

Bar owner strives for new atmosphere at Bodega's Alley

By **BEYCE GLENN**
Staff Reporter

When Shawn Darnall decided to open a bar in early July, he said he wanted a place that was clean, comfortable and neat.

Two months later, Bodega's Alley, Lincoln's newest downtown bar, reflects that desire.

The new bar, 1418 O St., is at the site of what used to be Mudslide Slims and, before that, the coffee house Shakes Cafe, both of which were short-lived establishments. Darnall said he wanted to create a new atmosphere at Bodega's, which is a Spanish word for wine shop or bar.

So from July 5 to 18, Darnall said he and other employees, including co-owner Jeff Fredrick and future co-owner Trevor Batt, spent time putting in wood floors, painting the walls cranberry and navy blue, constructing a beer garden in back, and installing air conditioning, four new ceiling fans, a jukebox and mirrors to make the room look larger.

But perhaps the most important thing done, he said, was making sure the bathrooms looked nice.

"I'm married and my wife said, 'Hey, make 'em nice,'" he said. "Women don't like cruddy bathrooms."

He said he would also like to find a way to get some of the NFL fans who frequent sports bars in other parts of Lincoln to come to Bodega's on Sun-



TREVOR BATT, left, and Shawn Darnall stand in the beer garden of Bodega's Alley.

MATT MILLER/DN

days.

"We don't really want to be a sports bar, but we definitely want to be sports-bar ready," said Darnall.

Another readily noticeable difference between Mudslide Slims and Bodega's Alley is the beer selection. When Darnall took over in July, the beers on tap included Schlitz and Miller High Life, and when the Mudslide Slim's crowd stopped com-

ing, he practically couldn't give the stuff away.

"At first I was trying to sell it for a quarter a draw, and they wouldn't buy it," he said.

However, Bodega's now has 10 beers on tap, including domestic light beers and a variety of microbrews and imports such as wheats, lagers, ales and cream stouts.

However, there is one thing that

Darnall said he doesn't want to change. Shakes and Mudslide Slims were known for bringing in live music and he wants that tradition to continue at Bodega's. Eventually, he said, he'd like to get a live alternative or blues band every Tuesday night.

"We're basing everything on good service and a good environment and making sure that people get the product they want," he said.

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