

NIGHTLIFE

Garage playing to car crowd

„ The new restaurant and bar in Delano has returned the former John Barleycorn's space to its automotive roots.

BY STEPHANIE BARNARD

Wichita Eagle Correspondent

A restaurant and bar opening today is adding something new to the nightlife scene in Delano.

The Garage Bar and Grill is taking over the former John Barleycorn's space at 579 W. Douglas. Originally a gas station, the building has been renovated to its garage-like roots, featuring overhead glass doors and a hotrod theme on the walls.

“We're playing to the crowd that's in Delano, the car crowd,” said owner Ben Mansfield. “We had to exploit the view down the street.”

A cherry-red and chrome bar, vintage automobile hoods and a view of the Douglas and Sycamore roundabout complete the Garage's feel. Mansfield and his business partner have spent almost six months renovating the space.

Former patrons of John Barleycorn's will hardly recognize the place. Walls were knocked out, windows were added, ceilings were lifted and the patio was expanded to more than twice its original size. Seating includes bar-height tables and booths, and a new concrete floor enhances the garage-like feel.

“Everything you see, we did,” Mansfield said.

Mansfield has previously been a real estate investor and owner of a painting business. When John Barleycorn's vacated its space, the former owners wanted another bar to replace it, and Mansfield jumped at the opportunity.

“Real estate's been a little bit slow lately, and something I always thought would be fun was having a bar and restaurant,” he said.

Business hours will be 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily. Mansfield said he wants the Garage to be known primarily as a restaurant; he plans to serve food until 8 or 9 p.m. at first, possibly keeping the kitchen open later eventually. The venue will be all-ages until 9 p.m. daily.

“Delano doesn't have a lot of places that offer dinner,” he said. “We're really trying (to fill that void). æ.æ.æ. We're a full-on burger joint.”

Menu offerings include burgers, sandwiches, a grilled chicken salad, and other bar fare such as onion rings and fried pickles. Many items will be handmade on site.

Mansfield wants the Garage to be a destination spot in the district, attracting both the neighborhood blue-collar crowd and a wider base of patrons. In Old Town, it's easy to walk between bars, but they're fewer and farther between in Delano. That means less competition, but also less incentive for

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the bar-going crowd to cross the river.

He also plans to add live music on the patio, though there are no bands booked as of yet. A music night featuring ages 18 and up is also a possibility.

"We're hoping to attract a bar crowd," Mansfield said. "We like the area a lot. We think it's an up-and-coming area."



Ben Mansfield is the owner of The Garage Bar and Grill, which took over the former John Barleycorn's space at 579 W. Douglas. The Wichita Eagle

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