

The Henry Station Repurposing a historical building

By Lisa Amstutz

One of Wooster's historical buildings has come a long way from its roots as a gas station and tire shop. When the former Albright Radiator building on the corner of South Market and Henry Street went up for auction, V.M. Roman thought it would make a great restaurant. "I liked the look of the building," he said. "I had seen something like it way back and decided maybe I should try that." The resulting restaurant, named The Henry Station, opened its doors Aug. 24 of this year.

The Henry Station offers authentic Hungarian, German and American cuisine, thanks to manager Tibor Biro's 16 years of experience catering to German tourists in Budapest. "We make everything we can homemade," Roman said. "Soups are made from scratch. Besides steaks and burgers, we have fish sandwiches, wiener schnitzel, pork schnitzel, chicken paprikash, beef goulash, stuffed cabbage and more."

In addition to the central dining area, there is a café in the front part of the building and a pizza shop in the back. A patio out front seats 20. "No matter how hard it rains, you don't get wet out there," said Roman.

Transforming a radiator shop into a restaurant was no small task. The renovations took close to two and a half years. Several walls were moved and the floor was covered with four inches of concrete. Two of the garage bays became the main dining area; the other two houses, the bar and kitchen.

The most unique feature of the restaurant is its large garage doors, which have been beautifully refurbished and can be opened in the summertime by removing the insulating panels that cover the lower sections. The many small panes of glass in the doors allow the afternoon sun to stream in.

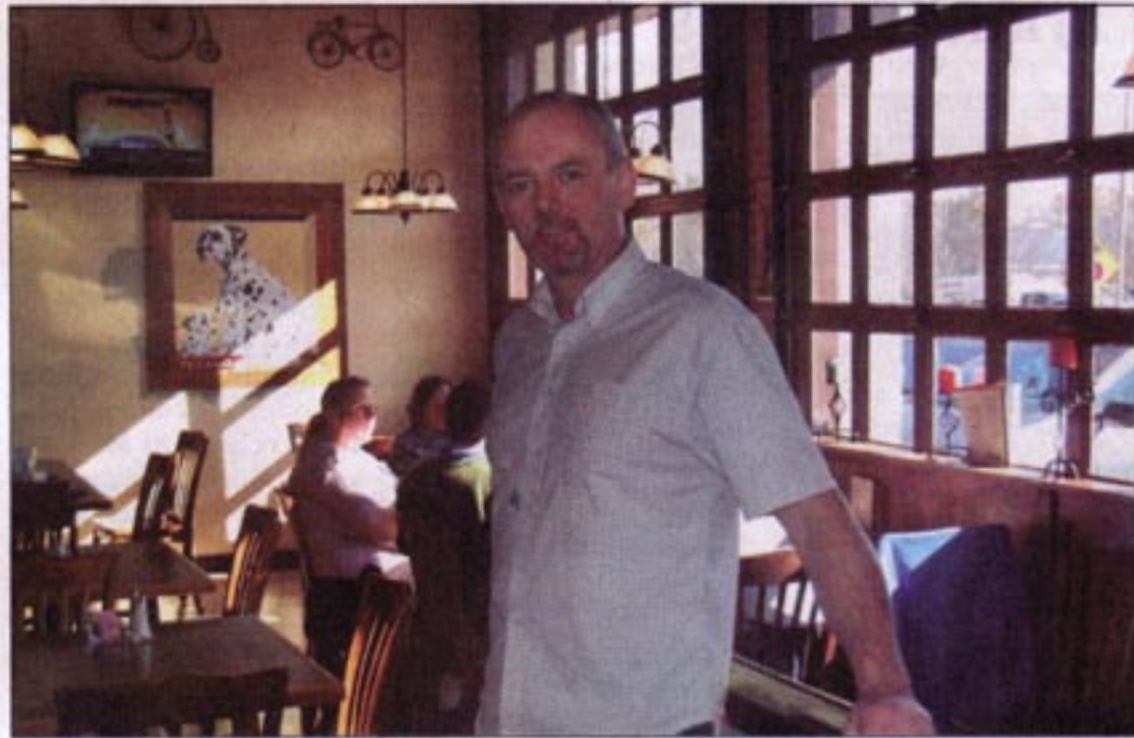
Artist Ruston Baker of Millersburg painted a brick pattern on one wall and artwork on several others. Roman's model car and truck collection also adorns the walls. "I've been collecting them ever since I knew about this," he said.

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The Henry Station's patio allows customers to eat outdoors in any weather if they choose. The former radiator shop is now a restaurant serving up American, German and Hungarian cuisine along with pizza and subs.



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Tibor Biro brings 16 years of restaurant experience in Budapest to his new position as manager of The Henry Station in Wooster. The former radiator shop now welcomes diners with its sunny interior and variety of Hungarian, German and American cuisine.

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Several people with historical ties to the building have stopped by to check out the new restaurant. Col. Jim Strock, USMC (Ret.) of Virginia is the grandson of Earl Wayne Strock, who built five gas stations in Wooster in the 1920s and 1930s, including this one.

"Many different people operated the station over the years," Strock said. "My father sold the building in the mid-to-late 1970s. A couple of times I've stopped by when I was in town to see the progress on the building. It just about brought tears to my eyes - it's wonderful to see old buildings preserved. It speaks volumes about what Wooster's doing to preserve the downtown."

Kauffman Tire, one of the largest independent tire dealers in the country, also has

its roots in the building. Company president Mark Kauffman came to visit shortly after the restaurant opened, Roman said. Kauffman's grandfather, Harry, started Harry Kauffman's service station there in 1936 and remained until 1967.

Harry's son, John Kauffman of Atlanta, Ga., began working at the station after he graduated from college. "We sold Texaco gas and carried Goodyear Tires," he recalled. "I was up not too long ago and went by to see the progress on the building. Next time I'm in Wooster, I hope to go through the store - I'm sure it will bring back some old memories."

Roman has been pleased with the response to the new restaurant. "We're doing very well. Friday and Saturday nights, there is usually a waiting line and we have a good lunch crowd," he said. The Henry Station is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 330-264-2226.