

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Casa Vaca Taqueria opens in Multnomah Village

The mural of the Mexican coastline is gone, and without much fanfare, local restaurateurs Nick and Sara Medici, along with their lifelong friend, Pete Vranizan, have opened Casa Vaca Taqueria in the heart of Multnomah Village.

A complete makeover replaces Acapulco Southwest Gold, which closed earlier this year. The menu has polenta, kale, caramelized onion, and pablano crema tacos. A full bar specializes in signature margaritas and local beers.

Having all grown up in the Village, this trio attended Wilson High School, they have let the neighborhood they are excited to continue and modernize the Mexican tradition in the old space.

Appetizers run around \$3-6 and entrees start at \$13. On opening night, this reporter found most of the old-style wooden booths full of new customers including Anne Bocci, who has a clothing boutique on the same block.

"The carne asada (marinated beef) with guacamole, caramelized onions, cheese, and cilantro were to die for," she said as co-owner Pete Vranizan brought her bill. She said she didn't have room for the flan.

Located at 7800 SW Capitol Highway, Casa Vaca will be open from 4-9 p.m. weekdays with some weekend hours as well.

French Quarter boutique mall gets green light from city

After many months of negotiations, an online petition, and support from community members, the city of Portland has approved permits for the French Quarter boutique mall to begin operating once again.

Yves Le Meitour, who owns the property, was closed down last year by city bureaus for a variety of issues. With just a few street and sidewalk improvements now needed, several small business owners will return to an indoor street modeled after New Orleans' famed business district.

"This means our plans for a community gathering place will continue to grow," Le Meitour said, beaming as he bought a few fresh pints of strawberries.

He hopes to attract more people to the

area for dining and shopping in addition to just gathering for the latest news and gossip.

The French Quarter is located at the corner of Southwest 35th Avenue and Multnomah Boulevard. Parson's Farm Stand reopened in its usual location earlier this spring and several food carts have sprouted up around the stand.

The food carts continued to operate during the closure since they were not affected by the strict rules of parking, rights-of-way, and access for the indoor businesses.

Inside the mall, Interstate Pizza will continue building its kitchen and getting its wood-burning oven ready.

"The story in *The Post* last year helped sway city leaders' views," Le



Casa Vaca Taqueria co-owner Pete Vranizan shows off the new Mexican restaurant on opening night. Co-owner Nick Medici can be seen in the window cooking. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Meitour said, "and the city decided to work with me. I've also appreciated the support of the community."

Plans for a grand re-opening are tentatively scheduled for Bastille Day (July 14).



Tracy Schulz (left) and Anne Bocci opening night at Casa Vaca Taqueria. (Photo courtesy of Casa Vaca Taqueria)

MJCC Summer Activities

(Continued from Page 5)

Portland, a Jewish CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program bringing local and sustainable food with a distinctly Jewish flavor to Portland. MJCC is a pick-up location: Wednesdays starting June 1 from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Restorative yoga with guided meditation: Focus on stretching soft connective tissues by holding poses longer, and using props to support the body. Begin and end with guided meditation. Instructor: Tara Atkinson. Classes start on Thursday,

June 2 and run from 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Cost is \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members.

Lifeguard Training Course: June 13 - 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The MJCC aquatics department is recruiting potential lifeguard staff. Bring swim suit and goggles. Swimmers must be able to swim 300 yards without stopping, tread water for two minutes with no hands, and retrieve a brick from the bottom of the deep end of the pool and bring it to the shallow end. Cost is \$100 (reimbursed if hired by MJCC). Training is for those aged 15 and older. Participants must attend all class sections.

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