

Estimated printed pages: 3

March 27, 2003

Section: Weekend

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Column:Club Crawl'

IQ's settles into roomier quarters

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* Bar: IQ's

* Address/phone: 2105 University Ave., Green Bay (920) 437-2950

* Open: 11 a.m. daily

* The scoop: IQ's, the folksy watering hole that just didn't seem quite in the right spot on South Broadway, is settled into a new home, and darn it if it isn't pretty much the same ol' IQ's.

Owners Bill and Sandra Hickey opened across town in the former Microswitch in July. The appeal of the site is obvious. There's a new full menu, with lots of space for sit-down meals. The bar itself is bigger, with space for pool and foosball tables -- amenities impossible at the cramped Broadway bar. And it has a proper stage for the bar's many live music shows, so there's no more squeezing past the bass player to get to the bathroom.

But wasn't that intimacy part of the charm of IQ's?

"That's one thing that we've kind of lost," Bill Hickey said. "Now we've got that big room there. But we've still got the same vibes. The customers are the same."

IQ's still has plenty of character, and the crowd is as eclectic as ever. If moving was a gamble -- endangering what by any yardstick was a highly successful bar -- the Hickeys and the patrons of IQ's have hit the jackpot.

* Atmosphere: The basic setup of the old 'Switch remains unchanged. A large U-shape bar fills one area, while the stage, seating and game area comprise the side hall. This club crawler was glad to see the vintage Old Style beer barrel digital clock survive the move.

Another bonus of the move was more display space for art. Local artists have their work on the walls, and fresh pieces rotate in regularly as others are sold.

* Tunes: Folks flocking to IQ's on the weekend should expect live music. Hickey said IQ's stage is booked through June, and the scope of the bands coming in is widening thanks to the extra performance space.

"We're getting a lot more different, diverse bands playing," he said. "Not just local, we're getting mostly regional." This weekend, it's Spirit Creek tonight, Madison jam band Groovulous Glove Friday and three-piece funk/rock band GreenScene Saturday.

The popular Wednesday open mike sessions have for the past nine weeks been a contest building to the finals on Wednesday and April 9.

When the stage is quiet, one of the best jukeboxes in the city takes over. The new digital online jukebox is as eclectic as the one at the old bar. You wouldn't think twice about hearing Soft Cell, Lou Reed, Radiohead and early Phish in succession.

* Crowd: If anything, Hickey said, IQ's patronage has gotten more diverse since the move. The bar is now much closer to students at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, a strong support base even back on Broadway.

* Munchies: IQ's expanded menu features specialty pasta dishes, gyros and chicken breasts in addition to standbys such as burgers and appetizers. In April and May, a free cup of homemade soup comes with any lunch order.

* Diversions: The new pool table and foosball table are in the back of the stage area, tucked away from the bar. You'll also find darts, video gaming and Golden Tee.

* Fun fact: IQ's homemade "voodoo chili" takes its name in roundabout fashion from a classic Jimi Hendrix song, Hickey said. A band billed as C.J. Mack and Voodoo Chile -- the latter the name of the Hendrix tune -- had a gig planned at IQ's. Several patrons, seeing the posters around the bar, ordered a bowl of the as-yet-nonexistent voodoo chili.

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