

Greenstreet Tavern starts jazzing up its act

Jazz favorite Chameleon featured house band

By DAVID MILLER
Staff Writer

The Greenstreet Tavern has jazzed up its act.

The downtown lounge that's located in Howard Johnson's In-Towne hotel at 100 E. Jefferson St. has turned into a hotbed for great live jazz.

Wednesday through Saturday, the Greenstreet Tavern shines a spotlight on a potpourri of jazz entertainment.

On Wednesday evenings, the 200-seat tavern plays host to the Jazz Showcase, a weekly musical presentation that features local and out-of-town jazz musicians in scheduled performances, and, often in informal jam sessions, too.

(Jazz Showcase made its debut last year at Les' Deli & City Tavern.)

Thursday to Saturday, Greenstreet Tavern is enlivened with the jazzy sounds of its newly hired house band, Chameleon with Mike Tracy.

Chameleon premiered Oct. 2 at Greenstreet Tavern, at which time the lounge transformed into a contemporary jazz club, according to Alan Cosgriff, food and beverage director at Howard Johnson's In-Towne hotel.

"I had been thinking for about a month that the bar needed something," Cosgriff explained. "And then it just came to me. I said, 'What about jazz?'"

And on that note, Cosgriff said he called the University of Louisville, which features a regular jazz presen-

tation called "Jazz Ensembles."

"I called U of L to see if there was a group available," Cosgriff said. "That's when I met Mike Tracy."

Tracy is the director of the Jazz Ensembles at U of L.

"He got real excited about it," Cosgriff said. "Tracy said, 'Let's put together a group.'"

Tracy called upon a group of musicians known as Chameleon.

"They've been around a long time, and I've known them for several years," Tracy said. "They played at On Broadway (restaurant) for some length of time."

Tracy, Kentucky jazz artist-in-residence, who's also teaching this semester at the University of Kentucky, said he performed with the members of Chameleon in the past.

And he thought that the opportunity to play with Chameleon on a regular basis sounded quite appealing.

The members of Chameleon are Glenn Fisher, keyboards; Darryel Cotten, drums; Tyrone Wheeler, bass, and Tracy, who plays sax.

The response at Greenstreet Tavern to the four-man instrumental

band has been very good thus far, Tracy remarked.

"It will take a while to build up an audience," he said. "It's sometimes difficult to get jazz enthusiasts to come out to a club to hear music."

"Louisville doesn't have a history of jazz," Tracy added. "However, they (jazz lovers) will show up in full force at the big events."

Cosgriff said that part of what he has planned at the new jazzy Greenstreet Tavern involves bringing in nationally known jazz acts.

"We're blossoming with jazz here," Cosgriff said. "We're still going to feature top-40 music and oldies but goodies during happy hour, but the rest of the time we'll have jazz."

"And I think Louisvillians are going to like it," he added.

The Greenstreet Tavern is open Monday to Friday from 11 to 4 a.m.; Saturday from 1 p.m. to 4 a.m., and Sunday from 1 to 10 p.m.

Chameleon will perform Thursday to Saturday after dark.

For more information, call Howard Johnson's In-Towne at 582-2481.



staff photo by DAVID MILLER

ALAN COSGRIFF, food and beverage director at Howard Johnson's In-Towne, is attempting to jazz things up at the hotel's Greenstreet Tavern. Cosgriff has hired an instrumental jazz band, Chameleon, as the bar's house band. And starting this week, Jazz Showcase, a Wednesday evening jazz presentation which includes performances by local and out-of-town musicians, will be featured at the tavern.



THE FOUR-MEMBER Chameleon jazz group has been hired as the house band at Greenstreet Tavern in Howard Johnson's In-Towne hotel on Jefferson Street in downtown Louisville.