

Business

GilbertSunNews.com | @GilbertSunNews /GilbertSunNews

Realtor couple tap into new Gilbert pub

BY JOSH ORTEGA
GSN Staff Writer

After working in real estate in the East Valley for 27 years, Realtors Karen and Jesse Herfel felt it was time to diversify their investments with the recent influx of development in the area.

"There's just nothing like this around here," Karen said. "So we started looking into different concepts and we just fell in love with this [place] because of that."

"This" is The Brass Tap, which the Herfels hope to be opening Dec. 12 at Verde at Cooley Station, 2442 S. Recker Road, Suite 101 – depending on supply chain issues that have slowed their construction timetable.

The Tampa-based craft beer bar and entertainment venue has become known



Gilbert Realtors Karen and Jesse Herfel are excited about the opening of their pub, The Brass Tap, at Cooley Station located at 2442 S. Recker Road. (David Minton/GSN Staff Photographer)

for its extensive localized brewery offerings, specialty cocktails and premium wines and the Herfels' pub is its second in Arizona.

That's what Karen said attracted her to such a brand, with a full list of wines, cocktails, food fare and "all the craft beer that you can possibly imagine."

"Everybody can get what they want at The Brass Tap," Karen said.

Verde at Cooley Station sits on the corner of Williams Field and Recker roads in a high-density area, Karen said, with over 30,000 residences within walking distance.

With a robust roster of restaurants, bars and retail in development, Jesse said Verde at Cooley Station "is going to be the place to be."

SEE **BRASS** PAGE 31

Gilbert store teams up with police on holiday drive

GSN NEWS STAFF

Gilbert residents Bernard and Gianne Francisco make giving back to the community part of their local store, Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More.

And right now they're helping the Gilbert Police Department give back too during its annual Blue Line of Love holiday campaign.

The shop at 2743 S. Market St. not only is a drop-off location for items being donated to the drive, but the Franciscos also are offering a \$25 Big Frog gift certificate to anyone who brings in at least \$10 worth of any item in three categories on the department's wish list.

Requested items include: Gift cards to any retail, restaurant, or grocery store; new and unwrapped toys for boys and girls ages 13-17; and personal hygiene



Bernard and Gianne Francisco, seen here with their baby, own Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More in Gilbert. (Special to GSN)

products such as laundry detergent, soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste and toothbrushes.

The Franciscos opened Big Frog in 2016 as Bernard changed careers from accountant to business owner and t-shirt designer.

Indeed, Bernard custom-designed t-shirts for this year's Blue Line of Love holiday drive

The couple wouldn't think of opening their store anywhere but the same community where they live.

"Gilbert is such a great community," Bernard said. "It has a small town feel where it's common to run into the mayor at the market."

The store touts its ability to be "in the forefront of our client's important life events."

"We are one of the first ones to know when someone is announcing a baby, preparing for a marriage proposal, starting up their small business or a Fortune 500 company wanting to outfit their employees with swag," Bernard said.

"We get such enjoyment seeing the excitement in our client's faces when they see their completed order," he continued. "Big Frog provides a fun creative environment where we collaborate with our clients."

"Most importantly, Big Frog provides a platform where we can give back to the community by way of free t-shirt programs for schools, toy drives and more. Without our community, there is no Big

SEE **FROG** PAGE 31

EV woman creates multipurpose gift bags

GSN NEWS STAFF

Just because it's 'tis the season doesn't mean people should ignore the accumulation of wasted paper that usually comes with gift-giving.

With this in mind, Roopa Srinivas of Chandler has started a business making reusable gift bags out of old fabric that also can be folded into colorful decorations.

"We want to save paper and not use plastic decorations which will go to waste, so we have designed these bags," Srinivas explained.

Made in India, the multipurpose bags also can be used as backpacks, handbags and/or for gift-giving. "They also can



Roopa Srinivas' gift bags can pull double duty as handbags. (Special to GSN)

fold into a small size for easy carrying in a purse," she added.

The bags come in only one size – 17"x10"x5" – in red, gold and multicolors. They also are reversible, increasing its use with garments of different colors.

Srinivas said she created their design after "seeing all the gift bags that were trashed after my twins' birthday party."

Costing \$9, the bags can be purchased on Etsy and eBay by shopping under "GurlzBiz" or "multipurpose reusable fabric gift bags."

Shipping in the U.S. is free and orders are processed in one or two days, Srinivas said.

Information: roopasri9@gmail.com.



BRASS FROM PAGE 30

She also pointed to an empty lot that will eventually become a two-story, 24,000-square-foot office building.

As owners of Keller Williams Integrity First Real Estate franchise and Jesse Herfel Real Estate Group, the Herfels have an insider's look at the local real estate market.

Increased mortgage interest rates have cut home sales by 35% year-over-year and prices have fallen only 4% in the last three months.

Both factors have caused homes to sit on the market longer, Jesse noted.

"However, unless you bought within the last 12 months here, the majority of homeowners have equity," Jesse said. "So, it's not a 2008-type scenario."

With more than 3,500 units closed per year, the Herfels' business is one of the top brokerages in the country.

Growing up on opposite sides of the Valley – Karen in Buckeye and Jesse in Queen Creek – the couple met through real estate business and have had three children during their 15 years of marriage.

Jesse entered real estate to avoid corporate America, explaining, "I loved real estate and the opportunities it provides, both in sales and a career, and then also from an investment standpoint."

Karen didn't want "a ceiling over my

head" nor tie her worth to an hourly wage, as was the advice she received growing up.

"People were always telling you what your worth per hour," Karen said. "And it was a career that I could determine that for myself."

After stumbling on the land in 2020 that would become Cooley Station, the Herfels said it was a "no-brainer."

"We've always been interested in doing a really kick ass bar," Karen said. "And we've talked about it for years and then the timing just kind of worked out perfectly."

Perhaps their timing wasn't that perfect, considering they've had to wait nearly two years since signing their lease at the beginning of 2021, but the Herfels have the finish line to their dream in sight.

Tentatively, they plan to open on Dec. 12, but the couple remains flexible due to the recent supply and labor issues.

On Nov. 18, contractors were still hard at work installing the 60 draft taps and the 24 TVs planned for the wall remained outstanding.

But the Herfels said they will do their best to have 146 seats ready for customers to sit and enjoy a drink in the 3,100-square-foot 50/50 layout.


Large sliding doors divide the con-

cept's floorplan that takes advantage of the year-round Arizona sunshine so people can enjoy a drink inside the bar or outside on the patio.

Finding 45 employees to fill the positions for kitchen, servers and bartenders, came a little easier than completing construction of the building.

"I think that the staff that we have hired is attracted to the concept," Karen said. "We've been really surprised at how well we've done with attracting staff here."

With plans for 60 craft beers on tap at all times, a DJ playing music Thursday through Sunday and open seating, Karen said she'd like the vibe to make The Brass Tap become "Cheers in Gilbert."

"This is a place where you're going to come and hang out three or four days a week and everybody's going to know everybody," Karen said. "This is going to be the spot." 

Check us out and like the Gilbert Sun News on Facebook and follow @gilbertsunnews on Twitter.




FROG FROM PAGE 30

Frog, so we are eternally grateful.

Bernard has a long history of working with and providing support to first responders and, specifically, to the Gilbert Police Department.

The national chain also helps first responders and veterans get discounts on franchises.

The store touts fast turnarounds on custom t-shirts and a wide variety of colors and designs. Information: bigfrog.com/gilbert. 

See MORE Online!

www.GilbertSunNews.com



Send us your observations.
cchan@timeslocalmedia.com

