



Imbrie Hall

trio of old-style ventilators along the roof line—the barn’s been there for decades. Still, no one seems to remember it.

It’s not memory playing tricks: This is in fact a brand new pub called Imbrie Hall, which opens its rustic doors on May 1, 2001. The new pub complements not replaces the property’s original pub, located in the old farmhouse. Imbrie Hall, in appearance and name, is a celebration of the farmstead’s long roots and a sincere tribute to the art of barn raising.

From the mid-1800s through the mid-1970s, the Cornelius Pass Roadhouse was home to six generations of the Imbrie family. On their land, which for a time exceeded 1,500 acres, the Imbries raised Morgan draft horses, dairy cows, and some sheep, chickens and hogs. They also grew wheat, hay, oats and barley, selling a good portion of the latter to Blitz-Weinhard’s Portland brewery. Over the years, the family built the ornate, Italian-villa style farm house, diminutive milk shed, pump house, pioneer-era granary, and the extraordinary octagonal barn that all still grace the property.

Imbrie Hall now joins this outstanding cluster of agricultural relics, and though of new construction, the 300-seat pub is a remarkable assemblage of vintage parts originating from barns, ranches, breweries and dance halls from here and around the country. Inside, the spacious pub is a study of scale and angles and light and shadows. Enter the building and you’re immediately struck by its larger-than-expected proportions, a characteristic reminiscent of the old Forestry Building from Portland’s Lewis & Clark Exposition of 1905. Huge columns rescued from Portland’s venerable Washington Hotel support a skeleton of massive beams from Port of Portland’s Terminal No. 5, wall posts and headers from a vintage barn near Forest Grove, and rafters salvaged from Portland’s old Blitz-Weinhard brewery. The latter ingredient seems particularly fitting owing to the landmark brewery’s recent closure and because the Imbrie farmstead supplied Blitz-

Weinhard with barley for years. All of this formidable framework is secured by bolts the size of a fist.

From ground level, the Hall's ribbing resembles the keel of a great ship—or maybe an internal view of Captain Ahab's great nemesis. For an even closer look at this ode to barn engineering, climb up the steps to the loft above the central bar. From this perch, one can also see how light from Imbrie Hall's many, various-sized windows plays off the impressive wooden infrastructure, casting a myriad of shadows across the pub's walls (wide planks that were well-aged as part of Seagram's distillery in St. Louis) and the red oak flooring (milled from old New England barn beams).

The loft also offers an aerial perspective of two separate spaces of interest: the kitchen and an enclosed dining room. The view to the kitchen allows customers a chance to witness the drama of McMenamins' largest culinary operation: plumes of fragrant steam, the glint of stainless steel, all set to the fast-paced choreography of the cook line. At the opposite end of the pub from the kitchen is a more private dining room softly set apart from the rest of the pub by partitions of doors and windows of various origins. The most eye-catching of the character-rich assemblage are heroic, seven-foot-high doors from a Eugene Masonic Lodge, the original glass doors from the Crystal Ballroom's notorious elevator, two graceful, mahogany and glass arched doorways, and several etched windows, including a striking farm scene with furrowed rows, shocks of wheat, and a central design of a crossed sickle, scythe and hoe featured prominently.

The private dining room offers a more intimate alternative, but throughout the pub a warmth pervades, which is a remarkable characteristic considering the great amount of open space. Contributing significantly to the pleasing atmosphere and temperature of the place are two classic wood-burning beauties. Called Jewel Triple Heaters, these four-foot-high cast-iron stoves have more than a passing resemblance to an old steam locomotive's boiler. Certainly they railroad any chill out of their vicinity.

Another most intriguing flame emanates from a colossal ceramic torch that stands just outside Imbrie Hall at a central spot on the historical property. Fashioned by artist Joel Cottet and dubbed Big Red, the towering lamp is glazed fire red with bluish highlights. Similar to the more famous, and only slightly larger lamp that for more than a century has been illuminating the New York harbor, beckoning refugees in search of liberty, Big Red serves as a beacon for folks "on liberty," uttering with the flashes of its gas flame, "Give me your tired, your hungry, your thirsty masses yearning to gather freely."