

New restaurants add variety

Yes, College Station has two new restaurants. This may be too much for your taste buds to handle all at once, so we've tried to give an idea of what each one is like to make your choices for culinary excursions easier. All articles by Susan Hopkins.

Baker Street

701 S. Texas Ave.

Baker Street has everything most College Station restaurants don't: plush decor, soft jazz music, mellow crowds and good service. And its food is reasonably priced and exceptionally tasty.

In the spot Grapevine restaurant used to occupy, at 701 S. Texas Ave., Baker Street features specialties such as "Fondue for Two" and "smoothies" (a blend of fruits, honey, ice and papaya juice served cold and very thick). Fried vegetables, twice baked potatoes, deli-style sandwiches, salads, half-pound hamburgers, steaks and shrimp complete the menu.

Thick green and rust checked carpeting covers the bi-level floor, and heavy wooden tables, chairs and ceiling fans add to the classic English pub look. However, a large bar surrounded by wooden trimmings and several plants gives a contemporary, yet comfortable, touch to the classic atmosphere.

Gregg Andrews, manager of Baker Street, says construction will begin soon on a sun deck, to be located in back of the restaurant, that will seat about 40 extra people.

"We've been open three weeks now, but we're holding off on our grand opening until the deck is finished so we can throw a huge luau before students go home for the summer," Andrews said.

The restaurant will try to serve mainly the older crowd in Bryan-College Station, although, Andrews said, special events like style shows will bring together customers of all ages.

Baker Street is open 11 a.m.-12 midnight Sunday-Thursday, and 11 a.m.-1 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Happy hour is Monday-Friday, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

The Loading Zone

404 University

A team of restaurant owners in College Station has finally come to the realization that atmosphere and low prices can co-exist.

The Loading Zone, at 404 University, offers a varied menu that includes everything from a steak sandwich for \$1.45 to a shrimp and fish platter for \$5.75. That's it. You can't pay any more than that for a single entree. The atmosphere is free.

Resembling a combination

flea market-garage sale, a Mobile "flying" red horse rotates in the center of the small room's ceiling, an antique gas pump sits near the door, and old beer and service station signs cover the walls, with unique license plates scattered among them. The entryway displays a variety of old Aggie pictures, making it clear that the Loading Zone is "not only owned by

Aggies, but also for the Aggies," according to Ray Emerson, D.V.M., class of '65.

The restaurant, owned by Emerson, his brother-in-law Preston Ruffino, III, class of '69, and their wives, is a franchise out of Waco, where the owners live.

"We plan to be in and out of College Station on our days off and on weekends to make sure

the restaurant stays top quality," Emerson said. "We plan to be here a long time.

"Our goal is to help Aggies in every way we can; but right now all we can offer them is great food and atmosphere at moderate prices."

The Loading Zone caters mainly to students, with a menu that spans the gamut from fried zucchini, potato skins and home

fries to salads, fish, "pocket" sandwiches, nachos and stuffed potatoes.

Happy hour is scheduled from 2 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Operating hours are 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-12 midnight Friday and Saturday and 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday.

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