



Federico Aubele plays the Indigo District Saturday.

Kind of Blue

Indigo District mixes global décor with global sounds.

Most 24-year-olds in Eugene's university neighborhood are wrapping up their degrees by day and bar-hopping by night. Not Justin Gibbs. This Southern California transplant has owned and operated one of Eugene's hottest new clubs since Sept. 20, 2003.

The long vacant Field's Brew Pub received a massive facelift after Gibbs — with the support of family money — bought the property last July. He had become enchanted with the space at 1290 Oak after surveying the bar from the street. Windows eerily exposed tables perpetually set since 1999 for a last meal which was never served. The doors to the Indigo District were opened that September.

But the story begins earlier than that. Gibbs originally came to Eugene for UO's Music Technology Program. He jokes, "Most people go to school to open their own business. I opened a business to put myself through school!"

Gibbs now works full time as the club's general manager and booking agent, and while he's begun reaping the benefits of his risky venture, he's had to tweak his formula a bit over the past year. One of the biggest changes is cutting back on music events. "We had some complaints about having to charge covers," he says.

Gibbs has had an ongoing goal of renovating a storage area into a dedicated performance hall. What hasn't changed is the original idea of having a suitable space for daytime coffee klatches and study groups, business meetings or take-out lunches which, with the stroke of twilight, transforms into a casual club for beer or cocktails with occasional musical performances to enhance the nightlife. "We're trying to create a community that's more well-rounded," he says. "It's fine to come in during the night and let loose but we also want to be some place where people can come in and do other things during the day."

The young entrepreneur has traveled extensively to Asia and India, where he began picking up pieces to enhance the

decor and atmosphere of the District. Along with statuary from Bali, an amazing wall-sized waterfall lends tropical ambience, perfect for lounging in the comfortable overstuffed couches and chairs. The hang-out space feels like a cozy living room that's equipped with wireless Internet, perfect for polishing your business presentation or studying before the quick walk to campus. A pleasing menu helps too, from an appetizer bar menu to sandwiches, salads, soup and pasta entrées.

Currently, Gibbs is booking only one or two acts a month, which allows him to find the truly unique acts that will present well in the space. His next show, Oct. 2, is **Federico Aubele** (pronounced Aw-bway-la), an Argentine guitarist and producer. Aubele's latest work, entitled *Gran Hotel Buenos Aires*, is produced by Thievery Corporation.

Aubele on guitar, along with Sumaia and Gabriella Maiaru on vocals and keyboards create music with the pulse of Buenos Aires. The music flaunts a subtle backbone of South American percussion and break beats overlaid with delicate female (predominantly) vocals in Spanish. Aubele lends a dreamy touch with his understated guitar, sounding right at home nestled against dub and reggae back beats and hypnotic vocal manipulations.

Aubele began playing guitar at the age of 11 when he and a friend pretended they were The Beatles. From there he explored American music in its punk and pop forms; next jazz and classical flashed across his radar. In Buenos Aires, he composed and arranged music for several pop bands and worked as a DJ. Later, Aubele began working on solo projects, with the common element being the guitar. "The guitar is, and always was, my main instrument," he says. "We understand each other very well." Aubele has tried designing a track without the guitar, but always ends up adding it. "I like an organic sound," he says.

Aubele's music sparkles with energy and moves with fluid grace, like a sinewy dancer. If you haven't yet visited Indigo District, let this show be your impetus.

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