

MOUNTAINS

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Hot Shot has new owner, again

By Michael Flynn
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ASHEVILLE — The Hot Shot Café is slated to have a new owner soon, but it won't be John Cram, who decided not to complete his planned purchase.

Another member of the local arts community, Bella Vista Art owner Glenn Garson, said he plans to begin operating the Asheville dining landmark by the beginning of January.

"You shouldn't notice any change, except I'm standing in front instead of Phyllis," he said in reference to longtime owner Phyllis Roe, who is retiring.

Garson said his brother Jack, a lawyer who lives in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, is buying the restaurant and building at 7 Lodge St. and the neighboring building at 10 Lodge St. The deal is slated to close by year's end.

After renovations, Garson and his partner, Christin Zelenka, plan to move Bella Vista Art, their River District gallery of contemporary fine art, to 10 Lodge St. in March or April. The couple moved to Asheville in the fall of 2005 after fleeing New Orleans 10 hours before Hurricane Katrina hit.

With no restaurant experience, Garson, 50, said he plans to retain existing Hot Shot staff to help run the old-time eatery, known for its longtime employees and breakfast and lunch staples.

As for any future changes, he wants to hear from community members.

"We're going to hear what everyone has to say," he said. "I think it's a wonderful location."

Cram, the owner of the New Morning Gallery, Blue Spiral 1 gallery and the Fine Arts Theatre, said the timing ended up not working out for him.

The Biltmore Village restaurant dates to the mid-1920s. Roe's family has been connected to the Hot Shot since 1970, when her father, Charlie Jackson, bought the business. Her son Robert Roe Jr. has been operating it for the last decade or so.

CONTACT NEW OWNERS

To share your thoughts and stories about the Hot Shot Café with the landmark eatery's new operators, e-mail them at ashevillehotshot@gmail.com.