

Turtles: Empty frame shop next door to become bar and lounge

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zine, but the fare just didn't mesh well with the neighborhood. The restaurant closed after a year and a half.

"It was just too pricey," she said. "And there's nothing worse than going out for fine dining and having to stop at McDonald's on the way home because you're still hungry."

The restaurateur believed in her location though, and she decided to start listening to her clientele's calls for a "neighborhood joint," a place they could get a great-tasting burger and a beer at a reasonable price.

Bonéy, however, did not sacrifice taste at the altar of economy. She describes Turtles' cuisine as All-American, home-cooked, comfort food and maintains that almost everything on the menu, right down to the salad dressings, is made from scratch.

"Sometimes people want an extra side of something, like the Alfredo sauce, and I have to explain to them that it's not just sitting in a bucket in the back," Bonéy said. "I'm just all about making it ourselves."

She added: "Some people accuse me of putting crack in the ranch

dressing, but I just want to go on the record as saying that I don't. It's really just that good."

Aside from the ranch, some other recommended items from the Turtles menu include the spinach, artichoke and roasted garlic appetizer; the blackened salmon salad and the baby back ribs. The green apple martini, Stoli orange Cosmo and the Italian margarita were some suggested drink choices.

Overall, it's hard to deny that Bonéy made the right choice in sticking it out after the fall of Pinot's. In fact, Turtles' revenue has steadily increased every year since it opened.

After spending several nights at Turtles, it becomes clear that it's more than just good food that has made the restaurant so successful. It may have something more to do with the fact that you can almost hear the theme song from "Cheers" playing in your head when you enter. (In fact, Bonéy said Woody Harrelson, who played the sweet-natured bartender on the old Boston-based bar show, always visits Turtles when he comes to Eugene.)

"We have a lot of regulars. We

know at least 10 percent of the customers at the bar by name," server Carrie Holloman, who has worked at Turtles for five years, said. "I think that's how we stay so busy; we have a good, solid reputation and people just keep coming back."

Indeed, a sense of family permeates the restaurant. Holloman said the staff even refers to Bonéy as "Mama Turtle." Bartender Bill James, who has been with the restaurant for about five years as well, also cited the relaxed intimacy as one of Turtles' greatest assets.

"The people we have an opportunity to serve and the people we work with, they're just a great bunch of folks," James said. "It kind of reflects the neighborhood, that sense of familiarity."

When asked what the bar and grill has to offer students, the same response was given repeatedly: comfortable atmosphere and large portions at a good price. The fact that the restaurant is open until midnight was also a noted selling point.

However, the joint may gain some new appeal for the college-age set

when the 21-and-over bar and lounge Bonéy is putting in at the old frame shop next door opens around winter break. The new establishment will feature an annotated version of the full Turtles menu and musical acts from a variety of genres including jazz, blues, funk, soul and bluegrass. It will be open "bar

hours," from 5 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.

According to Bonéy, in almost every culture, the turtle represents love, life and longevity. And so it would seem, with her small restaurant in South Eugene, this depiction holds true.

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SNL: Jon Heder will host next episode

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"Weekend Update" is that ever since Jimmy Fallon left they've been depending too much on little skits throughout the news broadcast, rather than just telling jokes about current events. I mean, they had all summer to come up with funny material, but they failed to come up with any real zingers. And they couldn't even come up with a new sign-off line? "Good night and have a pleasant tomorrow" has been around since Fallon was doing "Weekend Update" on his own.

That was basically the whole night; there were a lot of jokes, but only a few made me really laugh out loud and none were truly original. Even "Debbie Downer" was lame. And don't even get me started on that horrible "Lundford Twins Feel Good Variety Hour" crap they tried to pull. Why do they keep running that skit? Whoever wrote that needs to be fired.

However, my biggest complaint of the night was that they didn't do the "Ambiguously Gay Duo" for the Robert Smigel "TV Funhouse" cartoon — hello, Carell is the voice of

Gary! Why the writers didn't take advantage of that one is beyond me.

All in all, it was a disappointing beginning to a show that I've watched since I was a child. And it just seems to be getting worse! Next week, Jon Heder (a.k.a. Napoleon Dynamite) is hosting. But the musical guest is a joke in itself: Ashlee Simpson. What is Michaels thinking? Why would anyone give her a second chance that she doesn't deserve? I'm disappointed already.

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