



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Sophia Godoy and Janet Winchester say their Bay's BBQ must have gotten broken into because their barbecued chicken is so good.

By Jim Knowles

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A downtown restaurant isn't going to let the crooks get them down.

It was a bad week already after Bay's BBQ in Pelton Center was broken into in the middle of the night. But a couple of days later, the owner's newest enterprise just down the street was burglarized.

Bay's BBQ Owner Loc Nguyen has renovated the barbecue restaurant in Pelton Center. Now he's remodeling the former Vo's restaurant on Parrott Street, which he plans to open under a new name in the spring.

But in the middle of the day, somebody broke into the restaurant and pulled out all the copper pipes.

Luckily, an alert downtown cop noticed something fishy and police surrounded the building and arrested a guy for attempting to steal the pipes.

Nevertheless, Nguyen plans to forge ahead and open the restaurant at the corner of Parrott and Hays under the new name Pao Dan and specialize in Asian fusion food.

Nguyen and his staff see the two crimes as small setbacks.

“We’re not multi-millionaire venture capitalists,” says Sofia Godoy who works for Nguyen as a consultant. “We’re small businesses, but if we help each other and keep an eye out, we can succeed.”

Godoy and Nguyen said they saw the video tape of the guy breaking into their barbecue place in Pelton Center. The burglar caused a lot of damage but there was no money in the restaurant and the guy ended up just taking a bag of barbecued chicken.

“He stole the leftovers, basically,” Nguyen said. “Maybe he was just hungry.”

To which Godoy added, “Or maybe the chicken’s that good!”

They said the police gave them some more tips on preventing burglaries after the break-in.

The burglary was on a Saturday night, and then on the following Tuesday afternoon the police pulled up and asked Nguyen if he had any employees inside the other restaurant on Parrott Street. He didn’t.

The police had noticed a car by the restaurant with two women who had the hood up as if the car had broken down. They realized somebody was inside and got suspicious.

“The police knew it was our restaurant because we’ve mentioned that to the downtown bike officer,” Godoy said.

Nguyen said he went down the street to see his other restaurant surrounded by police who called out for the person inside to come out. He didn't come out, so they sent in the police dog.

"I heard a loud shout from outside, so somebody got bit," Nguyen said.

As long as there are no more setbacks, Nguyen plans to open the restaurant at Pao Dan in a couple of months.

"We want to make it a hangout place for San Leandro when it comes to Asian fusion food," he said.