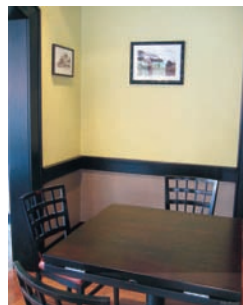
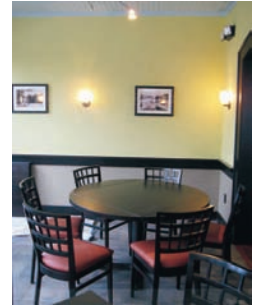
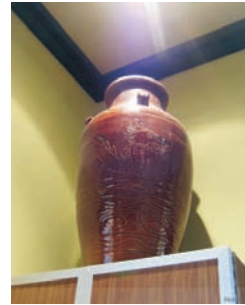


The new-look Vietnam Cafe in pictures

posted by Drew Lazor on Friday, November 13th, 2009 at 2:50 pm



Here's your first look at Benny Lai's new Vietnam Café (816 S. 47th St.), which'll open to the public this coming Tuesday, Nov. 17. We dropped in as architect Jesse Gardner, the Vietnam owner and general contractor Drew Miller (fourth pic, L-R) were putting the finishing touches on the 180-seat space (formerly Abbraccio), a blown-out version of the humble 22-seat BYO Lai opened just down the block in early 2008. (There are no pressing plans for that space, at 814 S. 47th, just yet, says Lai.) Split up into multiple rooms (some are able to be sealed off for private events), the space is characterized by an abundance of natural light and a number of neat design touches from Lai's homeland, including a decorative mock-up of a bamboo rain-water collector near the bar as you enter.

The menu here will be comparable to the one at Lai's flagship location in Chinatown (221 N. 11th St.), but the major difference here is a spacious bar area, where they'll be serving Vietnam's signature cocktails as soon their liquor license kicks in in about a month's time. There are also plans to introduce a late-night bar menu that'll be available on weekend nights.

Lai tells Meal Ticket he'll be open out here from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily, with plans to extend hours in the coming weeks after they get their feet.