

Leo's Bar set to open at El Bajío



By Bill Bradshaw

ENTERPRISE — The popular El Bajío Mexican restaurant in Enterprise is adding a new feature — Leo's Bar that is slated to open Thursday, July 15, co-owner Leo Arenas said.

Situated for the past 18 years in what had been a service station building at the corner of North and River streets, El Bajío has been popular with locals and out-of-towners alike. Now, Leo wants to expand on his restaurant by adding the bar in what had been a storeroom on the building's east side.

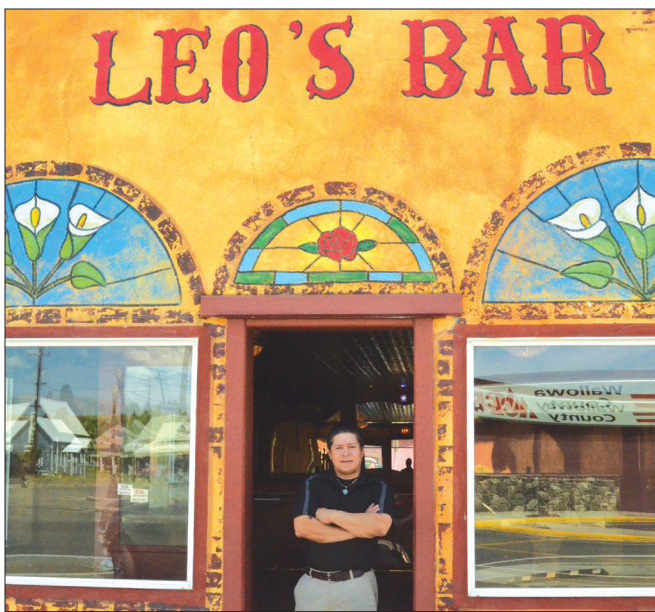
Although alcoholic drinks at the business aren't anything new, a special place to consume them — and enjoy company — is.

Woodworker and friend Tyler Hauxwell did most of the work building the actual bar and long, bar-like tables in Leo's Bar. The two long, tall tables will have stools and are built so patrons sit facing each other while they drink, snack and talk.

"We're just trying to inspire other people to look outside the box and doing something other than just watching television," Hauxwell said. "I made this bar specifically so people could talk to each other face to face. It's something that's never really been done as far as bars being proactive so people face each other."



Leo Arenas, co-owner of El Bajío Mexican restaurant in Enterprise, center, stands in what will become Leo's Bar adjacent to the restaurant when it opens Thursday, July 15, 2021. At left is woodworker Tyler Hauxwell, who did most of the woodwork in the bar, and at right is muralist John Michener, who painted the agave plants and other murals on the walls. Below, Arenas stands in the doorway of the bar.



The bar itself has a glossy front over pictures of agave plants, the native Mexican plant from which tequila is made. Agave plants also are a common theme in the murals on the walls.

Hauxwell said that in his work on the bar, he was hoping to repay Arenas for the latter's kindness when Hauxwell was experiencing trouble with his now-defunct chimney sweeping business.

"We've been good friends for quite a long time," Hauxwell said. "He was one of the few people around here who gave me any respect."

LEO'S BAR

When: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day but Tuesday.

Phone: 541-426-3322

Where: 100 W. North St., Enterprise

Menu: <https://zmenu.com/el-bajio-enterprise-online-menu/>

Also on Facebook

"I TRY TO DO THE BEST FOR THE WHOLE COUNTY AND MAKE IT THE BEST FOR THE LOCAL PEOPLE."

Leo Arenas, co-owner of El Bajío Mexican restaurant

Arenas understood where Hauxwell was coming from. "He wanted to give back," Arenas said.

Longtime artist and mural painter John Michener provided the creative touch for the bar.

"When I came here from Southern Oregon, it was just gray, concrete walls," Michener said. "I've been painting murals all my life — over 50 years. I came in here to eat and there were no murals or anything. I showed Leo my portfolio and told him to close his eyes and imagine what he wanted."

Arenas said he wanted to "bring a hacienda to life," complete with the agaves, such as were common in the Bajío — or valley — of his native Guanajuato, in central Mexico. He's been in this country for 22 years, during which time he met and married his wife, Audra, a Baker City native. The couple has two sons and two daughters. The elder

son, Pablo, regularly helps around the restaurant.

Arenas said plans for serving meals will remain the same and bar patrons will be able to wait there while their tables are made ready and their meals prepared. Appetizers not yet on the menu will be offered in the bar.

"If they want to order from the regular menu, they can go into the restaurant and we can come in and tell them their table's ready, their food's ready," he said.

Arenas envisions adding the bar to his restaurant will be something that the county will find an improved asset.

"I try to do the best for the whole county and make it the best for the local people," he said.

Bill Bradshaw is a reporter for the Wallowa County Chieftain. Have a business tip? Contact him at 541-398-5503 or bbradshaw@wallowa.com.



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CLUES ACROSS

- Instagram pictures, e.g.
- A portion of
- Pushup counts
- "Inuyasha" genre
- Bread with palak paneer
- Highway sign
- Cabinet at Domino's?
- Caesar's accusation
- Had a meal
- Oldest March sister in "Little Women"
- Bay Area metropolis, to nonlocals
- Dejected
- Cape Canaveral org.
- Person who's single, good-looking and irritable?
- ___ for the course
- Supports for certain swings
- Chiwere-speaking tribe
- Treat indulgently, with "on"
- Shape of a watermelon's shadow
- At most, informally
- Former Poet Laureate Dove
- Opted (for)
- Polo of "Meet the Parents"
- ___ boom
- "Dropped" drug
- One with a black cat and mean canines?
- Unwanted find in a stocking
- Relieve (of)
- Where to wipe your feet
- "Every rose ___ its thorn"
- Pollen pouch
- ___ mater
- Secret entrance to a rave?
- Song such as "Islands in the Stream"
- "Law & Order: SVU" actor
- Miffed
- Seated on
- Worked with thread

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61						62					63			
64						65					66			

CLUES DOWN

- NATO letter after Oscar
- "Starting right away!"
- Clothing tag number
- People.com competitor
- Charts for sailors
- Cozy
- Cereal grain
- Safari runners?
- Intensify, as an image
- Anemones' homes
- Score after a touchdown
- Bread with tabbouleh
- Leave gawking
- Lamarr who held a patent for a Secret Communication System
- "No thanks"
- Use a blast furnace
- Guard dog's warning
- Wanders
- Person showing a lot of potential
- One may streak past Earth
- Video game pioneer
- Platypus venom, e.g.
- Upper storage space
- Extend your arms
- Sci-fi robot
- "Aquatic chicken"
- "Nothing but net" baskets
- Emeril's exclamation
- Hair color associated with wisdom
- Give a keynote, say
- New ones often change many diapers
- Ijeoma who wrote "Mediocre"
- Mediator's skill
- URL opener
- Birria or bouillabaisse
- Common skin condition
- Neighbor of Cameroon
- ___ Speedwagon
- Bar offering



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