

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

## Toni Braxton

In addition to listing her as among the most beautiful women in the world, People magazine calls Toni Braxton's mesmerizing voice "unique enough to make her the model to match in years to come. Time observes that Braxton "seems destined for pop diva-dom." The New York Times adds to the accolades, declaring her "rich, throaty, alto [and] torchy love-love style a throwback to an earlier era."

Indeed, ever since Toni Braxton began her 1992 hit-making path with "Give U My Heart" (a duet with master producer/recording star Babyface) and "Love Should Have Brought You Home," chart-tipping singles taken from the Multi-Platinum-plus LaFace Records' soundtrack for the Eddie Murphy movie "Boomerang," music buyers and industry insiders eagerly awaited this dynamic singer's all-important first album. Toni didn't disappoint: Her critically acclaimed debut album Toni Braxton has been certified Quadruple Platinum, selling well over four million copies since its July 1993 release, and has won two Grammy, Soul Train and American Music Awards Each. In keeping with the LaFace tradition of creating quality music, Toni took her time to put together an astonishing debut boasting two #1 Gold singles, "Another Sad Love Song" and "Breathe Again."

Her reaction to her success is a combination of amazement and matter of factness. "I still don't feel that I have made it, but deep down inside I knew it would happen." As a showcase for her vocal artistry, Toni's self-titled album is quite literally, breathtaking. Hauntingly soulful on



Toni Braxton

"Another Sad Love Song" (the first single, written by Babyface), smoldering with sensuality on the jazzy "Seven Whole Days" (another L.A. & Babyface classic in-the-making) or groovin' with the upbeat "I Belong To You," Toni's prowess as a passionate and vibrant young songstress is fully evident. Toni switches moods with consummate ease on an album destined to establish her as one of the music scene's most exciting new singers. Whether expressing tenderness ("You Mean The World To Me," an L.A./Babyface/Daryl Simmons composition), joy ("Spending My Time"), melancholy ("Breathe Again"), pain (Best Friends") or sexuality ("Candlelight"), Toni Braxton brings an emo-

tional honesty to every track on her very special premier musical outing. Producer L.A. Reid who chose the quality of the songs remarks the key to her success was finding the right material for her "mature voice, great tone, great delivery, and impeccable stage presence."

"As a whole project, this album expresses who I am," says Toni. "And that's a typical young woman, who's been through some of life's experiences, who's been through some of love's ups and downs, a woman who has a lot of love to give. The songs on this first record are real, they're about things that people experience in relationships with love heartbreak and all that goes along with dealing with everyday situations."

## Old Chicago To Open Near Town Center

Offering Portland's suburb more than pizza and pasta—Old Chicago set to become the neighborhood hang out.

Old Chicago is set to open December 10, just in time for Milwaukee-area residents that are looking forward to the best part of the holidays: rewarding ones shopping efforts with a little neighborhood fun and relaxation.

The 7,500 square foot Old Chicago restaurant, located at 11211 South East 82nd Ave., in the old Fudruckers space, will offer a lively, yet comfortable atmosphere for its patrons to delight in great food. It will also serve as a gathering place for friends and family to watch sports, play pool, try a new beer or just talk over a freshly-made pizza or pasta. Hours of operation will be conducive to neighborhood get-togethers as well: 11 a.m.-2:00 a.m., daily.

Gary Foreman, Director of Operations, sees the Portland-area as an obvious location choice for Old Chicago, "Old Chicago's credo is to provide fantastic customer service, great food and that hard-to-define little extra that ensures customers know that we care about them and their community. This seems to be in synch with what Portlanders' value."

Demi DeSoto, Executive Di-

rector of the Clackamas Chamber of Commerce, thinks that Old Chicago is exactly what the Milwaukee-area needs: "This area has been growing at a tremendous rate and we welcome Old Chicago which has a strong community commitment and will be a

pasta bar and dessert. Menu items are prepared daily with local high-quality, fresh ingredients from original recipes. Specialty pizza combinations include non-traditional toppings such as artichokes, Roma tomatoes, shrimp and barbecued chicken as well as traditional toppings.

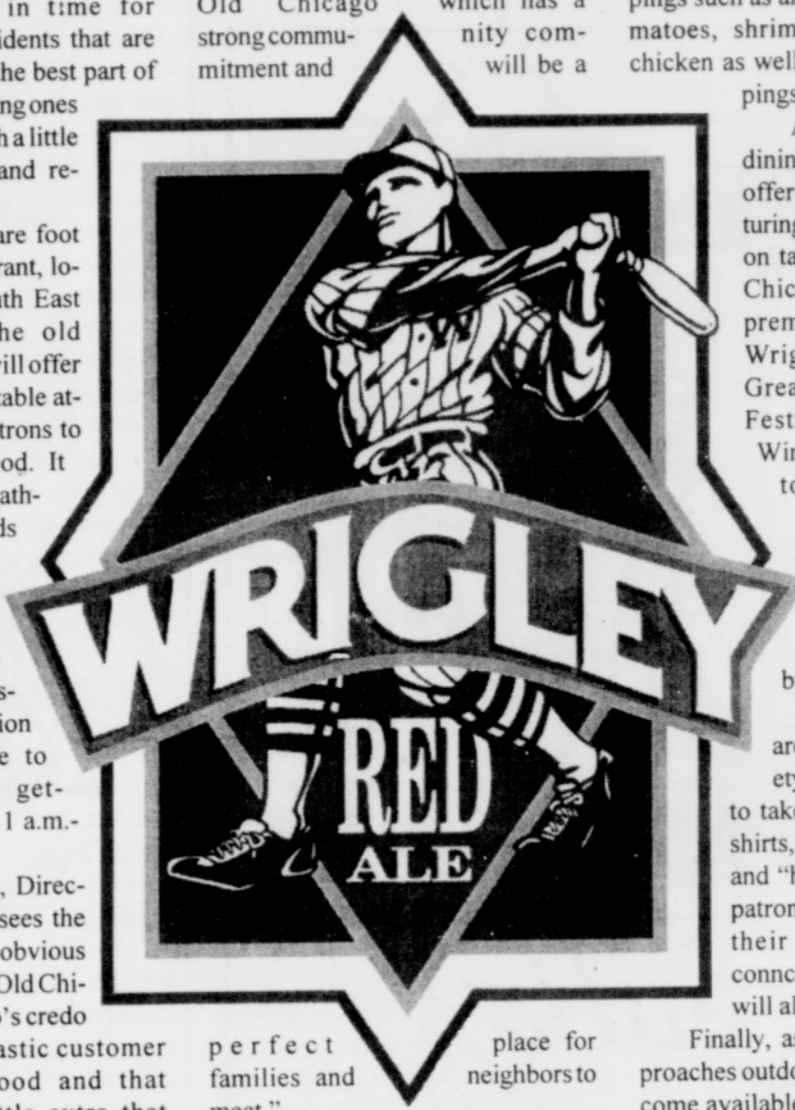
Aside from the main dining area, the pub will offer over 110 beers, featuring 30 Northwest beers on tap. In addition, Old Chicago's brewed-on-premise beer features Wrigley Red, a 1993 Great American Beer Festival Gold Medal Winner. Brew pub customers can enjoy sports programs shown on two large screen televisions or entertainment provided by two pool tables.

A merchandise area, will offer a variety of interesting gifts to take home including t-shirts, sweatshirts, glasses and "home-brew kits" for patrons to learn to create their own microbrew concoctions; Old Chicago will also sell "beer-to go".

Finally, as warm weather approaches outdoor seating for 60 become available.

Rock Bottom Restaurants, Inc., a publicly-held company, operates Old Chicago.

For more information about Old Chicago, contact Lisa McCrummen 206-722-8268



perfect place for families and neighbors to meet.

Old Chicago's broad but moderately priced menu features Chicago-styled deep-dish pizza, along with more than 40 other items, including appetizers, burgers, sandwiches, calzones, large salads, a

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