



SMOKED PORK,
PICKLED PLUM
AND HONEY
GOAT CHEESE



MANGO-
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CAIPIRINHA

PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

Above Board

NEW RESTAURANT OPENS UP IN
LEGENDARY WHITEAKER DIVE By Rick Levin

Tiny Tavern is dead. Long live Tiny Tavern. With the protracted death rattle and final expiring sigh of the Whiteaker's seediest bar now just another piece of Eugene folk history, the question "what will become of Tiny's?" has at last been answered: It will be a restaurant, of course.

In fact, the former tavern at Blair and 4th is an eatery already, called Board (more on that in a sec), which celebrated a surprise soft opening Aug. 1 during the Whiteaker Block Party. The place was packed — with hob-nobs of the jet set, preening foodies, drunken scene-hoppers and not a few stumbling crusties drawn like zombies to a familiar place to score.

Nope, no more goodies here, hophead; it's all above Board, as it were. Sitting down at the table during the block party, the first thing I notice was: no saltshaker, just a pepper mill. Ballsy move, one that says, "we know what we're doing."

Also, the place is gorgeously revamped from its previously ramshackle condition; especially nice is the copper-topped bar, which blends nicely with the warm, woody atmosphere of the place.

And the food was good, some of it very good — outstanding were the pork belly Reuben and the duck confit with a scrumptious tart cherry mustard made from scratch, not to mention the perfectly done pork brisket.

Co-owner and co-chef Michael Autrey describes the cuisine at Board as "elevated comfort food" — small, artisanal plates served mostly on cutting board (hence the name) for a warm, down-home feel. "A big concept of Board is you can come in and get three or four small plates



CO-OWNER AND CO-CHEF
MICHAEL AUTREY

priced anywhere from \$3 to \$12," he says.

A Texas native who, despite a degree in engineering, has always pursued his love of food, Autrey was the head chef at Agate Alley and worked at Laboratory before

deciding to open his own place. Crucial to the inception of Board was his wife, 4J math teacher Courtney Stitt — who is responsible for much of the restaurant's lovely décor — as well as Autrey's co-chef, Pierce Kieffer.

"I've seen a lot in this town," Kieffer says, "and I feel like in Eugene you approach food with a low ego and high standards, and you can please anyone with that. There's a lot of pretentious people around and a lot of cool people around, and we try to meet in the middle."

Autrey says that the collaboration between himself and Kieffer is crucial, as the two chefs play off each other's strengths, blending classical training and influences of New World cuisine. The focus, they say, will be local with a twist. "The menu is going to change a lot more rapidly than just the seasons," Autrey says. "We definitely want to push the envelope, but also at the same time there are a lot of people who do want a grilled cheese. I want to provide a place where everybody can get what they want."

Although for many the demise of Tiny's is a sentimental punch in the guts, especially to hood rats nostalgic for the Felony Flats era of the Whit, Autrey has honored the tavern by keeping the Tiny Tavern sign on the beer taps. He also plans on opening a patio that features the big yellow-and-green Tiny Tavern sign, along with future plans for offering deck dining upstairs.

"The opportunity to take an old farm house from the 1890s that was in complete disrepair and bring it back to its former glory was a majority of the appeal," Autrey explains. "To breathe life back into it was really what we were going for." ■

Board is at 394 Blair Blvd.; call 343-3023 for more info.



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