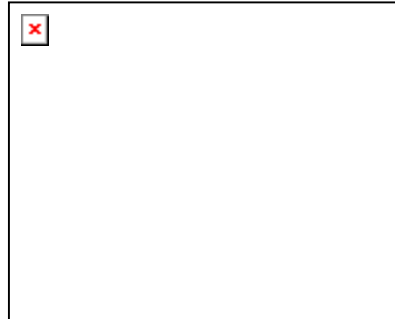
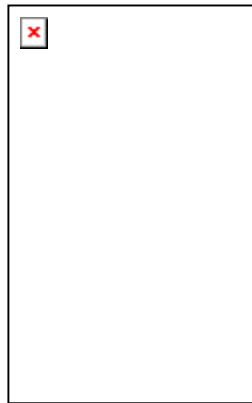




Nestled amongst the trees on a shady country road in Mequon is a two-story, 1800's farmhouse turned restaurant. Formerly known as the upscale steakhouse Club Forest, this new Mexican restaurant boasts more than enchiladas and quesadillas. The building, according to many, is also home to restless spirits. The sleepy, farmhouse with attached barn and silos seems an unlikely spot for ghostly chain-rattling until you consider its colorful and tragic history.



Blue Agave's unique building is a farmhouse with attached barn.

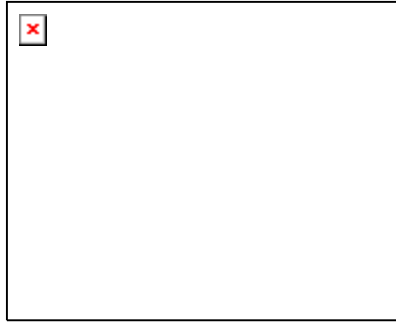


Tunnel entrance.

Built in 1841, the building became a stop on the underground railroad. Slaves found their way to freedom using the building's subterranean tunnels. One of the tunnels extended to a nearby house on County Line Road. While another extended all the way to the present day site of Brew City Barbeque Mequon located at 10250 N. Cedarburg Road, and then on to the river. It was this tunnel that later proved most useful to the owners of the building in the 1920's. By that time, it had become a Mafia roadhouse frequented by Al Capone. Gangsters used this tunnel to smuggle alcohol, or "hooch" as it was called during Prohibition, to the river for illegal distribution. Unfortunately, the tunnel entrances have since been bricked over.

Whiskey running wasn't the only business of the building's proprietors, however. Along with liquor, the owners of the establishment, also entertained patrons with gambling and prostitution. As you might suspect, no good could come of this unsavory mix of crime and sin. The pastoral facade would be the scene of at least two mysterious deaths.

The madam of the brothel would be the first to die. She managed the many bedrooms on the second floor. In these small rooms, still very much the same as they must have been then, you can still see the tiny mirrored dressers with washbasins that stood next to the beds.



Old dresser in brothel bedroom.

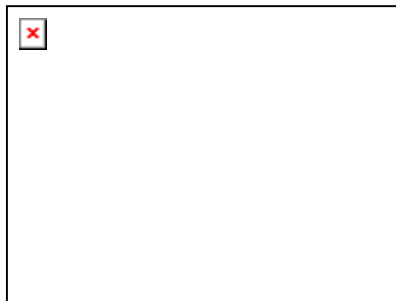


Original mural may have been a portrait of the brothel's madam.

In a larger room, down the hall, is a wall-length period mural of a nude woman. The face has since been painted over to tie the mural into Blue Agave's vibrant, updated interior art. Some say the original mural was a portrait of the madam. Nearby is the madam's bathroom, where she spent the last moments of her life.

The space has now been turned into a shuttered storage area. But inside, underneath the cabinetry built around it is the madam's bathtub. It was in this bathtub that the madam is said to have died. The exact circumstances of her death are unknown. Some say there was an argument between the madam and her lover. This nameless man turned violent and strangled her.

Another version of the story claims the madam's death was accidental. She slipped and fell, striking her head on the side of the tub. This version maintains that the first person to find her body was an innocent employee.



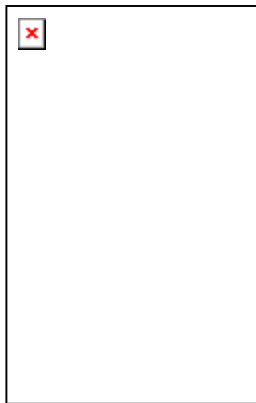
The madam's bathtub is still visible.

The next person to die, however, was undeniably murdered. The other patrons mobbed the man they discovered with the madam's body, hurling him down the spiral staircase in an act of vigilante justice. He died at the bottom of the stairs.

It may never be known whether he was a murderer or just a hapless bystander in the wrong place at the wrong time. His

body is said to be buried somewhere on the premises. The exact location of the grave is unknown.

These unfortunate souls are the two spirits that haunt Blue Agave. It is said the madam remains because of her sudden death, whereas the murdered man remains until his name is cleared or alternately until his final resting place is discovered.



Old spiral staircase in basement.

If it is true that the dead haunt the living in an attempt to communicate with us, then the ghost of the murdered man may be trying to deliver a message. In one of the most dramatic examples of spectral activity on the premises an eerie symbolism seems evident.

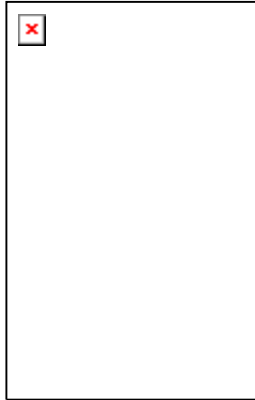
In the days of Club Forest, the restaurant's manager had an unsettling experience in the basement while closing one night. She and another employee descended to the basement storage area to retrieve some liquor for the bar. The manager, who kept the only key for the

basement storage area, unlocked the door only to behold a startling spectacle within.

The extra chairs, usually kept there in neatly stacked columns in the corner of the room, were teetering in the middle of the room in a surreal configuration. One chair was supporting 20 or so others in a formation shaped like an upside-down pyramid, towering to the six foot ceiling. The manager and her helper fled at the sight of the unwieldy chair sculpture. They locked the building and left immediately. In the morning, when the manager returned to open up the restaurant, the freaky chair tower was gone. All the chairs were back in the corner neatly stacked.

The employee that accompanied the restaurant manager to the basement that night saw a religious statue on the top of the chair structure. Could the ghost have been trying to convey that the spot is somehow hallowed ground? And what about the strange shape of the chair formation? Perhaps the upside-down pyramid is really an arrow pointing from above, directing us to where we can find long lost earthly remains.

Most other ghostly manifestations on the premises are more mischievous in nature. These antics are persistent, yet harmless



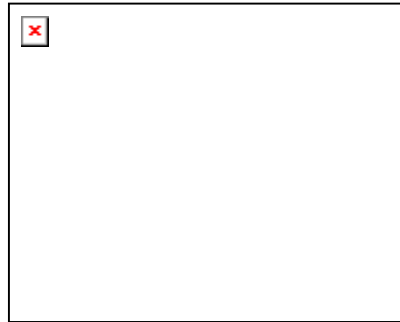
Staircase leading the old brothel rooms.

with the exception of one odd incident where a steak knife flew point first out of a dish rack, narrowly missing the back of a nearby waitress.

Other spooky hijinks include doors that won't unlock, beer taps that turn on by themselves, phantoms that bump against you in the dark, and lights that switch back on after being turned off at closing time.

Another former manager of Club Forest, who was closing up alone one night was so frightened when he heard the chair in the upstairs office roll across the floor, that he fled the building immediately. He refused to go back to the building that night and called the police to lock it up.

The current manager of Blue Agave, Patrick Wagner, has a more relaxed attitude about the ghosts. He stays late almost every night and had never had any frightening experiences, only annoying ones. He has had persistent trouble with the upstairs windows. Their latches are tight and their hinges would need a good greasing to move easily, but somehow the heavy casement windows just won't stay shut.



Windows often open by themselves.

This problem was especially frustrating for Patrick last winter when he and the Blue Agave's owner Bill Suskey worked late nights to get the restaurant ready to open in spring. It was hard enough to keep the drafty, old building warm without having to contend with cold air blasting in from open windows. "I was about ready to screw gun the windows shut," he says. "But I had a little talk with the ghosts and the problem settled down for awhile."

One of the most recent ghostly encounters featured more than just opened windows or other objects moved by unseen forces. This time one of the ghosts was actually seen.

Don, a suis chef, was down in the basement one morning at the end of July. He getting ready for his shift, putting on his chef coat, when he heard footsteps coming toward him. "It sounded like someone wearing dress shoes," he said. He looked up only to see the swinging arm of a man in a fancy suit pass

by the door as if someone was ascending the stairs.

Don peaked around the corner to see who it might be, but no one was there. He ascended the stairs himself to talk to the Patrick, the restaurant manager, about what he had seen. He wondered if a salesman had come to call since no one who worked there was likely to wear a suit, especially on a hot summer day. However, there was no salesman and none of the staff was wearing a suit that day. Encounters with apparitions are a rarity. This is true even of locations where high levels of spectral activity have been documented because in theory a ghost needs a tremendous amount of energy to manifest. Don's experience suggests that the ghosts of Blue Agave are strong and will no doubt haunt their picturesque old farmhouse for years to come.

If you would like to have your very own haunting experience at Blue Agave, the best time to visit is coming up. **October 28th - November 3rd is a celebration of Día de los Muertos, the Mexican equivalent of Halloween, at Blue Agave. The event will feature special tamales, a traditional holiday altar display, and guided tours of their spooky basement.**

Blue Agave is located at 4200 W. County Line Road in Mequon. It is open for lunch Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., for dinner Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday, 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, 4 p.m. to 11 p.m., and for brunch Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.