

MUSIC

# Las Vegas aboard for debut of Pete's Dueling Piano Bar

By JERRY FINK  
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The siren song of Las Vegas has lured Pete's Dueling Piano Bar out of Texas.

"It's a dream for us," says owner Corey Urbach, who is busy putting the final touches on the nightclub that will open Friday at Town Square. "Some people said we were crazy to open in this economy, but I think the town needs something like this."

The wild scene at Pete's features a tag-team performance by four world-class pianists who occasionally bring the bartenders and waitresses into the act. The pianists rotate from about 7 p.m. until 3 a.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

There are four Pete's in Texas — Addison (near Dallas), Fort Worth, Houston and Austin, where it all began in 1992. Vegas is the first non-Texas location.

"We chose Vegas because 2 million people live here," Urbach says. "We came here for the locals. We came here because we saw there isn't a real rock 'n' roll piano bar like

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Pete's Dueling Piano Bar  
**Who:** Christine Cochrane, Dean Edwards, Joel Henry and Matt Newbold  
**When:** 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; bar opens at 4 p.m.  
**Where:** Town Square  
**Admission:** Free

this one here. There are dueling-piano bars here, but nothing with the swagger that we have — we just have our own style of doing it. We are a lot more rock 'n' roll."

Urbach doesn't claim credit for coming up with the idea for dueling pianos — the concept began in Dallas in 1990 and quickly spread across the country — but he capitalized on it.

"I saw the way the other guys were doing it and I thought it was very schmaltzy," he says. "It wasn't about the audience or their experience."

The high-energy shows at Pete's rely on audience participation — from requests to

singalongs to over-the-top partying.

Urbach is bringing three pianists from his Texas clubs — Christine Cochrane, Joel Henry and Dean Edwards.

The fourth, Matt Newbold, is from Las Vegas.

Newbold, an Ohio native who moved to Nashville to pursue his music career, toured with country artist Amy-Jayne McCabe, performed on cruise ships and traveled the nation playing in piano bars. He landed in Vegas four years ago and has played at Hooters, New York-New York, Harrah's, Paris Las Vegas and Planet Hollywood.

When he heard Pete's might be expanding its franchise to Vegas he didn't waste any time.

"I said, 'OK, that's what I'm doing,'" Newbold says. "I dropped everything and worked on getting the gig. Pete's has the best reputation of any dueling-piano bar in the country. It's the best place to work for and the hardest to get in."

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