

Cooper House Springs Back

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THE Cooper House bar and patio are open for business under new management after an extended remodeling period. New owner Brian Roeder of Aptos said April 7 that Don McCaslin's group "Warmth" will return to its traditional weekend afternoon gig on the patio, with other performers scheduled from noon to 5 p.m. throughout the week.

Food and beverage service on the patio will run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, with the indoor bar open from 11 a.m. to midnight weekdays and 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. weekends. Meal service indoors will commence "in a month or two," Roeder said.

While the Cooper House patio has no peer locally as an outdoor entertainment venue, the indoor bar and restaurant complex will face a stiffer challenge establishing itself. Since the room last thrived, the nearby Palomar restaurant has been remodeled and a handsome cocktail lounge added; Pontiac Grill, Hobee's, Front Street Pub and EMI have opened; and downtown night life patterns have changed. The Roeders are optimistic.

"We're going to create in the bar a local flavor in the evenings, a place that will be fun, comfortable, relaxed — with darts, probably — a place where you can come and the bartenders will know your name," Brian Roeder said, citing Salinas' Penny Farthing pub as an influence.

Roeder believes the new surge in downtown business generated by Pontiac Grill, Cymbaline, the remodeled Kuumbwa, the Palomar, Pearl Alley Bistro, EMI and other venues will help Cooper House as well.

"We want to be a part of that entire line of businesses, from Lulu Carpenter's to the Catalyst and Tampico's," he said. "I see the mall as being a really unique and powerful business area, not only for visitors but for locals too.

The four retail shops that remained in the Cooper House during the remodeling and sale period continue to be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, Roeder said. •