

BUSINESS FORUM

New Brooks eatery to feature 'multicultural influences'

A dream is coming true for Andy Brooks of Simi Valley.

Brooks, 37, along with his wife, Jayme, have spent recent months transforming the previous Ruby's Mexican Restaurant in downtown Ventura into the new Brooks Restaurant. The restaurant is scheduled to open this week if the final permit from the health department is received.

Brooks has held key positions with major restaurants over the past 20 years. The new restaurant, at 545 E. Thompson Blvd., is the fulfillment of his dream to own and operate a restaurant of his own.

"Our menu will be New American with multicultural influences," Brooks said. "In addition to our dinner menu, we'll feature a nightly five-course tasting menu with dishes and daily creations prepared with seasonal ingredients."

The 3,700-square-foot restaurant includes a private dining room, separate bar and an outdoor dining area. The dining room seats 60 patrons, the patio 22, the private dining room 12, and the bar accommodates 12 customers.

It was designed by Tom Nahabedian in a rustic, elegant style with modern accents, Brooks said.

The dress code for patrons will be "upscale casual," Brooks noted. Dinner prices will generally range from \$19 to \$25.

The restaurant will initially be open with its bar and dinner menus. Dinner hours will be Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday from 5 to 9:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 5 to 10:30 p.m. The restaurant will introduce a lunch service later this spring. Lunch will be served Wednesday through Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Brooks grew up in Southern California and graduated from Scottsdale Culinary Institute. Subsequently, he became head cook at the Stonehouse Restaurant at the San Ysidro Ranch resort in Montecito. He also has held positions at Lark Creek Café in San Mateo, Drago Restaurant in Santa



Jim
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Monica, and was executive chef at Tanino Ristorante & Bar in Westwood.

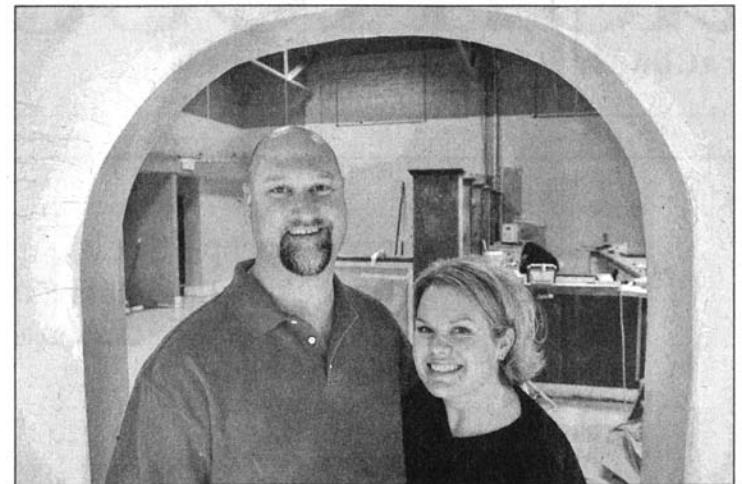
In 2000, Brooks left California to hold chef positions with restaurants in Chicago and Washington, D.C. He returned to his home state to open his restaurant in Ventura and to be close to other family members.

Jayme Brooks, a CPA, will handle bookkeeping for the new business. She also holds a full-time position for a firm in Chatsworth, as treasurer and financial adviser.

The executive chef at the new 25-employee Brooks Restaurant will be Shawn Williams, who has worked with Brooks at other restaurants in previous years. Williams worked most recently as executive chef at The Country Club, a steak house in Las Vegas.

For more information about the new Brooks Restaurant, call 652-7070, or visit <http://www.restaurantbrooks.com>.

— Star columnist Jim Woodard, a Ventura resident, is a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist. Fax him at 644-0790 or e-mail him at Storyjim@aol.com.



Alison Knox / Special to The Star

Andy and Jayme Brooks are nearly ready to open Brooks Restaurant in downtown Ventura at the site of the previous Ruby's Mexican Restaurant.