

COLUMBUS

Local News

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Rabid Buckeye fans again have a restaurant to call home

Packed with memorabilia, the Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill was set to open Tuesday, Nov. 23, in Grandview Heights

By MARK DUBOVEC

While Michigan fans will be allowed inside the newest restaurant at Grandview Yard, they might find themselves overwhelmed by the strong Buckeye flavor.

The Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill, 775 Yard St., was set to open for business Tuesday, Nov. 23, and features a wide collection of sports memorabilia from Ohio State University from over the years.

Charles Lagarce, president of Columbus Hospitality Management, which is running the restaurant for Nationwide Realty Investors, said he doesn't think of the grill as a sports bar.

"We like to refer to it as a sports-themed restaurant," Lagarce said. "Every day is game day."

Tina Guegold, vice president of marketing for Nationwide, the developers behind Grandview Yard, said the new grill is not affiliated with the former Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe on Olentangy River Road, which closed its doors a year ago. Of all the memorabilia on display in the new grill, only a Heisman Trophy awarded to Archie Griffin was at the previous location; the rest is a fresh collection.

"Our arrangement with Ohio State provides that opportunity," Lagarce said.

The restaurant has licensed the name Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill from the university.

The featured OSU paraphernalia includes trophies, T-shirts, programs, photographs, letters written by and sent to Woody Hayes, Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy's Associated Press Athlete of the Year Award, and items dating back to the time of Chic Harley. Some tables even have portions of benches from Ohio Stadium incorporated into them. Guegold said people most likely can be anywhere in the restaurant and see something they've never seen before.

Not all the items are from football. Lagarce said all the sports programs from OSU will be represented, and items on display will be rotated regularly.



Photo by Mark Dubovec

The Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill is located at 775 Yard St. in the new Grandview Yard development.

Lagarce said the restaurant looks at OSU as an ongoing partner.

"They look forward to this as a wonderful venue to represent the university," he said.

Lagarce said the proximity to the new Hyatt Place hotel works in the restaurant's favor. He envisions prospective OSU students, alumni and their families frequenting the restaurant when visiting the university.

"We're excited," he said.

Features of the Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill include a seated dining area, bar and outdoor patio, a screening room with a big-screen TV, and a "recruiting room" for small events.

At capacity, 200 people can be inside,

and an additional 65 can dine outside.

There also are 43 high-definition TVs that can show up to 10 different sporting events at a time.

"There's not a place you can't watch the game," Lagarce said.

Two of those screens won't show live games, however. At the bar, those TVs will display images of Ohio State from different events over the years.

"When we were doing all the research and looking through hundreds of photos, we couldn't put them all up, but we wanted to share them," Lagarce said.

Lagarce said the mission of the restaurant is to provide a real dining experience. Columbus Hospitality recruited an executive chef from Phoenix to run the food service. Signature dishes include prime rib, rotisserie chicken, filet mignon and a sandwich known as the "Tailgator."

"There's a real variety," Lagarce said. "I hope people will recognize the freshness and quality."

The Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill is the second restaurant to open at Grandview Yard since the development opened Sept. 1. Jason's Deli began operations Sept. 13.

For more information call 614-299-6639 or visit the website buckeyegrill.com. ■