

TIP OF MY TONGUE

Mac n' cheese fest and new Thai spot

This is a week of fond farewells and several food fundraisers.

On behalf of Petaluma, I extend a special thank you and good luck to Kevin Collins, bartender at Seared, as he ventures into the wilds of Bend, Ore., in the next chapter of his life. Collins has been an integral part of Petaluma's nightlife, bartending at McNear's Saloon for nearly two decades before moving to Seared. He built a loyal following over the years due to his positive attitude, sense of humor and skills behind the bar. Kevin has made many a happy hour just that — happy.

Coincidentally, I bumped into Collins at Thistle Meats while wishing a fond farewell to master butcher Kent Schoberle, who leaves us for his home state of Texas, where he will help an ethical cattle operation through its next phase of growth.

If Molly Best is the heart of Thistle Meats, Schoberle is surely its soul. Thankfully, he leaves behind a great staff that will continue to take care of customers' carnivorous needs. His expertise in all things meat is rare to see outside the countryside butcher shops of Europe. His old world artistry and new age thinking made him the perfect fit for Petaluma, where he was equally skillful, good-natured, thoughtful, and considerate behind the butcher block as he was when speaking with the intermittent protester attacking his trade.

Now back to your normally scheduled port wine report.

Brixx Pie and Bottle Special

We stopped into Brixx for a quick visit with friends and ran into an empty bottle of port. The horror! Owner Noel was more than happy to open a Sandeman 20 Year Tawny, which was a lucky coincidence because at \$9 a glass, we were more than happy to drink it. Don't miss Brixx's \$20 "pie and bottle

of wine" special every Monday night, a great chance to catch restaurant owners outside of their natural habitat.

Events

Starting on Sept. 20, F.A. Nino's will test run some of their tasty sauces and rubs atop BBQ at Petaluma Hills Brewing Company. Rumor has it that F.A. Nino's may start producing a Petaluma Hills beer-infused mustard, so let's hope this partnership blossoms.

Petaluma Animal Services Foundation (PASF) benefits from two big fundraisers on the horizon. Petaluma Craft Guild's second annual "Meet Your Maker" is on Sunday, Sept. 27, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Mystic Theater. Local brewers, distillers, bartenders, and chefs will be on hand, along with live music and a live Podcast.

PASF's "Mac n' Cheese Challenge" follows on Saturday, Oct. 10, from noon to 4 p.m. at Herzog Hall at the Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds. With all the great crab, lobster, bacon and pork belly macs that our restaurants have to offer, I'm sure this will be a super tasty event.

Also on Oct. 10 is Burning Ham, a family-friendly pork cook-off competition and festival with wine, beer, live music, kids' activities and plenty of pork at Penngrove Park from 12:30 to 7 p.m. I was one of the lucky rib judges this past June when the Petaluma Active 20-30 Club brought us the Ribs for Kids cook-off at Mario & Johns tavern on D Street. The Active 20-30 club has now joined forces with other Sonoma County 20-30 clubs to host this event to raise money for underprivileged youth.

New Restaurants

River Thai is moving into Romeo's Pizza's old space on Washington Street across from Exchange Bank. With the closing of Sea Thai, Ginger Thai and Banyan Tree in recent years, this is a welcome

Porter

Continued from page D1

addition to our downtown culinary scene.

Brasil BBQ has moved into the Orchard Supply Hardware shopping center on Old Redwood Highway and McDowell Boulevard. They offer "Rodizio," which is an

all-you-can-eat Brazilian BBQ option where servers come around to your table to carve meat directly from skewers right onto your plate.

(You can reach Houston Porter at houston@avant-larde.com.)



HOUSTON PORTER