



Clockwise from lower left: Will Brady says the “B” names seem to be working, so he’s sticking with the theme. No. 4 will be Bodega.

Jon Luken tends bar at The Banshee, Brady’s first Chico establishment.

PHOTOS BY MEREDITH J. COOPER

Brady demonstrates how to make The Banshee’s Bahn Mi Tacos on a recent episode of Guy Fieri’s *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.

ner opened B Street Oyster Bar in 2013.

“I started out with the idea of traveling,” Brady said. The Banshee was supposed to evoke the ambiance of Dublin or Boston; “with an oyster bar, I wanted it to feel like you were in Brooklyn or Venice.”

He realized early on that his plan for B Street was flawed. “People in Chico couldn’t afford to eat oysters every day,” he said. “We had to change.”

That’s part of what’s made Brady’s businesses successful—the ability to recognize when something isn’t working and change it rather than stubbornly trying to make it work. He dropped the “Oyster Bar” from B Street’s name and added “Public House.” It’s worked. At Bill’s Towne Lounge, which opened last fall, he’s still working out the menu, though the overall goal is 1960s-’70s L.A. The patio is set to open in a week or two, which will complete the construction phase.

Brady’s accomplishments haven’t gone unnoticed by those around him. At the Downtown Chico Business Association’s last annual meeting, he was presented with the Kudos Award “for economic development and capital investment in downtown Chico,” said Kathleen Rivard, DCBA administrative assistant. “To have three very separate, different, individual restaurants is amazing.”

During a recent interview inside Bill’s, Brady could barely sit still—he quietly chided a host who wasn’t greeting customers walking in the door; the music was boring, so he asked the bartender to liven it up.

Brady acknowledges he’s got a bit of a reputation for being loud and obnoxious. He’s calmed down over the years, he says,

though sometimes he finds it difficult to bite his tongue. “Be ready to be mean,” he said by way of advice for anyone hoping to open a restaurant, bar or any business, really. “I now have about 110 employees. Someone always needs to be fired.”

That said, he estimates he pays better than many other restaurants because he wants to attract good workers. “If you want good food, you have to pay better. And treat people right or you’re not going to get the product you want.”

He and his various business partners promote from within, as well, offering incentives including part ownership. Good quality staff is one thing; good quality ingredients are another.

“Use good stuff,” he said simply, but figuring out food costs is a must. “We used to grind our own burgers at The Banshee. Then we started getting it ground at S&S [Produce]—and that works better [in terms of staff time], plus people like to hear that [we’re supporting local businesses].”

For his next venture, Brady and Rawbar owner Darren Chadderdon are working on the former Cyclesport space at the corner of Second and Main streets across from Bill’s Towne Lounge. That one is going to serve a few functions, he says: First, it will be a bakery to provide bread for all of his restaurants; second, it’ll offer quick food options for people on the go.

He envisions Bodega will serve doughnuts and breakfast sandwiches for breakfast, plus offerings from a coffee counter. For lunch, there will be deli sandwiches—no paninis or anything that requires cooking, unless it’s premade. “The goal is to be a deli, like the ones they have in Boston and Philly,” he said. At night, there’ll be a dessert bar, since none of his places serve dessert.

“I just want to create something new that we don’t have in Chico,” he said, adding, “If you’re gonna copy someone, do it better.”

—MEREDITH J. COOPER
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YEARS IN BUSINESS

LOCALLY MADE

LEANN COOLEY OWNER

It’s easy to see the impact LeAnn Cooley has made on the city of Chico. Signs created by Cooley, owner of Signs & Graphic Design, hang proudly on storefronts throughout the area. A licensed C-45 Electrical Sign Contractor with 20+ years of experience in the sign industry, Cooley is well-versed in every aspect of sign fabrication and has produced high profile projects for Disneyland, Legoland and the Getty Museum.

She enjoys working closely with her clients to provide solid design, fair pricing, and professional project management. Cooley has a reputation in the sign industry for her ability to design signs that add beauty to the environment. She is also known to light up any room she enters, and customer relations are one of her greatest strengths.

Cooley has also made an impact on the Chico music scene and performs lively swing and vintage jazzy blues at many of our local establishments.



Whether she’s singing a song or designing a sign, LeAnn loves making people happy. If you are in need of a sign, give her a call today!



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YEARS IN BUSINESS

LOCALLY MADE

KEVIN RILEY MICHAEL WEAR NICK ANDREW MICHAEL HALL OWNERS

Locally owned and operated 5th Street Steakhouse opened in August 2000, featuring U.S.D.A. prime cuts of beef, fresh seafood, a full service bar, and an extensive wine list. The owners and staff pride themselves in providing consistent and excellent personal service along with the finest quality food.

This passion for quality food, top-notch service and a lively atmosphere has made 5th Street Steakhouse a memorable and cherished landmark of the Chico community as well as a Best of Chico Living Legend 14 years running.

5th Street Steakhouse also offers a banquet room which is attached to the main dining room area, but provides a private section for any special event. This beautiful facility is perfect for birthdays, wedding rehearsal dinners, anniversaries, religious celebrations,



graduations, fundraisers, holiday parties, and private meetings.

With an array of menu options and an extensive wine list, you are sure to find 5th Street Steakhouse to be the ideal fit for your event.

Everyone at 5th Street Steakhouse looks forward to serving you soon!



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