



The Fulton Premieres, 1926.

The Fulton Pub

A Home Tavern for the Ages

Everything's Jake at the Fulton. At least, that's how it began. In 1926, during the depths of Prohibition, one of Portland's great saloon men, Jake Reisch, built a new place on SW Nebraska. It stood down the street from the neighborhood grocery, just up from the Portland Shipbuilding Co.'s yard and right next to the Shell service station. Jones Lumber and Portland furniture were a brisk walk or a short street car ride to the north. This was back when the Fulton neighborhood got its fingernails dirty.

Jake, a middle-aged, cigar-champing German immigrant, called his new venture Reisch's Place. And like it's name, the place wasn't big or fancy--nothing like Jake's earlier downtown saloons, but in these Dry Years, things were different. He couldn't even have beer on the menu, for God's sake (whether it was an unadvertised special remains a point of speculation). What he did serve up was a pretty solid, home cooked menu, some pinball games, stogies, candy and ice cream.

Prior to Prohibition, much of Jake's life had been spent around beer. He first put on a bar keep's white apron at the turn of the century, just before his wife's family sold the United States Brewery, one of the pioneer brewing establishments of Portland. Jake went on to manage three heavily patronized saloons until the state closed them and all others on January 1, 1916.

When the ban on booze was finally lifted in 1933, Jake was undoubtedly one of the first to retap the kegs. The seven years that followed must have been gloriously wet and frothy at Jake's "beer parlor." In 1940, though, the 71-year-old Jake decided he'd poured his last brew. He untied his apron, and turned over the key. And while his reign came to end, the tradition continued.

During the past half century, The Pub That Jake Built wore its status of "working man's watering hole-



Jake Reisch (right) mans the "dry" bar at his place, c. 1926.

in-the-wall” like a badge. The new owners rechristened the place, The Home Tavern, and while many of the regulars may have considered the place their home away from home, it really was a residence for the proprietors, who built a small apartment off the back end (now the brewery).

It was in these Post War years that neither rain nor snow nor dark of night kept the Fulton-area postal carriers from coming into the Tavern for a beer or two to break up their routes. One veteran of that mail beat, who fortunately was rapidly approaching retirement, was discovered after one too many mid-route snorts “resting” inside one of the mail storage boxes on Terwilliger Boulevard.



The Fulton Crew, circa 1990.

By the late 1980s, the neighborhood was changing and the pace at the tavern had slowed so much that “The Rest Home” may have been a more appropriate name for the place. Customers got in the habit of calling first to see if it would be opening that day. More and more, water skiing seemed like a better option.



Paying frothy alms to Lyle's beer god can only have added to the Fulton's good karma.

Then McMenamins had a chance to give the old neighborhood institution a whirl. With Cap'n Paul Hehn at the helm, the good ship Fulton Pub and Brewery was launched on Cinco de Mayo 1988, and was soon cruising on fairly calm waters. That's not to say that some bailing wasn't necessary along the way (like when the water pipe burst in the kitchen just a couple hours before the pre-opening party).

Along with the water, good feelings began bubbling up at the Fulton right from the start. Old Jake's legacy certainly played a part in this, but the new blood was responsible for generating a lot of good karma: the artwork created by manager Paul Hehn's brother, Lyle;

the brews (notably Nebraska Bitter, Fat Rat Porter, Piranha Pale and the esophagus-burning anniversary Jalapā) crafted in back by Keith Mackie, Lee Medoff, Jon Richen and others; and the aromatic and soul-soothing beer garden that Patrick McNurney brought to life alongside the pub. And let us not forget the almighty Firecrackers--a shot of Terminator and Tabasco--which gave any and all takers an immediate warm and fuzzy feeling!

Since 1988, this good feeling has drawn to the pub some interesting and notable folks, including the late, great Leroy Vinnegar, the Blazers Harvey Grant (his teammate Richard Anderson had to be eighty-sixed on two occasions for coming in without shoes or shirt) and Keanu Reeves. More importantly, though, the regulars, neighbors, after work gang, families and college students--and yes, letter carriers--still consider the place a good meeting spot. That calls for a round of Firecrackers. Care to join in?

