

NAPLES LIFE AROUND TOWN



PHOTO BY MARK MARYMONT /SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

■ People might assume the name means they cook in a brick oven or specialize in pizzas. But the name comes from a most unlikely source.

Bricktop's features rotisserie, fresh fish

BY MARK MARYMONT

Special to The News-Press

Call it the birth of a chain. Bricktop's debuted June 15 at the renovated Waterside Shops in Naples. There's another in Nashville and two on the way —Charlotte, N.C. in the spring and Atlanta next summer.

"The concept was developed by Joe Ledbetter and Tom Brunberg," general manager Tony Grippo says. "They have both been with other restaurants and Joe used to own Houston's Restaurants and he sold them to start this one."

Grippo says Bricktop's offers "American cuisine. Everything is made fresh, in-house. We have a rotisserie

fresh seafood and sell a lot of grilled fish and baby back ribs. We do a really nice Mongolian pork chop which has a Mongolian marinade and is grilled over wood."

Besides a varied and interesting menu, Bricktop's has a contemporary ambience, with a low ceiling and dark wood touches balanced by a copper wall around the open kitchen.

Then there's the monkey art.

"You know, that was a whimsical touch that Joe wanted," Grippo says of a series of bright, light-hearted paintings of monkeys in a tropical setting. "He has a friend who is an artist and he commissioned it for this place. We'll have something

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Bricktop's
- **When:** Sunday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- **Where:** Waterside Shops, Seagate Drive and Tamiami
- **Information:** Call 596-9112 or go to bricktops.com

great restaurants, Grippo says the best way still is word-of-mouth, "and that's really what we rely on."

"Being in a good location certainly doesn't hurt, but our real focus is to set a high standard and meet it every day. We taste the food all the time to make sure it's what we

acknowledges that folks might assume it means they cook in a brick oven or specialize in pizzas. But the name comes from a most unlikely source.

Gerald Hilbun, another Bricktop's manager, says it was inspired by a Paris jazz club that was popular in the '30s and '40s.

"This place has nothing to do with jazz, but the original was also known as a place where everybody felt comfortable and knew they could go in any time of the night or day and know everybody and have a great time.

"Joe read about it in a book. Bricktop was the name of the performer there, a jazz singer with bright red hair who was