

# DINING OUT

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL OWNERS OF EATING AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE MLK AND SIXTH AVENUE DISTRICTS



1022 South is a neighborhood craft cocktail lounge at 1022 S. J St. Featured in The New York Times, 1022 seeks to express the best aspects of their community by using quality ingredients and contentious observance of what has come before.



Owner and Operator Chris Kiel opened the bar in March 2009 specializing in gourmet snacks, craft cocktails, apothecary infusions, and literary inspiration. **Kiel says the original plan was for a Hilltop bar that was centrally located in the middle of all these beautiful houses.** He hopes there will be a few more bars here so people can hop from bar to bar as a cultural benefit to the community.



## Hula Girls Coffee

Opened in 2011 in the area because of a perceived niche for a coffee stand. Of the 30 to 40 customers per day, most drive up to get their coffee. However there are a few local residents who arrive by walking. **Overall, The business has had a positive experience in the area.**



## Engine House # 9

ENGINE HOUSE NO. 9, around 1908 - At the sound of the alarm the night watchman would open the stable gates (where the bar is located now) the horses would trot into position for harnessing and within 30 seconds the crew would have the steamer fire lit, pre-heat water pipes disconnected and be underway. The original accordion doors which were spring-loaded opened in seconds causing the horses to bolt out much like a horse race track.



Engine House No. 9 was built in 1907 to provide fire protection for Tacoma's North End. For many years it served as battalion headquarters. It was the last station in Tacoma to convert from horse-drawn to mechanized equipment - in 1919 when Rufus Harben and Earle More made the final symbolic run aboard an Amoskeg steam pumper drawn by the horses Nip, Dick and Joe.

Engine House No. 9 was in service until 1965 when it was abandoned and fell into disrepair. Vandals touched off no less than three fires in the building in the ensuing seven years. Although the structure remained, it was stripped and battered and its bones exposed to winter snow and rain when it was discovered by a young newspaper reporter in 1971.

Win Anderson and Bob Lane purchased and restored the building, converting the lower floor to a tavern and the second story into an apartment.

In August of 2011 the Xitco and Paradise families, having been longtime admirers of Engine House No. 9, became proprietors and stewards of one of Tacoma's Historical Landmarks.

**The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975**

**First non-smoking pub in Pierce County in 1992**

**Arguably Tacoma's first micro brewery.**



## Tacoma Timeline

Engine House # 9 Bought and Rehabilitated 1974

Engine House # 9 First Micro Brewery in Tacoma 1994

Primo Grill 1999

Jazzbones 2000

Asado 2006

The Red Hot 2007

Crown Bar 2007

Dirty Oscar's Annex 2010

Marrow 2011

Overtime 2012

Bob's Barbeque 1989

Fish House Café 1990's

Thai Garden

LeLe's 2001

Tempest 2005

Quicky Too 2006

1022 South 2009

Pho King 2010

Ezell's Famous Chicken 2011

Papa Jones Barbeque 2011

Peterson Brothers 1111 2012

Broken Spoke 2012



**Peterson Brothers 1111** Opened July 1st by the Peterson Brothers. They were familiar with the area and had eaten at Thai Garden since they were kids. They had also worked at the Swiss and Hell's Kitchen. They were approached about the 1111 location by the owner of the building, Mike Parker, whom they had known for awhile. He also owns Hilltop Pawn. They got their kitchen Manager from Top of Tacoma. Their theme is Sandwiches and a comfortable bar modeled after a dive bar. Small and comfortable, but somewhere where you want to eat. They're really proud of the bar they made from wood harvested from the old Nalley pickle factory and installed it themselves. They think it gives the restaurant a warm feeling with some history, so when people walk in they think

it's been there forever and they're confused why they haven't been in before.

**They were originally attracted to the location because they were asked by the owner of the Courtney building, and the space was attractive.** There was a good bar scene with 1022 and Tempest but they were more loungey and they thought they could fill a niche with their food offerings and jukebox atmosphere. They were also attracted by the idea that it was a new or up and coming district with an eclectic group of people. They also liked that 11<sup>th</sup> had pretty good access to downtown, and finally they just thought the address (1111 on 11<sup>th</sup> St.) was cool.

Because they spent about a year working on fixing and furnishing the place, they were running out of money and had to open by necessity. They claim to have had better success than they expected. They have had good success attracting people up the hill from downtown. They attribute this to having good food and providing a memorable experience. Often business professionals will come up at lunch to eat and then stop by after work to drink. About 50% are from downtown and 50% are from the neighborhood. They make about 100 sandwiches a day and they estimate about everyone comes in for a sandwich. During the summer many more customers would walk or bike, now that's the weather has changed more people are driving. Parking doesn't seem to be an issue though. Of the 9 people that live above the space, 1 works there and 3 are regular customers. When asked what they would do to change or improve the area he said the Sav-a-Lot would be a great spot for a trader Joe's or a Tacoma Boy's. It would be great if the MLKHDA lot could be filled. The area could use more retail to create a boundary creating strip. It would also be great if there was artist housing in the area. **Safety hasn't been an issue.**



**Ezell's Famous Chicken-** Opened November of 2011. Owner Lewis Rudd, who co-founded the restaurant chain in 1984 said he believes it's still a good market in Tacoma even though they've had to move locations a couple times.



## MLK Recent bars and restaurants



**Papa Jones BBQ-** Opened the end of July 2011. Owned by Helen Alfred who cooked for Jones Original Barbeque in Seattle for a number of years before starting her own place.



## 6th Ave Influential bars and restaurants



### Dirty Oscars Annex

Was formerly SAX restaurant and lounge. Opened in December of 2010 They average less than 10 people for lunch and between 20 to 40 people for dinner and up to their fire code imposed limit of 197 people by closing. On Friday and Saturday. This is a pretty high number considering Jazz bones has two levels and only has a max occupancy level of 244 people. **Most of their night crowd comes from Masa, Red Hot and Jazz bones.**



### Marrow



### Crown Bar

Opened in 2007, loosely inspired by the Crown Bar in Belfast, Northern Ireland, The same owners of Primo are committed to Sourcing local ingredients and creating an atmosphere that Allows people to meet, unwind and enjoy delicious food and drinks. Was recently visited by Guy Fieri from the show Diners, Drive ins and Dives.



### Red Hot

Started up in 2007 Won best hot dog of Western Washington Featured on the Food Network's Chefs vs. City



**The Broken Spoke** Opened Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Ben Jones - combination art studio, bike shop and a place for coffee, beer and light grub. Ben moved up here 20 years ago from Redding CA, for the snowboarding. He had an extreme sports/boarding shop (Down in Flames) on 23<sup>rd</sup> and Jefferson in Tacoma. However, because of his location between two police patrol routes he could go days without seeing any kind of police presence. Eventually he was robbed 3 times within like a 3 to 6 month period of time. He was attacked at knife point when he fought the guy off, robbed one night, and actually had a guy drive his car through the window to rob him a third time. The last straw was when he lost \$20,000 dollars worth of merchandise.



**In looking for a new location he knew he wanted his place to be somewhat centrally located, he wanted it set up in an established, bike friendly people dense neighborhood. Hilltop was ideal for these requirements because of its relative proximity to downtown, flat grade and historic community both in density, time, and social interactions.**

Ben estimates that about 90% of his customers live locally, arriving by foot or bicycle. For the first couple of weeks the customer draw has been around 20-25 people per night, with a slight increase on the weekend. Hospital employees and other customers on their way home also stop in. In addition to a great location, the cost/square foot is about the quarter of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Even though there aren't as many people on MLK it's worth it for the extra space he can afford. When looking for a building he looked at about 10 buildings in the city. The other one on MLK was next to the Fulcrum gallery, but the one next to Pho King was a better choice. He didn't want to locate any farther than 13<sup>th</sup>. Even though Fulcrum has shows quality, well known local artists, they have a difficult time generating foot traffic,

especially with the Community Health Center construction currently blocking the sidewalk. However, once the construction is complete it may help fill some gaps in generating coherent pedestrian interest in the area. Additionally Ben didn't think the market was saturated yet on MLK, but he also hedged his investment by incorporating a cycling retail/repair aspect to the space. He's also considered bringing in acoustic music with consideration to potential noise complaints from his neighbors above. The location Ben is in clearly expresses the mixed use diversity the community desires. It has retail, services, restaurants, and of course Ben's Bar. In addition there are currently 8 tenants, from evergreen, the hospitals, and a couple regular customers. It's no wonder there's such a diversity in such a diverse area.

