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Photo courtesy of Deschutes Co. Historical Society

Rejuvenation On the Rails

by Mark R. Johnson, for The Bulletin

Breathing life into a 96-year-old railroad depot was no small feat, but it created the perfect space for an imaginative restaurant

Most folks who passed by the decrepit two-story building probably assumed it was destined for a quick death on a gusty day. It stood shakily at the edge of Terrebonne's railroad tracks with holes piercing the roof, windows long gone, and an exterior so weathered it looked like a relic from a ghost town.

But Ian and Kristin Yurdin couldn't stop thinking about it.

About a decade ago the couple—former Portland residents, he a business director for Adidas and she a podiatrist—began making frequent rock-climbing pilgrimages to Smith Rock State Park. The building, visible from the road east of downtown Terrebonne, captivated them from the beginning.

"We thought it was a really neat structure," said Kristin. "We kind of fell in love with it."

Although they didn't know what it was at the time, they had a vision that a restaurant would suit the space perfectly.

Neither had any prior restoration experience, nor did they come from a culinary background. But Kristin was dreaming of becoming a chef, and they saw a need for a gathering place in the area. Then this fact made a big impression: nearby Smith Rock receives as many as 450,000 visitors in a year.

So they did some sleuthing, found out who owned the property, and one day just picked up the phone.

"He basically said 'no,'" Ian recalls of that first chat with property owner Deryl Ferguson.

But the Yurdins—whose tenacity threatens to shatter the mold—took it as a

definite maybe.

"We actually called Deryl probably once a month for about five years," Ian said without a trace of sarcasm.

Along the way, they moved to Bend in 2001.

"And then one day I called him ... and he said, 'You know, I think that maybe I'd be interested in finally selling that building ... that's probably the easiest

expansion zone, the lot was zoned residential. That process took half a year to resolve.

The entire 2,200 square-foot building, they soon learned, was held up by a foundation of eight-inch by eight-inch wood piers. To put it on a proper foundation, they had to jack it up and slide it back nearly 40 feet from the tracks onto a platform. That nerve-wracking

grainstrength) gave the walls new support and were exposed for dramatic affect.

"We basically had to rebuild that roof up in the air, 20 feet high," Warburton said.

Other challenges included engineering a septic system in a locale where soil depths are thin at best.

"Every single day on this project, there was something funky going on," said Ian.

The Yurdins were intent on keeping as much of the building as possible—a departure from the advice they received over and over from just about everyone to tear it down. But they were unwavering, and in the end they estimate they were able to keep roughly 50 percent of the old depot.

The removed foundation blocks found a new home when they were milled into the gleaming U-shaped bar and all the surrounding dining tables. The original wall framing is still intact, and the siding on the north side was kept, as was the original beadboard soffit.

The floor joists are original to the structure. And instead of altering the building's size, dimensions were left exactly as they were. With an historic photo as reference, they replicated the old doors, copied the exterior lighting, and matched the siding.

Meanwhile, they were envisioning the look of the restaurant. Kristin reckons she sketched 50 or so floor plans on graph paper before they hit upon the final design. It needed to embrace the original layout as much as possible and incorporate 22-foot ceilings.

The project was a two-year endeavor, and in May of 2006 the Terrebonne Depot



Photo by Ben Moon

way to get you to stop calling'."

The Yurdins took possession in 2004, but even then they didn't know what they had, thinking it probably was an early-century warehouse. It wasn't until the discovery of an old photo of the original single-story depot—built in 1911 and later modified with a second story—that the building's history became clear.

From the start of the renovation, there were some major hurdles. Although situated in Terrebonne's commercial

piece of the job only took several days, but ate almost \$10,000.

Todd Warburton of Sisters-based Greenline Construction served as the contractor on the project.

"It was just raw studs and some pretty rough siding and a falling-in roof," he said. "We had to re-engineer all the walls and the roof."

The roof trusses and roof hips were removed and replaced with new supports. Glulams (beams glued together for cross-

So what's the recipe for the successful overhaul of a 96-year-old building?

"Make sure you end up working with a general contractor and a bank that agrees and understands what you want to do," said Ian. "You don't want to spend time rehashing the vision."

And the Yurdins emphasize the age-old restoration mantra: plan on it costing more than you think.

For them, saving the building was worth every penny. It means something to plenty of other people too.

"Every week or so someone says ... 'I'm really glad somebody did something with this building,'" said Ian. "That's pretty cool."

opened its doors. The restaurant, open for lunch and dinner, typically serves several hundred customers a day, seating locals, railroad crews, and rock climbers. Everyone gets a kick out of the trains that make an appearance anywhere from three to 10 times a day, rolling down the line. Sometimes people even cheer.

The Yurdins got the building they wanted. And the fringe benefits are immeasurable.

"We've had people call us with stories," said Kristin. "We had a woman whose sister was born in the train station. This was back in 1920-something. Her aunt and uncle were ticket masters."

One day they got a call about a legendary hobo whose initials were supposedly etched somewhere in the building. A search ensued, but the carving was never found.



Photo by Ian