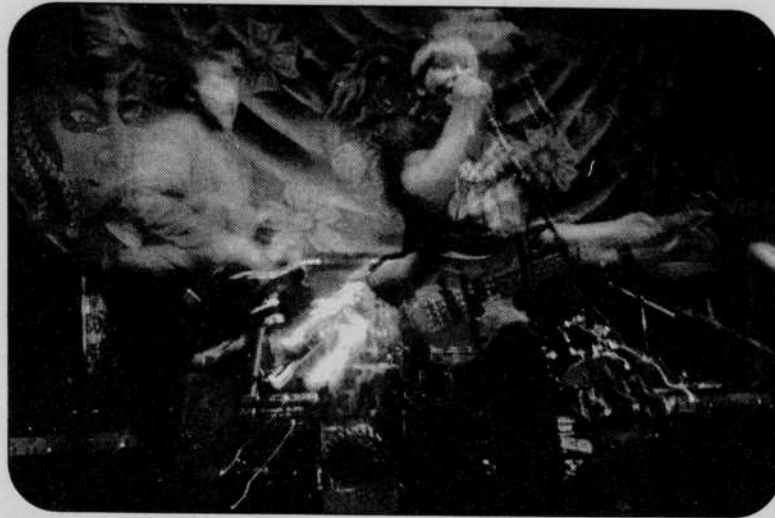
BY NATASHA CHILINGERIAN  
SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

I hadn't heard much about the Samurai Duck before my first visit on Saturday, other than that it's a popular venue for local bands to perform. Upon walking in, the first impression I had was one of grunge and heavy metal. Small groups of pierced, band sweatshirt-wearing, unkempt people mingled throughout the bar. On stage, a group of young male musicians prepared for their noisy, screaming metal act. An outdoor patio, surrounded by a tall black wall, carried the stench of cigarettes and the sounds of rowdy voices. While the guests there seemed to feel right at home, the bar didn't match my taste at all.

Samurai Duck began as just a Japanese restaurant, which still exists next door to the bar. The owner, Misako Poole, bought the bar space and opened Gilligan's Tiki Lounge, which she then converted to the Samurai Duck bar in 2000 with the addition of regular live music. Several employees said the scene at the venue today revolves around the music. Most live- and DJ-produced tunes are metal and industrial, but Samurai Duck features hip-hop on Sundays and a bit of rock and punk. Guests can participate in karaoke every Tuesday at 9 p.m.

"We've tried to keep it a full music venue," former employee Beau Bradford said. "The crowd follows the show and the music, but we have lots of regulars."

Bradford and several current employees stressed the feeling of a community at Samurai Duck. Manager



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

South Eugene High School students Joshua Chapman, left, and Teren Baker, perform "Bet on the Brat" by the Ramones at Samurai Duck on Saturday night. They have been playing with Tay and Jay Cowman from Sheldon High School for about four months as Pirate Radio.

and booking agent Stephanie Osburn said the venue is a happy place with minimal problems.

"It's like your local Cheers," Osburn said. "Everybody knows every-

body, and we have a collective group of styles and genres." Osburn said every employee has a drink named after him or her. Osburn's, "The Stephanie," consists of about 10 different kinds of liquor in a little cup. During happy hour from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., inexpensive beer and well drinks are available, including \$1 Pabst. The restaurant's full

menu is also available in the bar, and favorites include Bulgogi chicken, sushi and American dishes, the most popular being deep-fried pizza.

"It's a heart attack in a basket," Osburn said of the pizza.

If you enjoy dark, noisy metal music and an alternative scene, then this is the bar for you. But if your typical fun night involves hopping between Rennie's and Taylor's, I would recommend staying away. Samurai Duck is at 980 Oak St.

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Bartender Robert Poole, Misako Poole's son, is working at Samurai Duck to help out his family and said the venue evokes a family feeling of its own.

"It's pretty friendly; everybody has a mutual respect for each other," he said.

Bradford said the bar has no official drink menu, but bartenders can make basically anything, and they even cater their drinks for certain people.

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