

Bill's Tavern & Brewpub

Handmade beer and pub fare in the heart of downtown Cannon Beach

■ STORY & PHOTOS | DWIGHT CASWELL

Back in 1923, Cannon Beach was not the place it is today. It was a vacation spot, but not the busy art-filled one it is today. There was the Hotel Bill, built by George Bill in 1904, where Woodrow Wilson stayed in 1914. There was the Log Cabin Restaurant, built in 1925, and the Natatorium, built the year before, with a 30x60 foot indoor saltwater pool. There was also Bill's Tavern

Bill Gallagher built the place in 1923 and called it the Imperial Café; it soon became a gathering place for the community. Eventually renamed Bill's Tavern, Ken Campbell purchased it in 1984. In 1997 he and partner Jim Oyala turned it into Bill's Tavern and Brewhouse.

"I had the old tavern," says Campbell, "and it was a nice little tavern, but brewpubs had become the thing. It was something new for this area, something different and exciting. We tore down the old building because it was so far gone we couldn't save it."

Bill's is still at the original site, now housed in a larger and grander building in a coastal architectural style, but the modern brewpub retains its role as a gathering place for locals as well as a destination for tourists.

Campbell was an amateur brewer, but he knew that a brewpub needed more than amateur skills. Jack Harris, now co-owner of Fort George Brewery, was hired to be Bill's first brewmaster; today Dave Parker and Rich Amacher share the brewing responsibilities. Together they create a variety of beers, of which eight or so are usually on tap.

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