

# Trident II takes a stab at success in Plaza Palomino

Brad Allis, Inside Tucson Business | Posted: Friday, May 13, 2016 4:00 am

With its off-campus location, the Trident Grill has created its share of University of Arizona fans looking for a pre-game meal, a game on the TV or a quick lunch.

Now owner Nelson Miller hopes to build a new following at Trident Grill II, which opened at the Plaza Palomino with a few twists but the same upscale bar food inspired by East Coast pubs and eateries.

Miller met with his managers Danny Gallego and Jason Machamer, four years ago with the idea of expanding Trident not only to a new location but also on a larger scale.

Gallego said that Miller “enjoys people’s company and likes to have people around him having a good time with their friends and family. A neighborhood sports bar hits those bullet points to a tee.”

After a few years, they settled on the midtown location. They’re aware that several restaurants have failed at Palomino, but they prefer the example set by Italian eatery Vero Amore, which has had two successful locations in the same shopping center.

“Location is key to success but we were also warned by many people that the new location was a rough spot for other restaurants,” said Gallego. “We felt that the plaza, street visibility and surrounding neighborhoods would support Miller’s theme.”

Trident II is first and foremost a neighborhood sports bar, but it also reflects Miller’s own influences. He’s a former Navy SEAL, so it’s not surprising that the original Trident has a nautical environment that wouldn’t seem out of place outside of a Navy base on the East Coast. Even the name is a nod to the SEAL’s symbol.

The new Trident branch has a similar theme but with a modern look. Colors are brighter and there is more corrugated metal than dark hardwood. The bar boasts a great television array, including six flat screens over the bar.

The bar itself looks out onto the patio and into the main dining room, giving all the patrons a chance to grab a drink or chat with the friendly staff. A smaller, second room has tables during the lunch and dinner rush, but also features dart boards and a shuffle board table for times when a beverage and a game are



## Trident II

The Wildcat Burger comes with cheddar cheese, bacon, onion rings, lettuce, tomato, onions, and “Chef from Hell” bbq sauce served with french fries.

more in order.

While you can watch any live sporting event and grab a wide range of food, there are two things that Trident prides itself on, says Gallego: “Crab cakes and football, that is what Trident does.”

Miller is a Washington Redskins fan and both locations cater to a large number of fans of the NFC East team. Miller has also been front and center for most of the Washington Capitals’ NHL playoff games this spring.

Beyond the crab cakes, the restaurant features clam chowder (named for “Grandma Miller” and from her recipe), fish and chips, scallops, calamari and shrimp. One of their most popular burgers is seasoned with Old Bay, which is traditionally used with seafood but has been a hit with the beef.

For those looking to wet their whistle, Trident features two dozen beers on tap, including domestics, micro-brews and imports. They also have daily food and drink specials.

Sports fans will find MLB, NHL and NBA these days, but every Wednesday the bar hosts Geeks Who Drink, a trivia quiz modeled after games played in British and Irish pubs.

In August, Trident celebrates Nelson’s birthday with an annual Crab Fest with crustaceans shipped in from the East Coast, Tables are layered with butcher paper and people go to town.

“It has become one of the busiest days at Trident and a really great experience,” said Gallego.

So far, business has been brisk, although Gallego is aware that tough summer months are ahead.

“Business is great thanks to support of Tucson,” Gallego said. “We look forward to challenges that are around the corner, i.e. summer heat.”

Trident II is located at 2900 N. Swan Road in the Plaza Palomino and is open daily at 11 a.m., with Happy Hour from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.