Ziouis acquire Parthenon Steakhouse

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It didn’t take even take a month for the The Parthenon Family Steakhouse in Fort Madison to be taken off the “for sale” list. According to Jadi Zioui, her and husband Amine, the head chef at Atlas Smokehouse, announced the acquisition of the business Wednesday evening.

“We’re not going to change a whole lot,” Jadi said Wednesday evening. “We’re going to clean it up a bit, but it’s going to be the same style just upgraded a little. It’s a fixture in Fort Madison and what I’m doing with other groups of people is trying to turn this into a resort town, but we want to preserve as much of it as we can without alienating those that are already here and love it.

The restaurant was put up for sale by Nick Hantzeas, who owns the business along with his mother Maria, on August 1. Jadi said she and Amine were interested in acquiring the building as soon as it went up for sale. Amine will be the head chef and she will run the front of the house.

“My husband is from the Mediterranean so he’s gone-

Here’s quite simply...Your Heat and Air Guy

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A name that is generic by nature, says a ton about the uniqueness of the product of a man who still does business the old-fashioned way.

Tom Schulz has been working in the heating and air conditioning business since he was 12 years old cleaning offices in his dad’s heating and air conditioning business in Des Moines.

Now Schulz has one of the most recognizable names in the business in southeast Iowa and certainly has the most unique name - Your Heat and Air Guy.

It’s a name he came up with sitting one night trying to put a name to the face.

“I was just sitting up one night thinking of possible names and I thought, you know these people are sitting at gas stations and coffee shops in the morning and when their furnace goes down they don’t say, ‘My furnace broke down last night and I had to call ABC company to come out and fix it.’ They say, ‘My furnace broke down last night and I had to call my heat and air guy,’” Schulz said.

Now those tan trucks can be seen running on the streets of Fort Madison.

Vinnie’s makes another family transition

Fourth Vincent family to own bar took ownership Aug. 5

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - After three generations of family ownership, Vinnie’s Santa Fe Tap, is now once again Vinnie’s Longbranch. Chris and Tara Vincent purchased the business on Aug. 1 and officially opened the doors under the new ownership on August 5.

The couple has hasn’t planned a lot of changes for the business, but Tara said a few changes have been made already, including purchasing a new outdoor sign.

“We’re still waiting for the new sign, they’re backed up just a bit but we’re hoping to have it up by Saturday,” she said.

For generations the bar, which Tara defines as a dive bar, has been home to many local musicians. She said she won’t touch that part of the business.

“We’re still going to have the live Saturday music and we’ll pop one on Friday every now and then, but we’ll never charge a cover and we still want this to be a venue for local musicians to play,” she said.

Chris said the bar was originally called the Longbranch when his grandparents Earl and Lorraine Vincent opened it decades ago. Those two sold the business to Jackie Vincent-Patton and Harold Vincent who then sold it in 1996 to Louis and Debbie Vincent, who are Chris’ uncle and aunt. He and Tara have now purchased the bar from them.

Tara said they don’t see changing much as they want to preserve the tradition of the bar through the years.

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OBITUARIES

ALAN JAKE LITTLE
Alan Jake Little, 24 years, of Fort Madison, Iowa died Wednesday morning, August 16, 2017 in Fort Madison. Arrangements are pending at the Barr Memorial Chapel, Fort Madison.

Obligate ballots available for Sept. 12 school board election

FORT MADISON - Denise Fraise, Lee County Auditor, announces that absentee ballots for the School Election to be held Tuesday, September 12, 2017 are now available in the Auditor’s Office.

You may vote in person at the Auditor’s Office located at 933 Avenue H Fort Madison daily from 8:30 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. Monday through Friday; Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 11:00 am. You may also vote in person at the South Lee County Courthouse, 25 North 7th Street, Keokuk, located in the west hall across from the Lee County Assessor’s Office from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Eligible voters wishing to vote early may complete THE IOWA OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST FORM available from the Lee County Auditor or by downloading the form at http://sos.iowa.gov. The request for an absentee ballot may be hand delivered to the Auditor’s office in Fort Madison, dropped off at the Lee County Courthouse in Keokuk or mailed to the Lee County Auditor, P.O. Box 190, Fort Madison, IA 52627.

A voter may also request a ballot on paper no smaller than 3 inches by 5 inches and must contain the voter's name, mailing address, date of birth and signature and the name of the election for which the voter is requesting a ballot. Requests must be received by 5:00 P.M., Friday, September 8th. Requests may be faxed to 319-372-7033. However, the original request document must be received by the Auditor’s Office. If mailed, it must be postmarked by Friday, September 8, 2017. The original request can also be hand delivered to the Auditor’s Office no later than 8:00 P.M. on Election Day in order for the ballot to be counted.

Voted ballots may be returned by mail, but must be postmarked no later than Monday, September 11th and received by Friday, September 15th. Prepaid postage is affixed to all ballot return envelopes. The voter’s ballot may be hand delivered to the County Auditor’s Office before 8:00 P.M., Election Day, September 12, 2017, by the voter or any person the voter designates.

Anyone having questions regarding absentee voting may contact the Auditor’s office at 319-372-3705.

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one highway or another throughout Lee and Des Moines counties and even into the Hancock County market.

Schulz said the heart of his business will always be Fort Madison, and the growth really has been more of a word-of-mouth marketing.

He started in the Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning business in his father’s shop eventually moving into warehousing and then field calls before he even had a driver’s license. Then he moved to Florida from Des Moines after a stint in the restaurant business there.

The business was eventually purchased by a larger company and Schulz managed those operations for an absentee owner.

“We didn’t talk very much but he was a great guy. I sent him reports and money and he let me run the operations,” Schulz said.

But that company was swallowed by a larger corporation run by a younger accountant.

“I didn’t know his butt from a banjo. I was in Fort Madison for my late grandmother’s 90th birthday and got a call from the grandmother’s 90th birthday but from a banjo. I was in accounts run by a younger man and he let me run the business.

“He said that on a Thursday and the couple flew back to Florida on Monday and by the following Thursday he had a building at 723 Avenue G where Schulz set up shop in the back.

“We pretty much kept it close to home at first. Our growth has been more word of mouth. The first year I was here we did a trade show in Burlington and sold about 13 systems up there after that, but Fort Madison is, and will continue to be, the heart of our operation. It’s my home.”

Schulz said he’s seen a reduction in the quality of service of small and large contractors are moving to larger-scale jobs leaving a void in the market.

“The level of service has gone up in this town and the price has gone down and I think we’re solely responsible for that,” he said.

“When we looked at starting a business here I went through town and talked with people. And almost to a person they said we don’t need another heating and cooling company, we have plenty. I asked them if they were happy the service they were getting and it was common to hear, ‘well they don’t always show up when they say they will or you can’t get anyone on the phone’, and I thought, you know, this is exactly the place to start a business.”

He said the cost of media marketing was also a big reason. “It’s better here and those are big costs. In larger communities those prices can be stifling.”

“But you can’t go about this business I want everybody to understand, when I make a recommendation to a customer, it’s the same recommendation I would make to my mother and the day I can’t say that will be my last day. I guess, in a way, I sleep well every night when I go home to bed.”

“%One way we are able to keep our prices in line is that we negotiate like we’re a multi-million dollar company even though we’re not.”

Schulz has grown to a staff of three that includes his father, Jerry. He says he’s taken on the business because he will never become a rich man monetarily, but the people he comes into contact with make him feel quite at home.

“It’s the people. I love being able to help people,” he said. “When Joanne had her restaurant downtown, she would say I don’t miss the restaurant one bit - she hated it, but she loved the people who came to interact with all the time.

Joanne ran businesses out of the front of 723 Avenue G called Angel Scent and then the RiverRat Restaurant but they closed when she ran up against some health issues.

“I make a fair profit,” he said. “I will never be a rich man in this industry, but I sleep well every night when I go home to bed.”

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"Cold beer and hot music", still the pride at Vinnie’s

“Cold beer and hot music”, still the pride at Vinnie’s

"We're just going to market a lot of local and live music like they’ve always had here. We're changing the name back to the Longbranch paying homage to Chris' grandma and grandpa."

One of the most popular traditions is the annual Dry Creek Festival and Tara said she didn't see that changing too much either.

"We haven't decided what to do there...if we'll move it inside like this year or leave it outside in the heat. There are some kinks to figure out, but right now we're just getting going and trying to keep this a family business," she said.

"There are so many regulars here and so many different walks of life you see. That's the joy of what's been built here through the generations and we just want to do our part to keep that legacy going."

Chris said his business philosophy will be simple.
"My wife's really the better person to do the talking, but we want to continue with cold beer and hot music."

The bar has a new vendor for pool tables in Great River Amusements who's brought in new pool tables. Tara said the bar, which is open 10 a.m to 2 a.m., will still feature pool tournaments and horse-shoe tournaments, but beer and liquor selections will stay the same as they work through the transition. This Saturday Spazm is scheduled to be the live music entertainment on Saturday beginning at 9 p.m.

The pub is located at 2601 Avenue L in Fort Madison just across from the Hy-Vee on the west side of the creek bed. For more information contact the Vincents at 319-372-7987

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