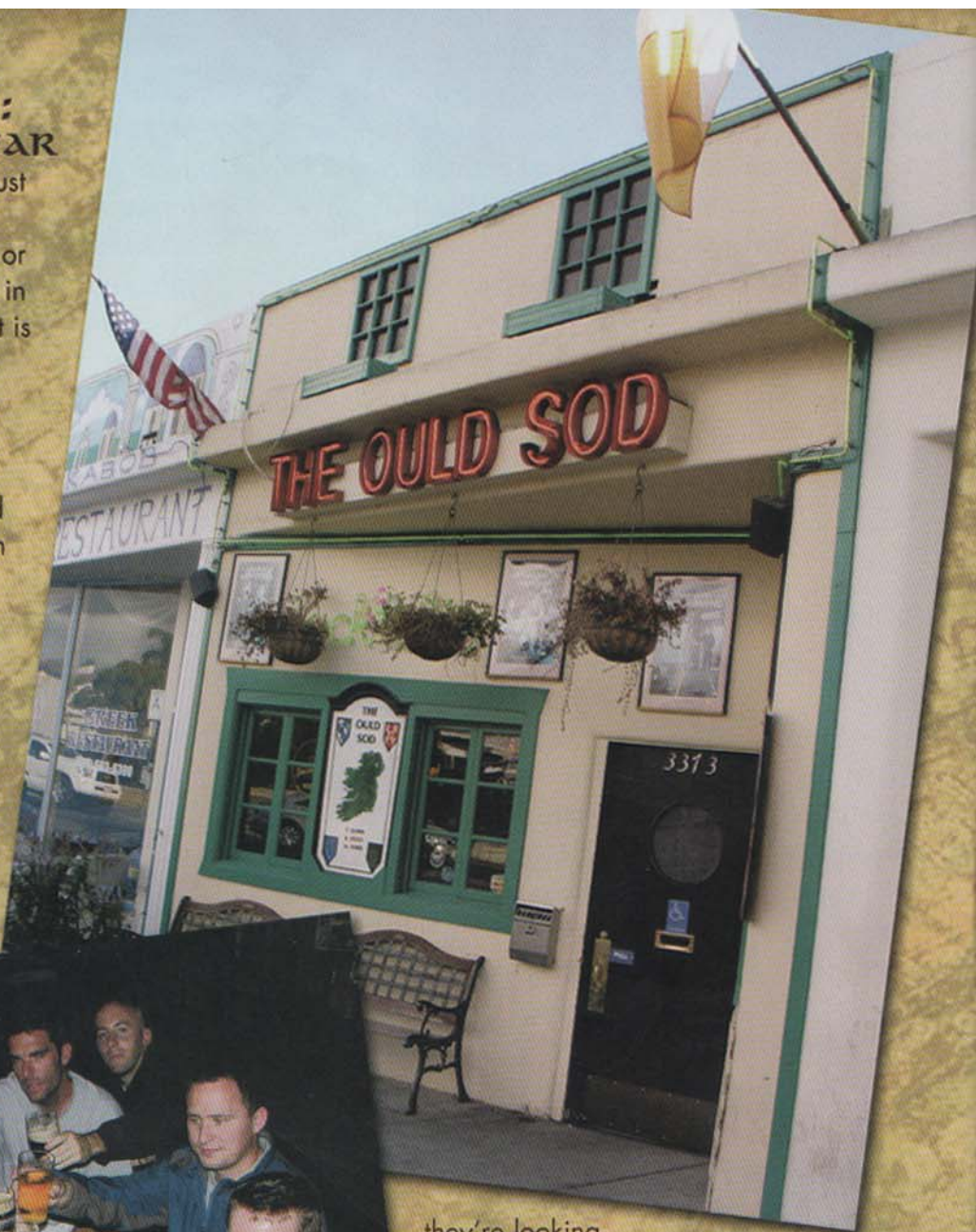


is a good mirror. As old as the mist and older by two.

The Ould Sod: IRISH 365 DAYS A YEAR

Though the Ould Sod is really just an affectionate name for Ireland, literally meaning "the old country," or "the old turf," this Irish pub located in San Diego's Normal Heights district is actually one of the eldest drinking holes in the city. Opened in 1989, the Ould Sod now fills the space where bars have been in business since the 1930s, making it the third oldest drinking establishment in San Diego, according to part owner Mick Ward.

But by no means is the Ould Sod outdated or archaic, certainly not when it comes to serving drinks at least. "Guinness is by far our biggest seller; some people even say we have the best pint in San Diego. But



A light hearted

nowadays a lot of the younger people have an eclectic taste when it comes to drinks, so you have to keep your finger on the pulse of the market and see what

they're looking for and be sure to stock that as well," Ward admits. Not to mention, the Ould Sod offers a free wireless Internet connection for those patrons wishing to enjoy a pint while they work.

And whether it be work or play that draws you into the Ould Sod, once there you're guaranteed an authentic taste of Ireland. "From an Irish perspective, having a friendly staff and a good rapport with the customers is key to maintaining an authentic Irish pub atmosphere," says Ward. A rapport that's been easy to establish due to its location: "Adams Ave. is a real old business neighborhood, so an old Irish pub fits right

A light hearted lives longest. A

in," Ward continues. The fact that the Ould Sod features live Irish musical entertainment three to four nights a week doesn't hurt.

For the most part the Ould Sod is just one more necessary piece in the pastiche that is the Adams Ave./Normal Heights area—where mom and pop owned businesses, restaurants and bars combine with the rare chain establishment to dot the landscape. A place where longtime residents come in to peruse the paper during the day, others come in to unwind in the evening, and sports fans—from American football to rugby to traditional football—come in and share pints while recounting the latest athletic feats either performed by them personally or those on the television.

Which is probably why the Ould Sod declines to do anything out of the ordinary on what many people have dubbed *the day* to be Irish: St.



Patrick's Day. "We just open the doors; we fill to our capacity, then we start a line outside the door," says Ward. But their decision to not make a fuss over March 17 runs deeper, and goes a long way in explaining the general vibe at the Ould Sod.

As Ward explains: "[St. Patrick's Day] has become so commercialized. People want to call themselves Irish for the day, but Irish culture is 365 days, 52 weeks a year. The Ould Sod is open the day before St Patrick's Day and the day after, and the day after that. From an Irish perspective, you're Irish every day of the year."

For more information on the Ould Sod, go to www.theouldsod.com

