



by Janet Clement
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RICHMOND — A number of years ago, Scott McIntire, owner of the Old Goat Pub in Richmond, turned a run-down, vacant building at 33 Main St. into a thriving business. The 1872 building, previously sided with aluminum, was home to three banks and, way back when, a merchant and tailor business.

A former owner had jack-hammered a large safe, reinforced with cement and railway ties, out of the center of the first floor, as part of the downtown Richmond renaissance. (There is still another safe in the cellar.) When McIntire bought the building, he gutted it, exposing the patina of the old brick walls, a granite foundation, and iron support pillars out front, which match the newly installed street lights perfectly.

He then transformed the inside with traditional British-pub-style paneled walls, a stained birch bar, and Brazilian walnut floors, and made it into a space that seats 44 and accommodates 80 people on the ground floor. Three years before, he began his business in a small space across the street, with 20 seats.

He said it was “just random luck” that lead him to Richmond, and that “Richmond is a great town, a real community with a good sense of itself and a lot of pride.”

The town's reception of him and customers as far away as Portland "have been good enough to keep me here for eight years," he said. He modestly adds that there's no "real magic" to it, and that the most important qualities for a pub owner are strong legs and the ability to stand on your feet 80 hours a week.

However, McIntire has done a great job of finding a winning combination. In the first place, as one might imagine, there's beer and wine. (Since the establishment is by definition a pub, the Old Goat sells no mixed drinks.) With 72 different types of good English, German and Belgian beers, he may have the largest selection in central Maine. He also serves eight different draft beers, which have proved to be wildly popular, and wine by the glass and bottle.

But probably the most popular reason to drop by the Old Goat for a pint, or for gathering there with your friends or for a business luncheon, is the food. His paninis are not to be missed. (For those unfamiliar with the word "panini," it's a type of grilled sandwich. They were first developed in Italy years and years ago, and are now popular throughout the world.)

"He makes a kick-ass panini with good ingredients, put together right," said Tim Acord, who owns the Main Street Dairy Treat across the street. "It's not just two pieces of bread with a filling slapped on."

McIntire said he uses the best quality ingredients he can find, and gives great care to the preparation of the panini.

For example, the menu begins with "The Bobcat," reportedly Richmond's number-one sandwich, which includes turkey, bacon, cheddar, tomato and their own special Bobcat sauce. It's named after the Richmond High and Middle School mascot and their championship sports teams. There are 10 other paninis to choose from, like the "Cabra Italiano," made with Genoa salami, Cappicola ham, fresh green peppers and red onions, basil, olive oil, provolone and parmesan cheeses - Si, molto bene! (Italian for, "Yes, very good!"). And then there's the PHS, made with sautéed, seasoned vegetables piled high and deep, topped with Jalapeno Jack cheese.

They also make “simple sandwiches” of roast beef, turkey, ham or pastrami with cheddar, Swiss, provolone or Jalapeno jack cheese. Add tomato and or onion, mayo and mustard - and that's it. This is not Subway, said McIntire.

For the kids, grilled cheese or peanut butter sandwiches are offered. And sorry, no crayons to play with while they wait.

McIntire also serves up a delicious pizza, which they first introduced a year ago, and has become a big draw. McIntire uses only the finest ingredients, and offers 28 different toppings. The pizzas are cooked in a brick oven at high and constant heat, which he said is essential for the best pizza.

Runa Mackenzie, who, with her husband Edward, an assemblage artist, are owners of the Richmond Store Gallery on Main Street in Richmond, which they renovated themselves for five years, and has been open for another five, said the Pub makes the best pizza in town, and the place is very “upmarket,” which apparently is a New Zealand term for classy, while still being a place where people from all walks of life feel at home.

Mackenzie also said they serve a fine New Zealand wine, a special compliment coming from someone really in the know, as she lived in New Zealand for 20 years. They frequently take business associates to lunch at the Old Goat, she said.

Often solo acoustical guitar music and occasionally a band can be heard in the pub. Local talent includes Wyimbish in Richmond, and Steve Chadbourne in Dresden. “He tries to get in as much entertainment as he can,” said Acord. Especially popular with some are Thursday “open mic” nights hosted by Albert Lord, when patrons play the guitar or washboard or any instrument in between. Some open mic patrons just read poetry or tell jokes.

“I've heard some amazing stuff,” said Acord. “Everybody has a hidden talent or a voice.”

Upstairs is a function and banquet room with the original tin ceiling. The room holds 40 people, the perfect size for second marriages, said McIntire. Being a strictly non-partisan pub owner,

Scott has hosted gatherings for both the Democrats and the Republicans. Receptions and Irish wakes have been held there, too. People can bring in their own food, or McIntire will serve as caterer. The room has a highly polished floor, all-new, large-and-long windows and ceiling fans, as well as old photographs and maps on the walls. The building had a third floor, but that was destroyed by fire in the '30s.

Asked if he had any unusual stories to tell about running the Old Goat Pub, McIntire said he had been approached by people from the Maine Ghost Hunters' organization, who said they had heard people say they had heard "funny sounds" in the building. They wanted to bring in their equipment and see what they could find.

McIntire declined. "If there are ghosts here," he said, "leave them alone."

However a woman, who claimed to be a medium, said she had gotten in touch with a man "with a funny collar, and according to him, he didn't like the way I run the business."

To non-ghosts, McIntire said he runs a tight ship, doesn't advertise, and does a good job of maintaining his image, as his hosting many benefits in the banquet room shows.

"I run fundraisers all the time," said Scott. Among those are the Christmas party to benefit the local food bank and the Bread of Life Ministries Soup Kitchen; the annual chili cook-off for the regional Clipper Soccer Club, a "Doggie Fashion Show" to benefit the Coastal Humane Society, which was seen on television; an annual golf tournament to benefit the Pine Tree Society for the disabled; and a function for the Friends of Swan Island. He also used to raise funds for the fireworks until the town took over.

McIntire, who had a printing business before moving to Maine from Florida, said he selected the name of the pub because he kept eight goats on his property in Alna, and it seemed appropriate.

Wearing a black tee shirt with the name of the pub and its logo on the front and "Belly up to the bar" on the back, McIntire said he got into the business because he likes beer, must have tasted

thousands, and has an appreciation for how it is made.

“I liked the idea of a pub, like to go to them, and had a lot of experience on that side,” he said. No, he doesn't have a favorite beer. “It is impossible to choose. There are so many different beers for so many different occasions.”

The Old Goat Pub opens at noon every day, and closes “whenever we feel like it,” said McIntire.