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“is a little bit scary. It’s a big job and a lot of responsibility. A lot of customers depend on me to make sure the food stays the same quality. But it’s a lot of fun and we’re just going to continue to build on what we’ve been doing for years,” Gisby said.

Continuity and consistency are indeed the mantra of The DEPOT’s new owners, Jeff and Casey Harrell, one they’ve

adopted from the outset. Gisby is a minority co-owner.

“We want to keep the legacy of the DEPOT,” Harrell said. The Harrells own a chain of pharmacies on the peninsula as well as Dylan’s Cottage Bakery in downtown Long Beach. A self-professed foodie with experience in the hospitality industry, Harrell saw the new business as an easy decision.

Lalewicz and Gorshe have known the Harrells for many years. So when the Har-

rells inquired about purchasing the restaurant, “the stars aligned,” Lalewicz said.

To Harrell, the thriving, successful DEPOT is not in need of revitalization but rather enhancement. “We’re really not coming in to change a whole lot,” Harrell said. The plan is to upgrade some equipment, including the payment system, and convert the beer and wine bar into a full one. “It’s not broken so we don’t need to fix it, just to enhance it,” Harrell said.

As for the track record of winning Readers’ Choice Awards year after year, “it speaks to the staff’s expertise,” according to Harrell. “They’re all proving they are putting out a quality product, so the awards speak for themselves to what Michael and Nancy built. It’s not about me and Casey, it’s all about the staff,” Harrell said.

Meanwhile, Lalewicz and Gorshe are now adjusting to retirement. Lalewicz plans to pick up his blues harmonica, golf club and camera while Gorshe plans to read as well as to continue her work in the community, including as board chair of the Ocean Beach Hospital. The couple also plan to move from Ocean Park closer to the restaurant so they can become regulars and to travel. A Paris style bistro on the beach was Lalewicz’s original concept for The DEPOT.

“It’s bittersweet,” Gorshe said about the transition. “Our employees and our customers are our family. We were there for them, for 19 years worth of Christmases and New Year’s and Thanksgivings. And everybody just was so appreciative that we were here and I always appreciated that they came in,” Lalewicz said.



Customers Greg and Trudy Klefstad at The DEPOT Restaurant.

Peter Korchnak

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