

Old South serving up more than barbecue

■ Monthly jazz night concerts spice up southern-style eatery

By Janice De Jesus
CORRESPONDENT

CONCORD — It's cold outside, but inside Old South Bar-B-Que, it's sizzling.

But barbecue ribs and chicken aren't the only things keeping customers cozy and warm. Every third Friday of the month, Old South transforms itself from lunchtime hangout to nighttime jazz destination.

Owners and music aficionados, Charles and Barbara Cox, thought offering southern-style barbecue and desserts with a side of entertainment would be just the thing for a gathering spot.

"For me, growing up in the country, the only thing to do was listen to music," said Barbara Cox.

"My parents, aunts and uncles had different tastes in music that enabled me to appreciate all types of music," said Charles Cox. So the couple drew inspiration from



SHERRY LAVARS/STAFF

JACK POLLARD of "Party of 2" performs live jazz music during an early Friday evening as the dining room at Old South BBQ begins to fill. The Concord spot not only serves up southern barbecue, but monthly jazz concerts, too.

their love of jazz and blues to start the monthly event in the fall. On a recent Jazz Night at Old South, vocalist Jack Pollard entertained a crowd with favorites from a by-

gone era.

"Barbecue and blues go well together," Pollard said to the audience, clapping along as he sang.

Combining jazz and barbecue

gives friends and families a chance to do something together on a Friday night, Cox said.

John Duley, a lunchtime diner, said Jazz Night provides a place to go with friends and to meet new ones.

"The ambience is lovely and quite warm and comforting," said the Walnut Creek resident. "This place transforms at night."

Lauren Morgan, 19, first heard about Old South when one of her friends raved about the food. Then when Morgan saw a flier about Jazz Night, she and her friends popped in one evening.

"Wherever there's great food and good music, I'm there," said Morgan, a Clayton resident.

Kirsti Dishman, 18, of Pleasant Hill and her friends also dropped by Old South for dinner and music. She said she was impressed by the diversity of the crowd — there were parents with children, teenagers and seniors.

"I grew up on southern food, so combining food and live music to-

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gether is great," Dishman said.

Bringing people from different backgrounds is the goal of Jazz Night and other similar events Old South plans to dish

up, Charles Cox said. Future events include Poetry or Spoken Word Night and a Sunday Jazz Brunch.

The Coxes said the events at Old South, which opened last April in Concord, are a way to share their own love of music with others.

The Concord couple, who

married in 2002, met on a blind date at an "old school" concert at the Concord Pavilion in 1996 that featured performances by the Temptations and the Four Tops.

"You have to really listen to jazz to appreciate and understand it. Every jazz musician tells a story," said Charles Cox. "They take you on a journey."

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