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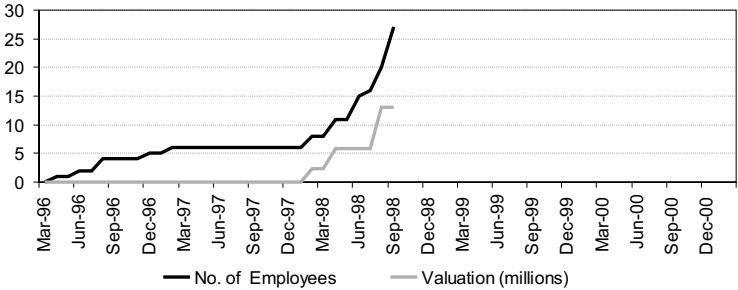


Photo: Jamis MacNiven

Buck's Restaurant in Woodside, California

A Classic Scene



I am not one who can live in a stereotype without subconsciously fighting it.

Trapped as I was in the role of an aggressive, dotcom entrepreneur, I lacked many, if not most, of the habits of the natives.

Okay, to be honest, I did have mid-afternoon lunch meetings at Chinese and Indian restaurants. I did scamper from one Sand Hill Road meeting to another. I did wear sandals to work quite often. I did go to Fry's Electronics more often than would allow me to completely avoid the term *nerd*. I did have a couple of *South Park* figures on my desk (but I swear I didn't put them there!). I did experience frequent struggles to be verbally articulate. And I did stay up late.

On the other hand, I did not get up late. I did not wear shorts and a T-shirt to work (very often). Jeff bore this responsibility for me. I only got around to playing ping pong at work once. My office was relatively neat. I ate breakfast and dinner with my family almost every day. And, I was in my late thirties—which made me downright *old*, if not necessarily *mature*.

So when I ended up at Buck's Restaurant for a breakfast interview with a team of sought-after programmers from Netscape, I could not help but feel a bit disembodied.

I had read in several Internet periodicals about breakfast meetings at Buck's. It's a simple restaurant that its owner, Jamis MacNiven, modestly describes as "a Silicon Valley restaurant, tucked against the hills in the quiet village of Woodside, California where the venture-capital community and the Information Age execs conspire to bring you the 21st century." This was a place where myths were born.

Jeff had already been initiated to Buck's during an early round of fundraising. Alexander and JP had already convinced Robert to invest