

Spot Checking

Food ★ Fun ★ Frolic
By Bill Whitman

5 Years Old This Week

Yes, as this week moves around the Red Onion Restaurant will become five years old - and without hardly a struggle. This, of course is for the spot up on the hill in Peninsula Center.

Five years ago this Thursday, Bart Earle opened his first Red Onion Restaurant in the South Bay area with his completely authentic Mexican restaurant at 27736 Silver Spur Road.

Mr. Earle then bided his time until such opportunity presented itself for him to expand the already existing building to the present large dinner house that features Sonora style cookery, adding the intimate cocktail lounge in the rear that was promptly dubbed The Cantina, still retaining the flavor of old Mexico, both decor-wise as well as food-wise.

Since that grand opening of grand openings, the policy at the Red Onion hasn't changed an iota with the exception of possibly for the better, featuring entertainment, a cocktail hour, and a warm friendly atmosphere that has done much toward making for a strong friendship between the Red Onion and its many patrons over the years.

And even when Bart Earle opened his Torrance Red Onion at 23305 S. Hawthorne Blvd. the spot up "on the hill" didn't lose business, although you still run into old friends now and again as you visit the newest spot. But old buddies still hang tough for the most part.

There are three Bart Earle Red Onions in all, the third one being at 11625 S. Hawthorne Blvd. in Hawthorne, although there are other Red Onion spots in this same general area and all part of the Earle chain, whether it be Earle himself, his brother or his father, and each enjoy a flourishing business, as well they should with the type of cuisine available at the Red Onions.

With the kind of operation Bart Earle presents, he's a cinch to have many more such anniversaries.

To continue along the good food line, unless you've been living in a cocoon or perhaps you've just moved to Southern California, you've certainly heard about Love's Wood Pit Barbecue Restaurants.

Stopped by the one at 1404 Redondo Beach Blvd. in Gardena one day last week and talked with owner-



NEW FACE . . . to go with the new policy offered at the Torrance Ramada Inn is owner-operator John Gregory.

host Jack Simko.

Now the decor is pretty much the same with all Love's Restaurants but the upkeep makes the difference.

Everything seems to gleam at Love's on Redondo Beach Blvd. and Normandie. The deep maroon shiney leather booths, the complimenting wood paneling and the immaculate red carpeting all seem to further enhance the already delicious food fare offered at Love's.

And priced so right, you wouldn't believe. There's nothing above \$2.95 for these truly delectable barbecued dinners. And in the sandwich department you'll not go higher than 95 cents or should you care for a "Bonanza on a Bun" it'll run you one-twenty.

Many people like wine with their dinner and this, too, is available at Love's. Special table wines like Bergundy, Vin Rose Sec, Chablis - will run you 95 cents for a half litre and \$1.75 for a full litre.

Top quality beers may be had at Love's, too, either from the tap or by the bottle.

There's always lots of diners here with their 110 person capacity seating, or if you prefer, there's nothing on the ample menu that cannot be boxed to take home.

You can feel perfectly at home by bringing the kids, too. They love 'em there and welcome them. Don't forget kids grow up sometimes and when they do they become adults. (this, too, sometimes!)

Seems like there's always

something new at The King's X Restaurant on La Tijera and Centinela and this time it's a new chef of which Tom Whaley's boasting. And well he should!

Chef Casey is a pretty well known putter - together of fine cuisine in and around the Southland and probably there are many dine-out addicts hereabouts that have wondered where he's located.

With such spots as the Bantom Cock on La Cienega, the Williamsburg Inn in West L. A., Las Vegas' House of Lords, and the Gold Nugget Inn at Lake Tahoe, it's small wonder that Chef Casey's in big demand for his culinary artistry.

And Tom not only holds him around for dinner but for the luncheon bit as well, so if you can't make it by during the evening, then set yourself up a luncheon date and enjoy this fine chef's cookery.

You ask Chef Casey if that's his first name or his last he'll tell you, "That's the way they know me." So that should be good enough for all of us.

And of course while you're waiting around, you've always got Tom and Lois on hand to seat and greet you, plus Eddie on the bar during the day, and Vince and Ramon holding down the nite trick.

Not so much in the cooking department but certainly in the entertainment end is the upcoming Lee Follies which opens at the Fabulous Forum in Inglewood Sept. 17.

As usual, the famous Shipstads and Johnson skating revue'll present performances through Sunday, Oct. 6, and tickets are available at the Forum box-office, May Co. stores in L. A. and Lakewood, TWA's Hollywood office, Uni-tours, Inc., American Express offices in L. A., and Union Bank offices in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, and Sherman Oaks in the Valley.

You might also keep in mind OR. 3-1300 if you'd like to nail down some reservations.

Say, remember the old Fallacy Club on the Sunset Strip? And before that



DISCUSSION TIME . . . Owner-operator of the Red Onion Restaurants, Bart Earle, talks things over with bar manager Jose Carrette in the friendly little Cantina Bar in Peninsula Center regarding their fifth anniversary party, which will feature door prizes, Margaritas at 50 cents all day Thursday and all kinds of good things, including entertainment by the Hernandez Bros., as well as men's style show at noon. Y'all come!

seems like it was the Sea Witch?

Well lots of folks are looking forward to the re-opening of this same spot right there next to Dino's and when its new opening comes up in about 30 days it'll be named the Immediate Family.

While firmly ensconced on a stool at the bar of the



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Matador Restaurant on West Pico last Friday nite, owner-host Bill Fremont slid into the stool next door and before either one of us knew

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CASTAGNOLA'S Lobster House

BRING THIS AD!

Owner - Operator

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about it, there was a rare delicacy placed before us.

Upon first look it would seem it might be the Spanish answer to the Mexican burrito but upon biting into same - not so! Entirely different taste and most delicious.

This tasty little goodie is called Empanada and originates in Argentina. It consists of meat, olives, onions, and raisins. A most delicious morsel and sells at The Matador for \$1.25 for two. Try 'em next time you're just sort of cruising around and feel like just a little something to warm the stomach.

Of course the regular menu is divided into five different selections when it comes to settling down to some real two-fisted eating-seafood, poultry, veal, lamb, and beef. Those are the five and all equally digestible.

Prices range from \$2.95 for that special Matador steak all the way up to \$5.95 for exotic Spanish dishes and all comes served on the complete dinner. You'll never go wrong at The Matador.

Now while we're in the neighborhood and as long as it's not competitive food-wise, you might have set up a date with some visiting fireman (or even policemen) who are in the mood for some Chinese food.

So just up the street on West Pico you'll find the

King Far Low Restaurant just what you're looking for in the way of Cantonese dining.

And as you enter this delicately decorated dinner house you'll find a long bar on the right that features all the libation goodies you've ever heard of and all served with dispatch and alacrity.

Another feature, if it can be called that, is the cleanliness of this establishment. There's nothing to sour a person's taste more than to sit at a cocktail bar awaiting your table and stare at a grimy, dust-covered bar with the various bottles in equally bad condition.

This is not the case at King Far Low. Everything sparkles - even the bartender, Ted Wong, who's humor is anything but inane. He comes up with some choice material regularly. Don't know who his writer is but he should give him a raise! (Surely it can't be Larry Hunter! !)

Anyway, it's strictly Chinese style when you finally get your table (and it's really not too long a wait). Owner "Jimmy" goes along

with the regular custom of "for two or more—for three added - for four added" - and so on. Always seems that the more you eat - the cheaper it is. One often thinks that, if you kept adding on, by the time you finish, the house would owe YOU money. (don't believe it! Not set up that way!) So make it by the King Far Low soon and enjoy dinner.

Well kids, hold on to your hats - here we go again! But this time it'll be a winner, you can bet. When you put such a man as John Gregory at the helm of any restaurant you better believe it'll take hold.

That's the happening at the Torrance Ramada Inn on Pacific Coast Highway. True there've been problems here in the past but now it's going to be different.

Mr. Gregory has expansive (yes, and probably expensive, too!) plans and idea for the NEW Ramada Inn that'll include new frontage stuff, new signs, changes for the interior, new entertainment the whole ball of wax plus cuisine that'll be nothing short of sensational.

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