

The Twinkling Star returning to Paducah

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A lunch crowd gathers at the Twinkling Star in Paducah's Midtown neighborhood sometime in the mid-1930s shortly after the restaurant opened in 1933. It went by the name of the Cat and the Fiddle for about a year before changing to the Twinkling Star, the name it kept into the 1990s. The Twinkling Star will return May 6 when it reopens as a sports bar and live entertainment venue.

Contributed photo

The restaurant at a prime location on the corner of 31st and Broadway in Paducah has gone by more names than most can remember in the past decade.

In a few weeks it will reopen under the only name that ever seemed to stick: The Twinkling Star.

Father-daughter team Champ and Brook Webb are reviving the Paducah mainstay, inspired by the Twinkling Star of the late 1970s and '80s. It'll be a sports bar with classic bar food and a focus on live entertainment.

"There's a lot of places in Paducah that have great food. We just want to have good food with great fun," Champ Webb said. "And we're going to have really good wings, too."

Champ and Brook will open the restaurant together, and Brook Webb will take things over once the reincarnated Twinkling Star gets established. After working in the restaurant business for eight years, Brook felt it was time to open one herself, and her dad wanted to help her do just that.

"I'm most excited to finally be able to run my own place," Brook said. "I've learned a lot from all the people I've worked for. It's just time. I think my dad's probably most excited about getting to work with me all the time."

"That's true," Champ said, smiling at his daughter.

Neither Champ nor Brook are at all worried about the building being "cursed," as so many people like to say.

Though the Twinkling Star was successful for decades, from the time it opened in 1934 as a diner to its time as a sports bar under the same name in the '70s and '80s, several other restaurants didn't last long in the location.

While Flamingo Row did well during its run there before moving to its current location near the mall, most people remember the numerous grand openings followed by abrupt closings. Six restaurants have come and gone since Flamingo Row relocated in 2006.

Even so, when someone mentions "the curse" to Brook, she said she just does "the smile and nod."

"The building's not cursed," she said, matter-of-factly. "This building makes plenty of money, it's just that you have to have the right people to handle that money."

Champ added: "My understanding of a couple places that didn't work here, they put in too much money up front. They were always against the eight ball."

"This place, when we open May the 6th, that Friday night when we have the Cruisers here, it will be absolutely packed, and it's not because me and Brook are here. It's because this location is here and everybody's waiting for it. We just happen to be the ones that are going to open it."

Right now the Webbs are working long hours to get the Twinkling Star ready for its resurrection next month, cleaning up the dining room and beer garden and knocking out the "dome," the glass solarium on the far west end of the dining room.

The dome will be replaced with a large glass garage door flanked by floor-to-ceiling windows that can all be opened when the weather's nice, opening the dining room to the large beer garden outside.

The Twinkling Star's menu will be limited, but people will still have plenty of options for eating while enjoying music outside or watching sports events inside, the Webbs said.

They'll have a full bar and 16 beer taps - eight inside, eight outside - featuring "something for everybody," from Bud Light to craft beer. They'll be open from roughly 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. during the week and have full bar hours on weekends.

Two local bands are set to play opening weekend: The Cruisers Friday, May 6, and Bottled Blond Saturday, May 7.

The following weekend will feature Larry Brewer of The Windows, a west Tennessee rock band popular in the area in the '80s.

The Webbs are excited for the opening and say everything is feeling right, especially the name. They considered calling it "Starbrooks," or "The Tin Star." But nothing stuck quite like the original.

"I was sitting at that light one morning, looking at the Coke Plant, and I thought you know, they didn't change the name of the Coke Plant. Why would we want to change the name of the Twinkling Star?" Champ said. "That's what the place has always been and will be again."