

= Country Bill 's =

Country Bill 's Restaurant was a family @-@ owned American @-@ style steakhouse and seafood restaurant in the Woodstock neighborhood of southeast Portland , Oregon , in the United States . Adjacent to the restaurant was a bar called CB 's Lounge . The restaurant opened in 1964 when ownership transferred from Bill Blake to Ron Thomas ' family . Though Thomas was not particularly fond of the name of the business Blake had established in 1960 , he was unable to afford new signage and kept the lounge 's title . Over time the restaurant grew from a hamburger stand into a family dining restaurant , expanding from one space to four . In 1978 , the family purchased the building and property following the landlord 's death .

Eventually , Thomas transferred the business to one of his two sons , Craig . Craig and his wife decided to retire in 2011 and none of their children wanted to continue operating the restaurant . The business and the 5 @,@ 300 @-@ square @-@ foot (490 m2) building were listed for sale in February 2011 . Country Bill 's closed in September 2012 after 48 years of operation . The restaurant had low staff turnover and dedicated patrons , hundreds of whom visited during its final days . Country Bill 's was also known for its Brat Pack era decor , including red clamshell booths , mood lighting supplied by electric candles , metallic wallpaper and wood paneling . Following closure , the building underwent interior and exterior renovation to make spaces available for new tenants .

= = History = =

Country Bill 's Restaurant opened in 1964 after Ron Thomas ' family purchased the business from Bill Blake for \$ 600 . Blake had named his lounge Country Bill 's in 1960 but the business was unsuccessful . Thomas had been in the food service industry in Utah previously and ended up living in Portland after a series of relocations with his family . Though he was not fond of the lounge 's name , Thomas was unable to afford new signage and kept the title . Over time the restaurant grew from a hamburger stand into a family dining restaurant , expanding east from one space to four . In 1978 , the family purchased the building and property following the death of their landlord .

Ownership stayed within the family , eventually transferring to Craig Thomas , one of Ron 's two sons , both of whom worked in the restaurant for numerous years . Craig Thomas and his wife decided to retire in 2011 and none of their children wanted to continue operating the restaurant . In February 2011 , Country Bill 's and the 5 @,@ 300 @-@ square @-@ foot (490 m2) building were listed for sale for \$ 975 @,@ 000 . The restaurant closed on September 15 , 2012 , after 48 years of operation . Hundreds of customers , some from as far away as Europe , visited the restaurant during its final days .

Following the restaurant 's closing in 2012 , the building underwent interior and exterior renovation , resulting in two spaces for future tenants , one of which has been confirmed as a dental office .

= = Description and reception = =

Country Bill 's served American food , originally operating as a hamburger stand , before becoming a steakhouse and seafood restaurant . The menu included prime rib , razor clams and steelhead ; meals were accompanied by soup or salad and a potato as sides . Slot machines were available on site but the business made 70 percent of its income from food . Adjacent to the restaurant was a bar reminiscent of the Brat Pack era called CB 's Lounge .

In his review for Willamette Week , Ben Waterhouse asserted that the restaurant had changed little since its establishment . Waterhouse stated " time travel " was Country Bill 's form of entertainment , noting its red vinyl booths , wood paneling and " white @-@ haired " clientele . He recommended ordering beer or spirits (specifically Anchor Steam) as opposed to cocktails , which he found contained too much sugar . Mix magazine reviewed Country Bill 's as one of " five vintage restaurants that have stood the test of time " . In his review , Michael Russell described CB 's Lounge 's red clamshell booths , electric candles and the servers " who alternate between

alarmingly fresh @-@ faced and downright sassy " . Russell recommended the hand @-@ cut garlic French fries and deep fried cheesecake , which he described as " country @-@ fair gluttony incarnate " . The Portland Mercury also described the restaurant 's retro features such as the plush red booths , mood lighting and metallic wallpaper . The publication also noted the older waiting staff

Country Bill 's was known for its low staff turnover and dedicated patrons . According to Craig Thomas , the family 's formula for success included a hard work ethic , loyal staff and a " common @-@ sense approach " to business . The cook worked for the restaurant for 43 years , starting at age 16 . Longtime customers and employees reportedly felt its closing was " almost like losing a family member " . The Oregonian wrote about Country Bill 's last days in articles about local restaurant and economic news , noting the business 's longevity .