

A place where you can enjoy an old fashion soda and hamburger, play some Elvis on the jukebox and even purchase some antiques from what seems like a long time ago. And if you're really lucky Marv Garriott, owner and proprietor, will even pick up his guitar and play you an Elvis tune.

Marv's dream of one day owning his own 50s diner started about two (2) years ago when he purchased an old theatre in Black Diamond and started selling antiques. He then added a soda fountain and diner which includes a jukebox, an older player piano and lots of things that will take you back to those 'happy days'.

Born in High River, Alberta, Marv was the youngest of five (5) kids and from an early age enjoyed listening and playing music. "My mother had me beat into taking piano lessons when I was about 7 or 8 and then she also had me learn how to play the accordion," said Marv. "My brother had this old antique shot gun and one day when I was in Grade 6 this old guy came to our class and played some songs on his guitar and I thought hey that's pretty cool. So we got together after school and I traded my brother's shot gun for the guitar."

In 1965 Marv moved to Vancouver and he recalls how one day while paying for some gas his guitar pic fell out of his pocket and this guy asked him if he played the guitar. "He told me that a friend of his was trying to start a band and asked if I would be interested," said Marv. "Of course I said yes and the next thing we've got our own band going." While working a full time job, Marv enjoyed playing the local clubs at night. One day while performing at a Rodeo he met a singer named Belinda Lee. "We started performing together and the next thing you know we ended up in Nashville to cut an album." laughs Marv. "We spent the next

three years singing together and were even nominated for duet of the year." During his singing days Marv spent a lot of time on the road performing all across the country and into the US. "By the time my son was a year old we had been in all 10 provinces and 13 states. We made a decent living and things were pretty good. I guess one of my fondest memories was opening for 'The Guess Who'." laughs Marv.

Marv later moved to Billings, Montana where he got involved in the auctioneering business. It was during this time that he really took an interest in antiques and especially items from the



restored so that it really is authentic looking. We added this jukebox about two months ago. I had a call one day



from a lady that said she had an old box sitting in her garage. So we got it fixed up and working here in the diner."

During our interview a family from Toronto stops by to talk to Marv about the diner and asks if he could play a tune for their kids. Marv pulls out



his guitar and breaks into an old Elvis song as people start to gather around to hear him sing. Afterwards we all applaud and the family sits down for some sodas and pictures with Marv. "We get lots of people who come here to see the diner. Mostly people tell their friends and they come up for a visit. I have some senior bus tours that come by regularly so at times it can get quite busy. Grandparents bring their grandchildren in and tell them 'this is what it was like when I was your age'."

In addition to some great food and wonderful antiques to look at Marv also sells lots of candy from days gone by. I remembered seeing this stuff as a kid and was amazed to find that you can still buy it. You can even purchase new bobby socks shoes and other items of clothing from the 1950s. Marv has also had some of his antiques used in the film industry as he mentions names like Clint Eastwood and Christopher Reeves. "Someone said that they thought Robert Duvall was here last Monday, but I'm not sure since that was my day off." chuckles Marv.

Marv shares with me that he would like to open a drive-in out on the

1950s. "I always enjoyed collecting things from the old soda fountains and candy stores," says Marv. In 1986 Marv moved into Calgary where he opened his own bar called the North 40. Later in 1989 he opened a second bar in High River. "The bar business was tough going back then so in the mid nineties I bought a local ice cream shop here in Black Diamond, called Yum Yums," said Marv. "Things were going well and I was still collecting lots of 50s memorabilia. When this place became available two years ago we decided that we would set up an antiques store and then of course we added the soda fountains and the diner part later."

Everything at Marv's Diner is original as he recalls when he first acquired the soda fountains that it took him almost a year to get them working properly. "We want our diner to look as original as possible," said Marv. "Most of this stuff I've purchased from dealers and

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highway. "I've got this idea in my head that we could expand our hamburger line with a drive-in, but I'm not sure at my age if that's a wise decision or not." laughs Marv. As we finish our interview the place is starting to fill up with customers as Marv puts on his

hat and goes behind the counter to make some delicious ice cream sodas. 'Happy Days' indeed!

/// Story by Paul Oldford