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New and Improved

Restaurant reopens with familiar WWII?theme

By Gloria Love
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Staff / Alicia Lavender

Manager Tricia Clancy stands with one of the airplane displays customers see as they drive in to 57th Fighter Group restaurant.



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The 57th Fighter Group restaurant, a north Dekalb dining tradition for three decades, is back in business on Clairmont Road after being closed for three years.

Originally opened at the edge of DeKalb-Peachtree Airport in 1981, it was open for 25 years and was a favorite spot for aviation buffs or anyone who enjoyed dinner or a drink while watching planes take off and land.

When it closed in 2006, it was purchased by Pat Epps of Epps Aviation. The restaurant was renovated in an effort to return the space to its original state.

"We refinished the furniture and painted," said General Manager Tricia Clancy. "And we brought back Winston in the bathrooms," she added, referring to the 57th's practice of playing Winston Churchill's speeches instead of music in the restrooms.

Former patrons will remember the 57th as being modeled after a World War II-era French farmhouse, complete with white plaster walls, green shutters, and a "bombed-out" chimney.

Also brought back were the signature hand-painted signs, as well as the World War II-era propaganda posters with slogans such as Keep 'Em Flying is Our Battle Cry, and the pictures of the real 57th Fighter Group.

"We're not in the most convenient location, so we're more of a destination place," said Ms. Clancy, "We have good food, friendly service, and are a clean restaurant. We're getting back to basics."

Side-stepping the World War II theme the menu is, as described by Ms. Clancy, "American with a modern flare," and laden with feel-good favorites like beer cheese

soup.

The 57th also still offers its signature patio which allows close-up views of the adjacent DeKalb Peachtree Airport.

It is perhaps this mix of the old and new which attracts a wide variety of customers to the 57th, she said.

"We don't just have one type of customer," said Ms. Clancy, "Our patio group is different than people in the restaurant. The restaurant crowd is different from the people at the bar."

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