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Cookin' up a *jazzy* summer

► Cool music is on the menu for the hot season in Yuma

BY DARIN FENGER
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The Ramada Inn boasts something new on its menu that's sultry, sexy and always smooth.

It's a summer of jazz.

The local inn launches a summer concert series this month featuring the Yuma Jazz Company, whose members say stirring up Yuma's usual hot-weather doldrums simply sounds cool.

"We think people that live here need something to be going on in the summer," said Steve Hennig, the jazz group's trumpeter. "Typically, there's not a lot going on, performance wise. We just think this concert series will be a perfect fit."

The jazz series kicks off May 9, then will continue with concerts once or twice a month through July. Dates will be announced as they are booked.

But it's not only music that the Ramada will be serving up. The inn will also combine its cooking talents with the music event, offering normal items off its menu along with specialty appetizers and drinks. To set off the perfect atmosphere for jazz listeners, the seating area will feature candlelit tables.

"We've really been interested for a long time in bringing this type of environment to Yuma," Hennig said. "It's like a club atmosphere where you have food, drink and music all in one central, comfortable location."

The seating and service for each concert will start at 7 p.m., with the music getting under way at 7:30 p.m.

Admission will be \$7 for each event. Tickets may be purchased in advance at the hotel, at the door or by calling 344-1050. For more information on the series itself, the musicians can be reached at 345-1534.

Hennig predicted that audiences' reactions to the series will be anything but a sour note.

"I think folks are going to love it," he said. "The music is great and the food is going to be wonderful. If Yuma has had events like this, it's been very, very rare."

The Yuma Jazz Company consists of Hennig on trumpet, Brian Carlson on tenor saxophone, John Olin on piano, John Knudtson on bass and Robby Carrillo on drums.

The guys started playing together about a



YUMA JAZZ COMPANY is set to entertain folks throughout the summer at a concert series at the Ramada Inn. Pictured above are the Ramada's Chef Bob and trumpeter Steve Hennig, while musicians John Olin (piano), Jon Knudtson (bass) and Robby Carrillo (drums) are shown jamming during a recent performance.

PHOTOS BY DARIN FENGER/THE SUN

about. It's based on individual inspiration and bringing that together."

Carlson, a band teacher, has played with several bands in the Yuma area. Knudtson also plays with the Chuckawalla Rhythm Kings. Carrillo, meanwhile, is a junior in high school who has really impressed his older musician pals.

"We're very lucky to have found Robby," Hennig said. "He's a very good kid and kind of gets us old guys in gear."

"I think the connection everyone has is playing with the Arizona Western College Jazz Band," Hennig said. "It's turned out to be a wonderful group. We're a good collection of individuals, which is kind of what jazz is all

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