

PARTING SHOT

A weekly snapshot from The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer photographers



A red-shafted flicker woodpecker takes flight in Long Beach, Wash., in June after foraging in a yard. The medium-sized woodpecker is of the northern flicker family of birds that reside throughout North America, and is one of the few woodpecker species that migrate.

DAMIAN MULINIX — EO Media Group

Venue: 'There's no stress; everyone's pretty laid back'

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"The dude is the real deal. And yet he comes and plays here in a 100-capacity venue for what we can afford to pay someone, which is not anywhere near, I'm sure, what he's used to being paid," he said. "But he loved it here, and I guarantee you he'll be back."

Symbiosis

It helps that the Turners are musicophiles with an abiding love of live shows. They understand, Holbrook said, that the relationship between venue and band works best when it is symbiotic rather than adversarial — when musicians are treated as guests rather than as fresh meat to fill the stage and make money for the owners.

"When you're on tour, you're sleeping on floors, you're eating crappy food, you feel terrible, you've been playing for 10 or 11 nights in a row, and you've been in the van all day," he said.

And to come to a place where the staff is grateful to have you and the patrons eager to hear you — which isn't always the case — can be a "breath of fresh air," he said.

Plus, at Pickled Fish, the musicians "get to stare at the ocean and catch some amazing sunsets while you play," Claborn said. "They also feed you better than almost any place I've ever played."

Music program

The Turners purchased the 80-room hotel in 2011, then took over the space that was The Lightship Restaurant in 2012, which they renovated using a lot of reclaimed wood, renaming it Pickled Fish.

"We knew we wanted music here," Tiffany Turner said.

"We didn't quite know what that meant."

What she and her husband did was create a music program that gives bands an experience of hospitality worth returning for. And, after they brought Holbrook on board two years ago, word got out real quick. Now, almost every musical slot is booked through December, "which is crazy," Holbrook said.

Last year, the trio set up an artist-in-residence program, mostly for the weeknights. Bands spend two to four days on the coast, staying in a two-story, two-bathroom apartment with bunk beds, a living area and a full kitchen.

"You can basically just hole up in there and do what you will, break out the guitars and jam," Holbrook said.

And, at night, the bands play Pickled Fish.

Brainstorms

Once summer is over, the Turners plan to discuss the possibility of setting up a separate recording studio.

A studio, should it become part of the artist-in-residence program, will function like a classic beach bungalow, where artists escape from their routine and get down to the business of creation, Holbrook said.

His hope is that, once the artists arrive, "they get it. And then they're like, 'I know you can't pay me \$3,000 to play here on a Wednesday night, but I don't care, because I'm going to record during the day, and come get some oysters, and then rock out for a bunch of people who are really appreciative.'"

The rockin' out presents yet another possibility: recording live shows, "at least in a good enough quality that you could put it online and not



Luke Ydstie and Kati Claborn perform at Pickled Fish in early June.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

be embarrassed," he said. And perhaps this could lead to a compilation album or two, he added.

But recordings of any sort, whether in a studio or from the stage, are still just brainstorms, Holbrook said. For now, their plans for Pickled Fish involve expanding the nightly musical offerings, building clientele and growing a reputation as a retreat for those who enjoy music and those who produce it.

"I've told a lot of my musician friends about this place, and I've told them that they need to stop in here," Noble said. "It's not that far from Portland, and you can swing past here on your way back to Seattle. It's a cool, easy place to play. There's no stress; everyone's pretty laid back — they live on the beach, so why wouldn't they be?"



ERICK BENGEL — The Daily Astorian

Blake Noble, left, an Australian musician currently based in Seattle, breaks down the barriers between himself and his audience while performing at Pickled Fish. Clare Sobetski, center, and Joey Kern, a couple from Seattle, pause to listen to Noble's tunes.

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