

# Hudson Star-Observer

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## Hudson's hometown jewel: Pier Five Hundred

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The newest reincarnation of the historic building at the corner of Walnut and First streets promises to be a lasting dining destination for local residents and beyond.

Under the ownership of Hudson native Andy Kron, 33, the restaurant - Pier Five Hundred - celebrated a grand opening event Friday.

The building, which was owned for decades by car dealers, was sold to local investors in 1990, rebuilt, remodeled and opened as a restaurant for the first time in 1991. Since then it has remained a restaurant through a number of owners, names, decor and menu transitions.

When Kron was swinging a hockey stick on the Hudson High School varsity hockey team, dreaming of owning a restaurant wasn't even close to being on his horizon.

The 1990 Hudson High School graduate went to the University of St. Thomas and afterward went into business with his father, Jim, opening a Hudson location of St. Croix Bike and Skate.

That location was eventually sold, leaving Andy to ponder his future. Kron then took his first step into the food industry by managing the concessions at White Eagle Golf Club, something he still does today. For four years, Kron followed the seasonal food industry, splitting his seasons between White Eagle in the summer and a catering service in Aspen, Colo., during ski season.

"I think it's the people that keep me in the business," said Kron. "You get to interact with the customers and the staff. People say this is one of the hardest businesses to survive in, but I look forward to and enjoy the challenge."

"My grandfather was very influential in my decision," said Kron. "We had some time to talk about what my future may hold."

Two years ago, Kron started researching the potential of starting his own food business on the hill, but both the location and the franchise world weren't what he was looking for.

"I have always loved this property, and it seemed like it was being under-utilized," said Kron of the only riverside dining establishment on this side of the St. Croix River north of Prescott.

Kron purchased Riversides restaurant in the summer of 2005. It closed in January for barely a month and reopened with a new name, logo and ambience.

"My mom and dad have been very involved and supportive," said Kron. "They came up with the name, and Mom and I selected most of the colors."

"We wanted to create the space as a year-round destination instead of a summer spot," said Kron. Teaming up with a restaurant designer and Elliot Architects, Kron and family members set out to create a warm, welcoming ambience that includes a fireplace and an assortment of seating options, tall and short tables, two-person to six-person booths, along with a full bar and outdoor patio space. All of the remodeling work was done by local businesses with staff members helping out in the process. The soft reopening Feb. 14

was a success, and since then the number of customers has grown at an almost overwhelming pace for both the dining and the night life.

“We wanted to offer the local residents a place to go for lunch as well as a special occasion,” said Kron. “Everybody can feel this is a comfortable place to go any time of the year.”

“We offer straight forward, recognizable food,” said Kron. “I want people to pick up the menu and recognize everything on it.”

“All the sauces are made fresh and the meatloaf bears little resemblance to what you may have grown up with,” Kron said with a chuckle. A full lunch and dinner menu offer a wide selection of choices, and most entries have a custom touch such as the hamburgers that are hand-pattied and hand-seasoned every day.

At the height of the season, Kron expects to have 100 people on staff at Pier Five Hundred as well as 13 at White Eagle. For the former Hudson High School varsity hockey player, the restaurant business is his new goal, and it gives him a chance to see his old coach when the annual hockey banquet is held in his restaurant.

Pier Five Hundred is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. The dining room is open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Live music is already scheduled May 18-June 22 on the patio, weather permitting, and more is expected to follow. For more information, contact the business at (715) 386-5504 or [www.pierfivehundred.com](http://www.pierfivehundred.com).