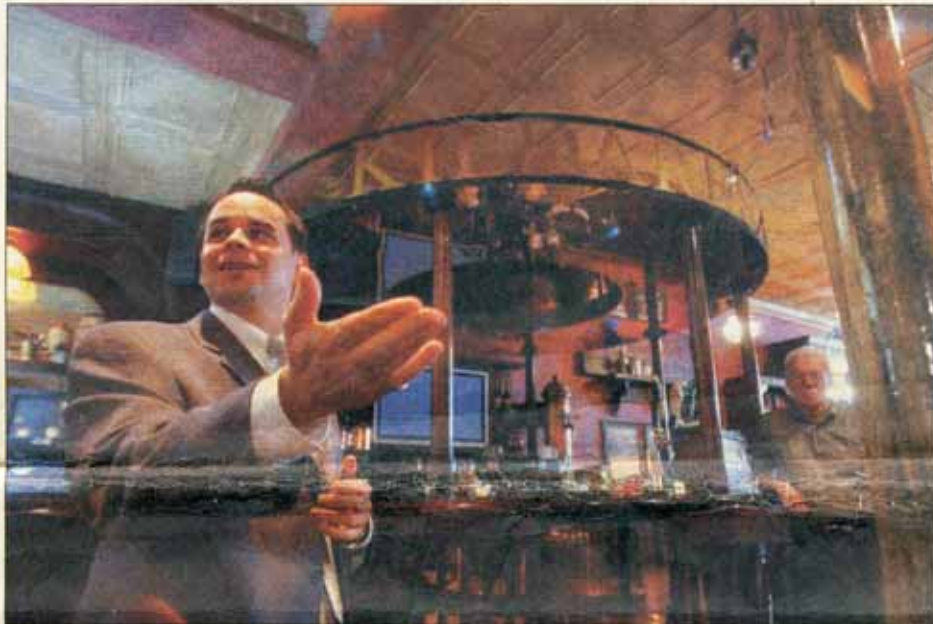


Luck (and cash) of the Irish?



Staff photos by Bethany Stiltner

At top, David Magrogan, owner of Kildare's Restaurant and Pub, shows off the bar area.

At both left and right, patrons enjoy the Irish atmosphere at Kildare's.

Above, Celtic drawings modeled after the Book of Kells adorn the ceiling of Kildare's.

Kildare's to celebrate grand opening May 15

By JESSICA McRORIE
Staff Writer

WEST CHESTER — Kildare's Irish Restaurant and Pub promises to pour the "perfect pint of Guinness."

The owner, David Magrogan, imported equipment from Ireland just to store and pour the brew. The wait and kitchen staff were trained to make sure each pint is poured to the Guinness standard, he said.

"If you have a good pint of Guinness, it is a great 15-minute experience," said Magrogan.

But Magrogan's attention to detail doesn't end at the bottom of the pint glass.

It exists in almost every aspect of Kildare's, located on 18-22 West Gay Street.

In the front of the restaurant, there is a bar with an antique-style cash register that was salvaged from a bar in County Wexford, an area in southern Ireland, said John McDonald, of Ireland, who works for the Irish Pub Co. based in Ireland.

McDonald's company was hired by Magrogan to create the look and feel of an authentic Irish pub, he

said.

"We had very specific ideas of how we wanted it to look like," said McDonald.

The entire restaurant and pub is a mixture of different styles and Irish influences.

The entrance of the pub is reminiscent of a time in Ireland when pubs doubled as a general store in order to stay in business, said McDonald.

Along the bar, scales and medicine bottles cohabit alongside pint glasses.

Tucked behind the bar is a corner stocked with an assortment of copies of the Irish newspaper, Irish Times, so people can "get an idea of what is going on in Ireland," said McDonald.

A portion of the rear of the restaurant represents the medieval era in Ireland. There are simple but large wooden chairs and thick-legged tables.

On the ceiling above is a mural of a Celtic myth, said McDonald.

Nearby, a tree trunk, imported from Ireland, runs from the floor to the ceiling, said McDonald.

"If you have a good pint of Guinness, it is a great 15-minute experience."

— DAVID MAGROGAN,
Kildare's owner

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Pub



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The opposite side of the restaurant still retains the former restaurant's bar. The character on the front of that restaurant portion is "a little more formal, a little more what a Dublin pub would be," he said.

Magrogan spent about \$1.7 million to purchase the building and the liquor license and an additional \$700,000 on renovations, he said.

He got the idea for the pub after visiting a restaurant in Atlanta called Fado, he said. It has an authentic Irish feel as

opposed to being Irish American.

Even the food is authentic of Ireland, he said.

Magrogan said he would like to open up about four more restaurants like Kildare's in the area.

Magrogan, who lives in Thornbury township, has worked in restaurants from when he was 12 years old to when he was in college, he said. But this is his first experience as an owner.

He said he plans to keep working at his practice about 15 hours a week during the day but will be kept busy the rest of the time with Kildare's, which has its grand opening on May 15.

But Magrogan is not the first to invest a lot of money and faith in that space.

In 1980, Jack McFadden of West Chester bought the space, which was formerly a clothing store, he said. In 1981, the Restaurant and Bar opened.

"There weren't any upscale, new, jazz, New York style restaurants," he said.

The opening of the restaurant and its subsequent success marked the beginning of the revival of Market Street, which had a very different look back then than it does today.

When the restaurant first opened, many of the shops along the street were closed, said McFadden.

The opening of the restau-

rant helped to encourage other restaurants to follow, said West Chester Business Improvement District Executive Director Malcolm Johnstone.

"It really set the stage for restaurant development in downtown West Chester," said Johnstone.

McFadden sold the restaurant in 1996 before it was sold to Magrogan, said McFadden.

Regarding the renovation and different look that the restaurant now has, he said, "Changes are good. Things evolve," said McFadden.

"I know that he spent a lot of money in there. I haven't seen anybody lose money in West Chester," he said.