

La Abilies Tea Room & Bistro

Although large development is taking shape west on SR 44, there are many investors quietly sustaining the charm of our city by choosing to renovate or rebuild to the same footprint as the original. Fortunately, home owners in New Smyrna Beach have been doing that for generations, but the business sector also has turned up the charm by doing the same in a growing number of areas.

In recognition, both of the key role our one-of-a-kind small businesses play in the economy of our city and of the choices these businesses make to preserve our city's character, the NSB Residents' Coalition will focus by email and on its website articles featuring these businesses.

The newest such special establishment chosen is La Abilies Tea Room & Bistro. La Abilies occupies a wonderful gray frame house at 114 Live Oak Street that was lovingly built in 1923. The Roaring Twenties was then in full swing. No one knew, of course, that in just a half dozen years the country would be rocked by the Great Depression and would be on the brink of an horrific World War.



Over the years, the large frame structure survived the rise and fall of many boom and bust periods. One of its recent long runs of sad years was broken when it was purchased by Becky and David Reichenberg in 2014. When they purchased the house, not a window would open nor were there screens for bug abeyance if they had been functional. Lovely original hardwood floors were bleak with abuse. Walls were ravaged.

Becky and David both grew up in New Smyrna Beach and graduated from NSB High. Their love of community and respect for their native town, steeped in the history of almost three centuries, dictated what they would do with this old house.

The Reichenbergs rolled up their sleeves and personally undertook the job of renovating. Building new would have been easier, but David and Becky knew that age adds a luster and a dimension to life for which there is no substitute.



Becky also knows there is no substitute for the welcoming aroma of good food. When David, who was a career navy officer, returned home, he always opened the door to the warmth of a busy kitchen. For years this love of cooking and love of people developed in Becky a desire to own a tea room.

After exhausting months of hard labor the old home is charming once again and more welcoming than it has been since the roaring twenties. Furnishings from cushions and chairs to pictures and china are eclectic and, yes, the result is charming.

Formal openings are coming, but LaAbilies is doing a “soft” opening currently with hours of service from 11:00 to 7:00. In addition to “Tea” fare, beer and wine are also available. Telephone contact can be made at 386-679-9392.