



Eraina Adamson



Shawn Eckles



Ryan Flores



Austin Fudge



Dave Tipton

Live music hits the right notes at restaurant

By Rhonda Van Pelt

Sharon Erale-Palmer knows the value of offering live music in a restaurant.

"I think it just adds spirit to a dining experience; it adds another layer," said the co-owner of Swirl Wine Bar. "It resonates and it totally adds to the environment."

Swirl has featured live music since 2010, and the restaurant is a regular stop for many of the Pikes Peak region's finest musicians.

"Sometimes we have musicians we just really, really love who we have come at least once a month. So a lot of repeat musicians. It's not just always about the music. It's about their attitude, their professionalism because that really works with the customer base. Are they nice toward the customers, as well?" Erale-Palmer said.

Add that to Swirl's great food and fabulous wine, and locals know they'll have a good experience.

The music generally starts about 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, although the larger the band, the louder they're likely to be and the later they'll start so they don't interrupt dinner service too much.

Swirl's manager, Breezy Johnston, handles all the booking for those nights. She's a student at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs—studying music business—and plans months ahead.

"A lot of times, we tell people, 'We appreciate all musical talents, but not all of it fits in with the style of the restaurant.' We might choose another way to go, but no hard feelings. She takes that over; she's great at it," Erale-Palmer said.

Starting at 8 p.m. Thursdays, Swirl hosts open mic nights and serendipity takes over.



The E.T.s

October is Arts Month, a Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region initiative to celebrate the performing and visual arts. Each week, the Bulletin will publish a story that focuses on a particular art form appearing on the Arts Month schedule. The fourth week highlights live music. Information: www.culturaloffice.org or www.peakradar.com.



Erale-Palmer said that, occasionally, musicians are traveling through the area and happen to stop by on open mic night. Fortunately, they've

nerves to walk up to the microphone and sing during open mic night. She's a longtime music fan who went to a lot of concerts while growing up.

People love watching people play.

-Sharon Erale-Palmer

got their guitar out in the car and they're ready to put on a show.

The self-professed "closet singer" has been known to overcome her

"I went to the first Lollapalooza, the first Lilith Fair, the first Warped Tour. I grew up in Palm Beach, so you could take the Tri-Rail for a dollar

LIVE MUSIC AT SWIRL

Friday, Oct. 27: Dave Tipton, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 28: The E.T.s, after the Emma Crawford Coffin Races; Friday, Nov. 3: Ryan Flores; Saturday, Nov. 4: Eraina Adamson; Friday, Nov. 10: Shawn Eckles; and Saturday, Nov. 11: Austin Fudge.

Swirl is at 717 Manitou Ave. Information: www.swirlismybar.com or 685-2294.

Several other Manitou restaurants and bars also host live music; see page 21.

down to Miami and Fort Lauderdale," Erale-Palmer said.

Her father introduced her to classic rock bands including Cream, Queen, The Beatles and The Who. She still listens to the music of that era and it brings back memories of her father, who died when she was 17.

"Music is super-influential, it brings back memories and makes you feel certain things. People love watching people play," she said.

Erale-Palmer's husband, Andrew, played the trumpet when he was younger and their children are dabbling in music.

She's witnessed the effect live music has on her staff and herself, especially when guitar virtuoso Ryan Flores performs.

"It's a really great relationship. We've had him in here for years. He's a sweetheart. And every time he plays, we all walk really fast. It's like he picks up the energy level and makes us happy. We're happy servers.

"We just laugh every time; you can't be lazy serving tables when Ryan plays. It just makes you want to run and dance."