

Barrymore's reopens after 'minor facelift'

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

Everything is in its right place, or so it appears. The wall of levers, switches and glowing lights is still there, tempting people not to toy with them. The ceiling, some 50-plus feet high, still remains for people to gaze up at during a lull in a conversation.

And the sounds of old-schoolers like Stevie Wonder and Curtis Mayfield perfectly mix with new-school darlings Macy Gray and Lauryn Hill.

In fact, the changes made at Barrymore's, 124 N. 13th St., seem to be relatively minor: the walls are now painted a deep burgundy, the chairs are new and the tables are still there, but have been stained. The menu has changed slightly, the bathrooms redone and new carpet laid. Still, for some, this is a drastic change for a bar that is a mainstay in the downtown community.

Chad Meister, one of the managers at

Barrymore's, laughed slightly as he remembered how one patron walked in, took a quick look, said they ruined the bar and then walked out.

Although the general response has been positive, Meister knew it was not wise to drastically alter the bar because of the clientele.

"We just wanted to get it open and get (the patrons) coming back," Meister said.

Meister shares managerial duties with Aaron Klaasmeyer and Robb Shull. Before coming to Barrymore's, Shull, who was manager at the Firethorn Golf Club, said he initially felt intimidated by taking over the reins at Barrymore's.

He overheard rumors from nervous patrons that the Stuart Theater would re-open, but the bar would be closed.

Jim Haberlan, the longtime owner of Barrymore's, sold the bar last year. His son, Laird, managed the bar until it closed to the public on Dec. 30. Managers Klaasmeyer, Shull and Meister

assumed their duties on Jan. 3 and Barrymore's reopened Jan. 8.

"Laird, he created the tradition," said Shull, who was tightlipped about the ownership, as it may tip their hand regarding the Stuart renovation. "We're continuing it."

Shull said he wanted to keep the laid-back atmosphere that defined Barrymore's. One of the main changes was the menu, which Shull played a big role in deciding. Instead of sandwiches named after '30s and '40s screen legends, the selections are a bit more contemporary.

Instead of the Garbo or Bogart, diners now choose from the Spielberg (turkey, mustard, mayonnaise and fetta cheese) or the Hefner (crab salad with shredded lettuce, tomatoes, served on a croissant). Thursday and Friday, during happy hour, selections such as shrimp and 7-layer dip are served.

The three managers had only five days to make

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Chad Meister
Barrymore's co-manager

the majority of the changes to the bar. Along with new carpet and painting, a new lighting system had to be put in place. New artwork had to be hung throughout the bar, as well.

"It's obviously a beautiful building. We wanted to enhance it," Meister said.

Shull said he hoped the changes would give the bar a warmer and friendlier atmosphere. However, he was quick to silence potential skeptics who have not come in this year.

"Barrymore's hasn't changed," Shull said, "We just gave it a face lift."

Rumors don't deter bar's goals

■ The owner of Studio 14 believes that despite stories circulating about the club, it has begun to establish itself and gain a following.

BY SARAH SUMNER

It's all football players. The dress codes are too strict. There are hidden rooms and hot tubs. The door staff was rude and wouldn't let people in. They made fun of people. The cover charge was \$20.

Studio 14 owner Lance Brown has heard the stories about his club. Very few, if any, are true.

"There were a lot of rumors going around that weren't true," Brown said, "and that nobody really knew what Studio 14 was all about. We're nothing different besides extremely large and a night club, and we like to have fun."

Studio 14, 1423 O St., has battled this reputation in an attempt to change the downtown bar scene, a largely sit-and-drink atmosphere, with darts and pool and occasionally karaoke as side entertainment. Studio 14, which is open Wednesday-Sunday, has a primary focus of music and dancing.

The club, housed in what used to be the State Theater, is a three-tiered establishment with a small, horseshoe-shaped dance floor around tables and a relatively large bar, one of two.

"Studio 14 has an aspect to it that no matter what you usually like to do, there's something here that you'll like," Brown said. "Just try it and form your opinion."

That's exactly what we did.

Everyone has a different view of what Studio 14 is about. On an extremely slow Friday night, the first comment came from a dark, trendy male wearing a leather jacket.

"This place blows," he said.

Studio 14 was anything but jumpin'. And the few people that made the "crowd" were kids dressed in sweatshirts and the dancers who were waitresses.

Of course, Friday is techno-night, not the biggest crowd pleaser and in direct competition with Club 1427 next door.

Inside, remixed versions of videos seen on MTV played on the big screen television and did not coincide with the music that the DJ was playing.

Often times, there were no videos at all, but DVD menus on the screen. The music would stop repeatedly and leave the would-be dancers in a lull, waiting for something to listen to while they sat.

"The music is all right," 20-year-old sophomore Casi Ramirez said, "but the dance floor is too small."

The huge environment was stagnant. There is not a lot of flow to the club. It still looks like a theater, a unique style the club owners are playing with.

There are no hot tubs or secret rooms, as rumored, for football players or anyone else. It has the typical workings of a club in Lincoln, only it can be filled with up to 500 people.

Though the dark colored walls and couches invited sitting and partying, it resembled an evening in grandma's attic for a Friday night.

Thursdays at Studio 14's 19-and-over night are more impressive, as there's a larger crowd. There are State Fair-like straps to prevent anyone under 21 from drinking.

At the beginning, the dance floor resembled a high school dance. A circle of about 10 girls doing what could only be described as bouncing up and down, stopping, giggling and starting all over again. This was the group of people under 21.

Eventually, the flow of people became stronger, and the dance floor started to fill up. The place did not become a party until around midnight - one hour before it closed.

The people were really friendly, not any more misogynist than any other club as many might think. Studio 14 does not bring in the type of crowd Guitars and Cadillacs did before it



LEFT: Studio 14, 1423 O St., offers five nights of dance club atmosphere, which owner Lance Brown said was unlike anything else in town. The Super Bowl party scheduled for Jan. 28, however, was canceled. BELOW: The big screens overlooking the dance floor of Studio 14 play music videos. They are one aspect of the dance club that owner Lance Brown said is different than any other club.

Derek Lippincott/DN

closed, but it brings in a decent one.

"There aren't enough people," Ramirez said, "but it's someplace to go since Guitars closed."

"I liked that it was a really mixed crowd," junior English major Kylie Wolf said. "There were a bunch of different people there; it was really diverse."

Wolf said that she would go back but would wait until the later hours of the night.

"It's not the best place in the world, but it is definitely not the worst," Wolf said.

Brown said the club has really started to establish itself and that they are getting a following.

"I've seen the same people every single Thursday," Brown said. "They come back and they bring 10 or 15 of their friends. It's kind of a word-of-mouth thing."

The owners of Studio 14 have not changed the goals that they started with when they first purchased the old State Theater.

"We wanted to bring something very, very unique to Lincoln," Brown said. "We wanted to bring a large-scale night club. Every night we try to change the flavor to something different."



Derek Lippincott/DN