

Locals invited to enjoy dinner, drinks and music at Blues Factory

By APRIL TOWERY
Lifestyles editor

As if owning a restaurant and blues club was not enough to keep John and Nicole Rausch busy, the young couple has a baby on the way. But they are far from singing the blues — the Rausches have smiles on their faces and welcome the hectic lifestyle they have chosen.

The Rausches are the owners of Edges Main Street Grill and Bar in downtown Bryan, and its recent upstairs addition, The Blues Factory, which opened Aug. 15.

"Blues and jazz has always interested us," John Rausch said. "We thought it was really underplayed here in town."

Edges sells cigars and is

equipped with a complete bar including beer, wine and margaritas. One-stop shopping is one of the features of Edges and The Blues Factory. John Rausch said an entire evening of entertainment is available to weekend customers.

"You park here once, and get your dinner, music and margaritas," he said.

The Rausches invented a special margarita recipe for The Blues Factory they call the blue margarita and serve only upstairs.

Although the downstairs restaurant and the upstairs blues club have not always been around, the building has been called Edges for at least 94 years. It used to be a clothing store where Bryan residents could purchase formal wear and wedding dresses.

"Whenever we first bought the building, there was a lady in her mid-70s or 80s walking around outside," John Rausch said. "I asked if I could help her, and she said no, she was just going in to shop."

Nicole Rausch said the Edges of the past brought a lot of Bryan natives to the area.

"It was like Charli or Plain Jane of the 1900s," she said.

The Rausches bought the Edges building in November 1995 and transformed it into the restaurant last October. They had originally talked about living in the upstairs area, which covers 3,000 square feet. But John Rausch said things went awry.

"Banks didn't want to lend us money because we were young and this was a commercial building," he said. "We felt like there was not a place where you could get live music and a good atmosphere, so here we are."

The club was originally created as a 21 and up bar, but Nicole Rausch said they made some adjustments to

accommodate the Aggies.

"It's 18 and up now — it was 21 and up, but now that the college students are back, we don't want to turn anyone away," she said.

This weekend, The Blues Factory will play host to local band Blue Note All Stars Friday evening and Houston blues legend Big Otis on Saturday. John Rausch said he is interested in local talent, but there is a screening process.

"We at least want to hear a demo," he said. "If someone wants to come in and set up and audition, we might could do that, but that gets expensive because we'd have to hire a sound engineer. Right now, we're just taking demo tapes."

Nicole Rausch said it has not been difficult booking out-of-town acts, but finding hotel rooms for the musicians on game weekends has been challenging. The Rausches are looking forward to Big Otis' return to the bar this weekend.

"He'll easily fill this room before 9:30," John Rausch said. "He plays Motown and blues with horns, guitars and drums. He has a following that travel in from Houston, Dallas and Austin. They call us regularly asking when he's going to be back."

John Rausch said, although The Blues Factory is down the street from other live music venues Dixie Theatre and 3rd Floor Cantina, there is no competition among the clubs.

"There's some bands that play both there and here, but it's more of a joint effort," he said. "Now there's three live music venues in downtown Bryan. They're glad to have us here."

For now, the Rausches primary goal with the restaurant and blues club is to pay the mortgage and prepare for their family addition.

"Help contribute to this baby's college fund, so someday he can go to A&M," John Rausch said.



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Nicole and John Rausch are the owners of The Blues Factory.

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