

German eatery with 21st century flair opening in South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Bringing a different food profile with a high level of service at an economical price to South Lake Tahoe are the goals of Himmel Haus owners and employees.

German food with American and Californian twists will be coming out of the kitchen of the old Christiana Inn starting July 6.



The correct glass is used for each beer at Himmel Haus. Photos/LTN

While schnitzel is on the menu, the breading is pretzels.

Truckee Sourdough Bread Company is creating a pretzel bun specifically for Himmel Haus.

The signature dish is a hamburger of sorts, but it's made with pork instead of beef. It is made with three types of pork – ground bratwurst patty, grilled Black Forest ham and bacon.

“Each pork has a different flavor profile,” chef Josh Bushnick

said. “We didn’t want to just do a hamburger.”

Besides interesting twists on traditional German food, the bar is stocked with imported beer from Germany – including from the world’s first brewery that opened in 1032. The nuns are still crafting this brew in the old style with just four ingredients.

Most of the beer vendors also supply a special glass for their particular beer to be poured into.

“Our goal is to be one of the top three restaurants,” owner Matt Eastling told *Lake Tahoe News* while sitting at one of the communal tables last week. (Zak Latzka is the other owner of the restaurant.)

In large part that will be Bushnick’s responsibility because he is the chef. He has more than 25 years of experience in the service industry. Using the freshest, most organic ingredients is the plan.



Local wood was used to build aspects of the bar area.

It’s the tables, though, that will also set this eatery apart from others in the area. Much like a Basque restaurant where strangers sit together, the same will be at Himmel Haus.

While work still needed to be done last week on the interior –

like installing the 12-foot television screen in the bar and tweaking a few other things, the historic restaurant at the foot of the Heavenly's base lodge is ready to throw its doors open. Expect plenty of Olympic coverage to be shown on that TV.

About 15 people will be employed at the restaurant. The ratio of full time vs. part time will depend on how busy the establishment is. Everyone on the front end of the house is local.

This location has had its ups and downs. When it was the original Christiana Inn it was hopping – one of those dining establishments that had to be visited on any trip to Tahoe. Plus, it was popular with locals. But it eventually closed.

Linda Catron remodeled the building, bringing everything up to code. She reopened it in 2007 under the same name. The renaissance didn't last long.

Then came Jens Dressler who had been the chef at Blue Angel Café. He bought that restaurant and renamed the Saddle Road eatery Fallen Angel, opening in December 2010. He skipped town a few months later owing several people money and to this day has not had charges filed against him.

But Eastling isn't concerned about the most recent history of the building, as the newest tenant he is confident the area is ready for something new.

Besides good food and unique beers, the owners want education to be part of the experience. Eastling said he wants to connect people to the food and beer. On a monthly basis vendors will be brought in to discuss the finer points of beer, or there could be a cooking class or some other lesson to be taught.

Notes:

- Address – 3819 Saddle Road, South Lake Tahoe
- Phone – (530) 721.7230
- Opening – July 6
- Hours – Tuesday-Wednesday 4:30pm-midnight; Thursday-Saturday 4:30pm-2am.