

A "Long" Dream Come True: Café 47 (Continued)

Location, location, location

Had it been any other town but Vernonia, I wouldn't have given it another thought," said Bill. "The opportunity here for restaurants is huge – there is still room for more. Competition is a good thing -- it makes you better, a stronger business. And this is a great community to do business in; it's a tight community where you feel both the success and the loss of others."

The other benefit: "With Vernonia being an easy drive to Portland, it has become a town where everyone wants to live – it's a desirable location. Just like rural communities of other cities, like Sisters is to Bend, I see that happening here...there's no doubt about it," said Bill.



"When people come out from Portland and surrounding areas to shop and play, they need a restaurant to come to. We're choosing to stay open later. We encourage other businesses to open later in the day and stay open later at night. Sundays too."

Inside and Out

"I'm not done yet," explains Bill, "I still have to put the radiator on the wall."

Approximately two years in development, Bill began by focusing on the vision for what the restaurant would look like. He had his artist friend, Mike Buchan, comp up renderings of buildings around town, finally landing on the building at 854 Bridge Street. "Café '47 got its name from the road many Vernonians travel every day," said Bill, "It's a nice drive, gives you time to think."

Previously a coffee shop and tanning booth, Café 47 was created through hard work from Bill, family and friends; like Adam Buchan, who helped Bill with the demolition work -- "I was really excited to find out that the place has 11.5 foot ceilings!" exclaimed Bill. Enough room for the row boat that he's still searching for to hang from the ceiling.

Another friend and neighbor, Rob Williams at Williams Metal Fab, helped him out with all his stainless, providing

custom metal work – "he's quite the perfectionist," said Bill.

Even Bill's parents contributed, coming up from Santa Barbara to spend summers here helping out. Bill said, "Even when they were back home, they'd call two or three times a day to see how we were coming along."

Through yard sale finds in Portland to purchasing materials at The Rebuilding Center, Bill says, "90% of the restaurant was built using recycled materials." Even Vernonians have contributed to the effort. My favorite is when Bill mentioned to a local, "I need a Windmill for the front of the building," and they shot back "I know where one is!" Within days, Bill had his windmill.

Bill believes half the dining experience is where you're eating, so he spent considerable time getting that right.

Getting the inside to match his vision was critical. Café 47 is chocked full of road and travel memorabilia as well as local artist Mike Buchan's drawings, a bicycle laced in lights, and music...what road trip would be the same without music?

Bill Long says it's all about creativity, "I love to create, to see the possibilities in my mind and make them happen."

About the food

Grandmother's recipes for the most part have been a big influence on Bill's cooking; he grew up with his mom making these dishes. "Recipes that were written the old way – a scant of this – the way they worded them is actually the trick to making them taste good," explains Bill. One of Grandma's recipes is the chocolate cake with vanilla crème sauce – a local favorite.

The Longs are on the road two to three days each week, gathering fresh ingredients and visiting connections in Astoria for fresh fish and other haunts for things like their incredible bacon.

At Café 47 the prices are fair and the food is fantastic! Bill's



spinach salad, made with bacon, egg and a special sauce is outstanding. The Apricot-Ginger Ribs require finger-licking in public. As for the seasonal cobbler...reserve this when you order dinner to not be disappointed (specials go quickly). Karla also adds a kick to the menu with her family recipes too; the Carne Asada plate is another local favorite.

More to come

Once the hood fan is installed, we'll be able to add a lot more to the menu. We also plan to expand with an outside dining area. When asked about serving alcohol, Bill said, "Yes, we will soon be serving beer and wine but have no plans on offering a full bar. We want to keep this a place where families can dine together."

Currently, Café 47 is a family-run business that employs two local residents; they will



look for additional employees as their business grows.

Looking forward

Right now it's a lot of hard work getting the business up and running and organized. "I look forward to expanding the kitchen and being able to experiment everyday," says Bill. "Being able to create new things is everything to me."

Bill says of wife Karla, "She knows I'm a dreamer, but that's what you've got...your dreams. Dreams do come true."

Karla says, "Bill put his heart and soul in this place...you will feel it when you walk in."

It's hard to put your finger on the pulse of Café 47, but I think Bill explained it best when he said, "I enjoy seeing people eating and having a good time; I often step back and just take in the moment, watching people – it feels like a bigger family – and there's such comfort and satisfaction in that."

Bottom-line Bill says, "I just want to sit back and create yummy stuff."

Café 47 is open Wednesday through Monday, closed Tuesdays. They open daily at 11 a.m., and close at 9 p.m., except on Friday and Saturday when they're open until 10 p.m. Coming Soon! Breakfast from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m.



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