

Discarded doors, stones often used

# Eatery expands one nail at a time

ODESSA (AP) — Ronnie Lewis, 30-year-old proprietor of Dos Amigos restaurant, beer garden and bull ring, admits he's sometimes compulsive about expanding his business.

One afternoon, while contemplating an empty house on his property, he decided it would make a good extra bar.

"I went and got my crow bar and a sledgehammer, and I said, 'Yeah, we can do it — we got three days,'" Lewis said, referring to preparations for the second annual C.C. Hutton Invitational Bull Ride in June, headlined by Eddy Raven. Hutton is Lewis' silent partner.

Contractor Mike Pool said, "We were through three hours before certain time, weren't we? Eddie Ra-

ven was here on Saturday night, and we were still pounding nails Saturday afternoon. We squeezed it all in."

Due to the time limit, though, Lewis was forced to use some new materials. That was a first for Dos Amigos, which has been built from the ground up with discarded windows, doors, stones and bricks.

"The things in this place came from all over town, all over the country," Pool said.

Dos Amigos got started with the 1982 purchase of property that had served as a horse barn for 20 years. Lewis had been in construction business for 10 years prior to the purchase.

"In March, we started shoveling out the manure," he said. "I lived in

the bar while we were building this place. This is where we dropped."

The place had a magic even then, Lewis contends.

Quite a bit of the "antique junk" found on the property was incorporated into the West Texas decor.

Also decorating the interior is a vast assortment of business cards tacked to the walls and ceiling.

"Some of these have been here since day one," Lewis said. "Some people have three or four different cards up there."

One card is from Singapore.

"You look around, and you can find cards from anywhere," he said. "Midland, Kermit, England, France."

Five months ago, Lewis moved

into yet another house next door to Dos Amigos. He lives there and shares the yard with his pets. Lewis now owns 17 lots in the neighborhood.

The restaurant did begin as a restaurant, featuring the first fajitas ever served in Ector or Midland counties, Lewis claims. Since then, the menu has expanded, most recently to include soft chicken tacos. Also expanding is the range of entertainment offered at the establishment.

Bull riding draws about 400 people every other Sunday. Austin bands such as Joe Ely, Omar and the Howlers and the Tail Gators draw even more.

The first bull ride was held in 1983 by Bad Company Rodeo.

The last major physical expansion took place at the same time that the old house was converted to a bar. A larger stage was built to accommodate bands, and the Cowboy Club grew.

"That was the biggest move we ever made in one time," Pool said. "It took two solid weeks and 600 beers. That's how many beers we had on the tab. Some of it was trade out for beer and fajitas, just whatever. Some of it's been real money even. He usually feeds us."

Even now, "We're scheming what we can drag in and weld together," Pool said.

How is Dos Amigos able to expand when other businesses are going under?

"The food, entertainment and beer, it's been affected, but you can still come in here and drink two beers and have a fajita and spend less than \$5. Some people come just to see it," said Lewis, who employs five full-time people and hires two or three part-time bartenders during special events.

"Dos Amigos could be in trouble," Lewis said. "It's a day to day deal. Success is getting to work in the morning."

"I feel it's a success to be here from where I was, but I'm not a wealthy person. I haven't had a vacation in I don't know how long. And I don't jump up and go to the horse races or go to the lake."

The saga of Dos Amigos isn't over yet.

"We're going to have two stories all the way around," Pool said, "one board and one nail at a time. It's all going to take 100 years."

# Back yard is Navratilova's playground

FORT WORTH (AP) — When you're a professional athlete, you take the game seriously.

So when you're not competing, it's nice to have a place where you can really play.

Tennis champion Martina Navratilova finds such a place in her own back yard. When she returns from winning at Wimbledon or Prague, she retreats to the small, enclosed yard of her Fort Worth townhouse for relaxation and recreation. The swimming pool provides options for aquatic sport: a water slide winds down from the balcony and a basketball goal hovers just above the water. A neon palm tree on the wall of the house and a canvas privacy screen with a palm tree motif introduce a playful decorative note.

"I wanted it to be a little different from what everybody else has, something special," Navratilova said.

To achieve such an end, she and companion Judy Nelson hired Alan Richardson, of Richardson-Whitney and Associates, to plan the landscape. They gave him a free hand, directing him only to include an abundance of flowering plants.

"I don't like just green things," Navratilova said. "I really like to see flowers."

Richardson said, "When I got here, I found a very uninteresting back yard — a rectangle." Brick walls and absence of shade created a harsh environment, uninviting to people or plants.

Plantings were chosen to soften the yard's severe lines, add color and establish a theme.

"Martina is primarily home during the summer months, so we wanted to take advantage of the Texas heat," Richardson said. Thus a tropical motif

was chosen. "Texas will afford that almost six months out of the year," he said.

Elephant ears, banana trees and pink and green caladiums line one end of the pool, below the canvas screen. Along the adjoining wall are bougainvillea in big pots, biscus and pink crape myrtle.

Shallow bowls of verbena, purslane, geraniums and periwinkles provide additional color, as does the jackbean vine when its purple blossoms drape the wall in autumn. Strawberry plants serve as a ground covering as well as offering fruit.

The intense colors of the flowering plants are underscored by black and white accents. The water slide is high-gloss black enamel on the outside and white inside. Palm leaves are outlined in black on the white canvas screen, supported by black and white fiberglass trunks.

The basketball goal at the other end of the pool likewise is supported by a palm tree "trunk." The screen, trunks, goal and slide were designed and made by Fort Worth carpenter and artist Ron Mackey.

On a second-story wall overlooking the pool, neon palm trees created by Fort Worth artist Frida Blumenburg cast a warm glow. They, too, boast fiberglass trunks by Mackey.

"I really like it at night," Navratilova said. "It's really beautiful."

Navratilova is the first to acknowledge the respite this oasis affords in a world normally aswirl with travel, competition and fans.

"It's a very, very relaxing place for me," she said. "It's one way to get away from it all."

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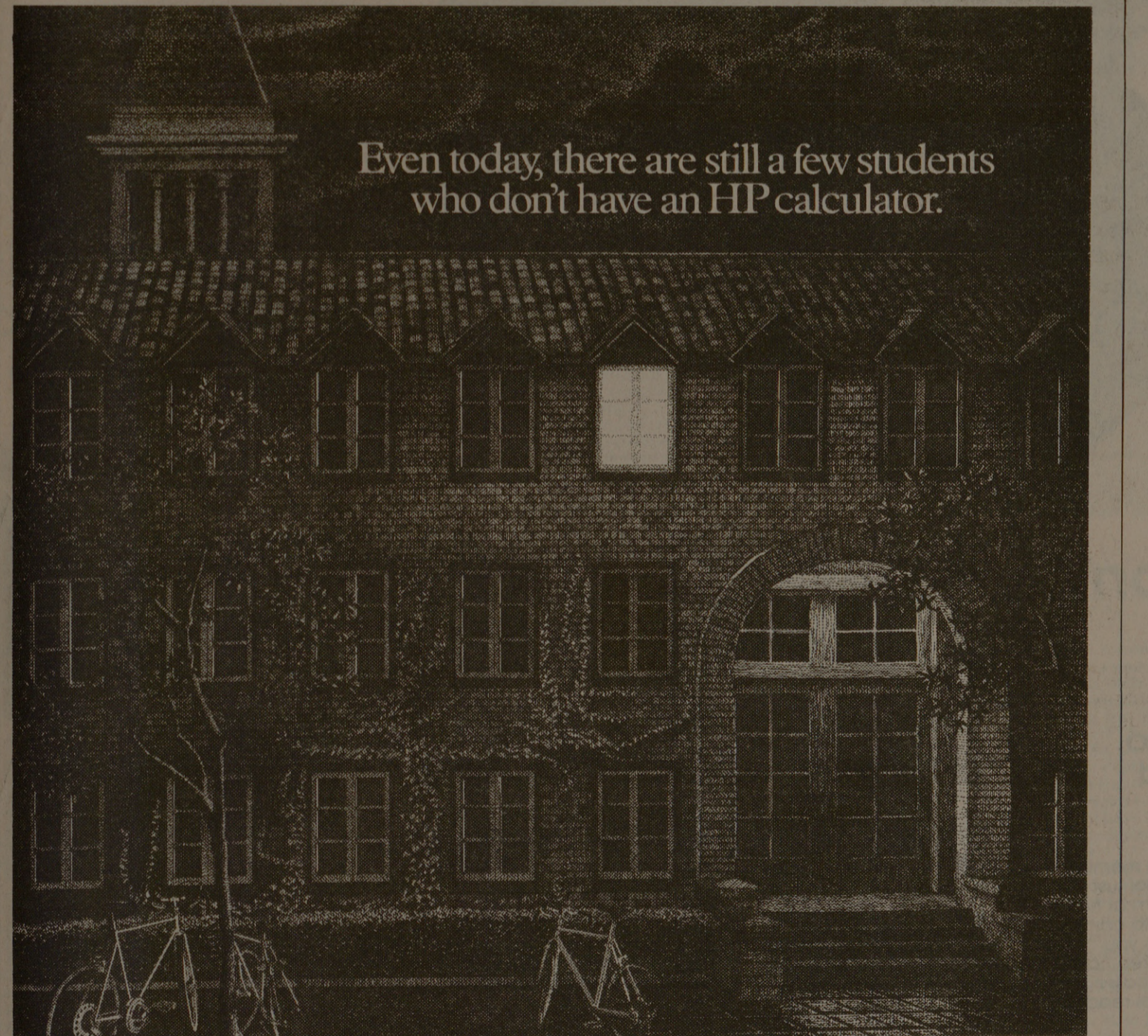
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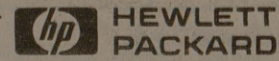
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