

FLAVOR

HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM • WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 • SECTION D



Oh, the places you'll eat!

By Greg Morago
STAFF WRITER

The Houston dining scene, still shaking off its pandemic doubts and fears, is about to heat up with a slew of openings.

The restaurants — some much delayed, some out-of-town imports, some helmed by top chefs — are ready to add fresh flavors and social sizzle to a landscape obviously ready to welcome newcomers.

From only weeks-away debuts to openings planned through the end of the year, here are some of Greater Houston's latest and most exciting culinary players.

Goode Co. Kitchen & Cantina: Local classic Goode Com-

pany will bring its Kitchen & Cantina concept to the Heights in the space that once occupied Down House at 1801 Yale. Set to open in October, the restaurant is billed as a "stepped-up version" of Goode Taqueria, offering a menu that includes fajitas grilled over mesquite, homemade tortillas, wood-fired Texas quail, jalapeño rellenos stuffed with chorizo, sizzling parrillada platters, tacos al carbon, redfish on the half shell, grilled snapper, enchiladas, carnitas and Goode's famous seafood campechana. This will be the company's third Kitchen & Cantina location.

North Italia: The modern Italian restaurant will open its second Houston-area outpost in October at 1201 Lake Woodlands at The Woodlands Mall. The menu includes

Dining continues on D7

1. Ten Sushi + Cocktail Bar; 2. Goode Co. Kitchen & Cantina; 3. Gatsby's Prime Seafood; 4. Burger Bodega; 5. Local Table; 6. Kolache Shoppe; 7. B.B. Italia Bistro & Bar; 8. LuLoo's Day & Night; 9. Ojo de Agua; 10. Bayou Heights Beer Garden; 11. Brett's Barbecue Shop; 12. Sugar Factory Express

Kirsten Gilliam; Jody Horton; Michael Anthony; Burger Bodega; Jenn Duncan; Carla Gomez; Kirsten Gilliam; LuLoo's Day & Night; Yelp Mexico; Lisa Gochman; Greg Morago / Staff; Sugar Factory

BBQ

Five grilling mistakes and how to fix them

By Chuck Blount
STAFF WRITER

Even though Labor Day is in the rearview mirror, signaling the end of summer in many states, grilling takes place year-round in Texas. But if your results weren't exactly as you had expected during the three-

day weekend, there could be some reasons why.

I recall going back to my home state of Iowa one festive weekend with plans to cook about 50 hamburgers during a family gathering. The grill was set up perfectly with an indirect arrangement that had a hot and cool zone. Then my uncle

grabbed the grill and ruined it by covering the entire bottom of the grill with red-hot coals. I think it was an unintentional sabotage; he just didn't know any better. But there was so much heat, the patties turned into hockey pucks. Oh, the horror! *Grilling continues on D3*



Using the correct amount of charcoal is key to creating the perfect cooking temperature on a grill.

Express-News file photo



North Italia

North Italia will open in October at 1201 Lake Woodlands at The Woodlands Mall.

DINING

From page D1

small plates (tomato and burrata salad, crispy calamari, arancini, beef carpaccio, meatballs, shrimp scampi), salads, pizza, fresh pasta dishes and entrees such as grilled branzino, Tuscan chicken, chicken Parmesan, hanger steak and braised short rib.

Brett's Barbecue Shop: One of the leaders in growth of local craft barbecue recently closed its wee storefront in preparation for a much bigger location at 25220 Kingsland Blvd. in Katy. Set to open mid-October, the new venue gives pitmaster Brett Jackson room work his smoky magic with brisket, house-made sausage, pork ribs, turkey breast and superlative sides. Brett's will continue to offer first-come barbecue service by day and then transition to happy hour and a full kitchen menu with barbecue, nachos, wings, sandwiches and its famous brisket enchiladas. The new spot will also feature full bar.

Sushi by Hidden: Sushi chefs from the boutique Hidden Omakase restaurant will take turns turning out quick omakase experiences at this new project opening in November at 5216 Morningside in the Rice Village area. Serving lunch and dinner, Sushi by Hidden will feature 30-minute, 12-course omakase meals with seating for only 10 diners at a time.

B.B. Italia Bistro & Bar: Benjamin Berg is bringing back his B.B. Italia restaurant, opening mid-October at Sugar Land Town Square, 16250 City Walk. The menu of elevated Italian comfort dishes will include house-made pastas (including a 20-layer lasagna), New York-style pizza and chicken parmigiana. Next year, Berg Hospitality Group will open two new restaurants in Autry Park: Annabelle's and Turner's Cut.

Burger Bodega: The smash-burger pop-up sensation from Houston food influencer Abbas Dhanani is set to open this fall at its long-awaited brick-and-mortar restaurant, 4520 Washington. Dhanani has been hosting buzzy pop-ups featuring his double-patty cheeseburgers made with grilled onions, pickles and special sauce on a potato bun.

Jun by Kin: After representing Houston in stellar form as a finalist on "Top Chef Houston," chef Evelyn Garcia is readying her first restaurant, a project in collaboration with



Luke Chang

Jun by Kin, from "Top Chef" superstar Evelyn Garcia and her Kin HTX chef/partner Henry Lu, will open later this year.

her Kin HTX chef/partner Henry Lu. Described as an Asian American restaurant, Jun by Kin, opening later this year at 420 E. 20th, will feature Garcia's passion for Southeast Asian flavors tempered with her Mexican and El Salvadoran heritage.

Late August: The much-anticipated restaurant from Dawn Burrell is on track for opening later this year at the Ion, 4201 Main. A project from Lucille's Hospitality Group headed by Burrell and partner chef Chris Williams, Late August's menu will explore the intersections of African and Asian cuisines. Dishes could include Hainanese-style chicken with purple sticky rice; pasta with lapsang chili crisp, lobster and corn chowchow; coconut-braised beef cheeks with red rice; and pan-seared scallops with tasso mustard greens and ham hock dashi.

Bayou Heights Beer Garden: Former Killen's chef Teddy Lopez is culinary director at this project from the Kirby Group, a sister concept to Heights Bier Garten on North Shepherd. This new beer garden, opening in October at 3905 Washington, will offer beer, wine, cocktails and a menu of bar foods and smoked meats showcasing Lopez's barbecue know-how. The expansive patio should be a big draw on the bustling Washington Corridor.

Ten Sushi + Cocktail Bar: The owners of Bosscat Kitchen & Libations are bringing their West Coast sushi restaurant to Houston this fall at 4200 Westheimer at the 200 Park Place building. Across the street from Bosscat, Ten will offer a menu from sushi chef Toshi Miura and BCK Management chef Peter Petro of black rice rolls, wok dishes and a full-service sushi bar.

Gatsby's Prime Seafood: This sister restaurant to Gatsby's Prime Steakhouse in Montrose is set to open late September in the former Tony Mandola's space, 1212 Waugh. The upscale seafood spot will offer a menu from executive chef Erick Anaya that includes seafood towers, caviar, branzino filet, baked oysters and crab cakes to be paired with a wine list heavy on California vineyards.

Norigami: What began as a monthly pop-up at Hidden Omakase will now have a permanent location, opening in November at 2715 Bissonnet in the West University Place area. Chef Cong Nguyen will oversee a menu of decadent sushi and hand rolls constructed with toro, uni, wagyu, foie gras and caviar set within a speakeasy-inspired restaurant.

Heights Social: The owner of Drift Bar plans to open a new 8,500-square-foot bar this fall at 1213 W. 20th specializing in cocktails on tap, martinis, wine, happy hour specials (with champagne sabering!) and late-night DJs on weekends. There will be food, too, including thin-crust pizza, appetizers, charcuterie and weekend brunch. With more than 50 TV screens and a 40-foot LED wall, the bar will be ready for heavy Heights partying.

Wild Montrose: The owners of Wild, the cocktail/coffee/CBD concept in the Heights, will debut Wild Montrose at 1609 Westheimer in September, offering specialty cocktails, coffee drinks and hemp-infused products as well as a culinary program featuring cannabis infusions. There will also be hemp-derived elixirs, wine and cannabis pairings set against a coastal jungle design.

Local Table: The family-friendly concept with several locations in the Houston area is expand-



Sherman Yeung



Joseph Geiskopf



Christine Ha



Terrence Gallivan



Matt Tanner



Furrest Greenwood and Kenneth Williams

Michael Anthony

ing with two new restaurants at 24033 Cinco Ranch in Katy opening in the fall and at 4223 Research Forest in The Woodlands in the winter. The menus will offer starters such as blue crab cakes, ahi tuna tartare, green chile shrimp ceviche, hummus, burgers, gyros, kebab plates, meatloaf, pasta, fried chicken, salads, pizza, falafel and soba noodle bowls, wraps and tacos.

Bosscat Kitchen & Libations: The River Oaks whiskey bar and restaurant will open its second Houston-area restaurant this fall at Market Street, 9595 Six Pines in The Woodlands. The nearly 5,000-square-foot space, with seating for 130, plus a 100-seat patio, will offer a huge selection of whiskey, cocktails and a menu that includes pork belly poutine, ahi tuna wraps, charcuterie board, burgers, salads and sandwiches, shrimp and grits, Cajun brick chicken, barbecue salmon and beef short ribs.

The Blind Goat: Chef Christine Ha's second location of her Vietnamese gastropub is projecting a November opening at Spring Branch Village, 8141 Long Point. The opening represents a new chapter for the Blind Goat, which has operated for years as one of the original vendors at downtown's Bravery Chef Hall. Having her own brick-and-mortar restaurant with a bigger kitchen will allow the "MasterChef" winner (who also operates Xin Chao with chef-partner Tony Nguyen) to expand on her Vietnamese comfort and street food fare with dishes such as lemongrass chicken with vermicelli, dry chicken pho, crab and garlic noodles and Texas brisket fried rice.

Kolache Shoppe: With locations in the Heights and Greenway Plaza, Kolache Shoppe is set to expand with an October

opening at 4521 Kingwood in Kingwood. The menu of sweet (apple, apricot, blueberry, peach, lemon cream, poppy seed, cherry) and savory (sausage, bacon, breakfast) kolaches is rounded out with coffee and tea. Expect special collaborations, such as brisket kolaches using Pinkerton's Barbecue and Blue Heron Farm's cajeta.

Andiron: This concept from Sambrooks Management Co. (the Pit Room, 1751 Sea and Bar, Candente) specializes in live-fire preparations. The upscale project is set to open in November at 3201 Allen Parkway, across from Stages theater's new home. Designed by the award-winning New York firm AvroKO, the restaurant will honor steakhouse traditions while also offering small-plate progressive dining and "sourcing the world's finest ingredients, treating them simply."

Elro: Chef Terrence Gallivan, once part of the duo that operated the Pass & Provisions, is set to open his new restaurant in October at 2405 Genesee. Described as a neighborhood pizzeria and crudo bar, the menu will offer pizza, salads, sandwiches and a variety of seasonal crudos served in a vintage bungalow on the Midtown/Montrose border. The intimate space — 16 seats indoors, 16 at the bar and 40 on patio — is named for Gallivan's children, Eleanor and Ronan.

Eau Tour: Restaurateur Benjy Levit is taking over the former Thai Spice space at 5117 Kelvin in Rice Village for this bistro concept set to open in November. The restaurant, positioned above Levit's Local Foods, will offer a menu from executive chef Kent Domas featuring contemporary French fare paired with an extensive wine list and craft cocktail program. Eau Tour will be next to speak-

Dining continues on D8



Midway

Riverhouse Houston restaurant will anchor the East River 9 public golf course.



Gin Design Group

Lymbar is a new restaurant and craft cocktail bar from chef David Cordúa.



Norigami

Boutique sushi and hand roll restaurant Norigami is set to open in November.

NEW DOOR

Cherry Block Smokehouse

By Greg Morago
STAFF WRITER

The concept

Rancher/butcher/chef Felix Florez, one of the pioneers of ranch-to-table dining in Houston, has opened a new counter-service restaurant in the Stomping Grounds in Garden Oaks specializing in Texas and Louisiana fare with an emphasis on smoked and butcher shop meats.

The space

Gin Design Group has fashioned the 2,600-square-foot space with Florez family photos. The restaurant, where guests can look into a working butcher room, also offers a retail shop that includes Texas-made foods and in October will begin selling butcher-cut meats.

The food

The menu from executive chef Jordan Economy, working with chef de cuisine Mellissa Hart, offers steakhouse choices (heritage pork chop, New York strip, rib-eye steak, filet mignon, blade steak) rounded out by po'boys, burgers, a Texas Cuban sandwich, jumbo hot dogs, brisket gumbo, brisket macaroni and cheese, tacos, house-made boudin and boudin balls, and smoked meats. Pecan-smoked barbecue



Becca Wright

Cherry Block Smokehouse is a new restaurant from chef/butcher Felix Florez at the Stomping Grounds in Garden Oaks.

comes from a 14-foot steel smoker created specifically for the restaurant.

The drinks

A full bar offers beer, wine and cocktails, including frozen options. Florez, a sommelier, brings his appreciation for boutique, family-owned wineries to the menu.

The word

"We are just getting started, there is so much more to come, like brunch and daily specials," Florez said.

One more thing

The restaurant is a sister concept to Florez's Cherry Block Craft Butcher & Texas Market butcher and retail shop in Katy

at 5305 Highway Blvd.

The details

1223 W. 34th, 281-940-2219; cherryblockbutcher.com. Open 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

greg.morago@chron.com



Becca Wright

Diners can expect to find a variety of po'boy sandwiches on the menu.



POP Studios

The counter-service restaurant specializes in Texas and Louisiana fare.



Becca Wright

Florez says, "There is so much more to come, like brunch and daily specials."

DINING

From page D7

easy-style wine bar Lees Den, which Levit opened in the spring.

Sugar Factory Express: Get your sugar rush at this new immersive, quick-serve concept from the Sugar Factory that has confectionary shops and candyland-inspired restaurants throughout the county. Opening this fall at 5015 Westheimer in the Galleria, Sugar Factory Express will offer a "sweets, treats & eats" menu, including over-the-top ice cream sundaes, smoking goblets, shakes and rainbow-hued sliders and chicken sandwiches.

Lymbar: In addition to Late August, the Ion is also set to welcome the opening of a new neighborhood restaurant and cocktail bar. The project that will return chef David Cordúa to the local dining scene is expected to open this fall at 4201 Main. Cordúa is partnering with his father, pioneering Houston chef Michael Cordúa, on the bar-forward Lymbar, with a menu of globally inspired fare with an emphasis on Latin American and Mediterranean dishes.

Money Cat: The long-awaited restaurant from the owners of Tobiuo Sushi & Bar in Katy will open in October at 2925 Richmond in Upper Kirby. Led by chef-owner Sherman Yeung, the restaurant will feature a menu of sushi (using fresh seafood from Japan's Toyosu Fish Market) and modern Japanese dishes, including street food-inspired small plates, a pastry program and multi-course blue fin tasting events.



Jenn Duncan

Sushi by Hidden, from the Hidden Omakase team, will turn out quick omakase experiences.

LuLoo's Day & Night: This collaboration between Blood Bros. BBQ partners and pastry chef Alyssa Dole is looking at a mid-October opening at 1223 W. 34th at the Stomping Grounds in Garden Oaks. LuLoo's will be an all-day affair, serving Dole's pastries, cupcakes, breads and desserts, as well as a restaurant offering salads and sandwiches using Blood Bros. smoked meats. With former BuffBrew chef Arash Kharat on the culinary team, look for other menu additions as well as full bar service.

Ojo de Agua: With 40 restaurants throughout Mexico, this fast-casual chain is ready to open its first Texas outpost this fall at River Oaks District, 4444 Westheimer. Expect an all-day menu of healthy, fruit- and vegetable-forward dishes, bebidas and smoothies. Dishes include acai bowls, salads, chilaquiles, eggs in various ways, avocado toast, ceviche, sandwiches and tacos presented in a vibrant atmosphere. Wine-based fruit cocktails and mimosas, too.

Flat Top Grill: This full-service Asian fusion restaurant

from the Dallas-based Mongolian Concepts Restaurant Group (Genghis Grill and BD's Mongolian Grill) is set to open in December in the blossoming Lower Heights District, 2795 Interstate 10 W. Flat Top specializes in create-your-own bowls (chicken, pork, steak, smoked sausage) and entrees such as fried rice, spicy steak, Thai red curry, chili curry shrimp and noodles. The menu also offers gyoza, skewers (steak, chicken or shrimp), lettuce wraps, ramen and poke.

Ciel Restaurant & Lounge:

Inspired by hot spots along the French Riviera, this new restaurant ("ciel" is sky in French) will be led by executive chef Joseph Geiskopf, who worked in Michelin-star French Laundry in Napa Valley. The menu is described as a blend of modern Japanese and French, with fine wines, champagne and craft cocktails. Ciel plans a late fall opening at 4411 San Felipe.

Daddy's Chicken Shack: A Southern California-based fast-casual concept specializing in fried chicken sandwiches is set to open later this month at 1223 W. 11th in the Heights. The company's first Houston location will feature a menu that in-

cludes the Big Daddy (butter-milk fried chicken, slaw and Sriracha mayonnaise), Waffle Daddy (fried chicken sandwiched between funnel cake-style waffles), Nashville Daddy (spicy fried chicken, slaw and pickles with remoulade sauce), salads, chicken fingers, popcorn chicken and fries.

Kirby Ice House — The Woodlands:

Set to open later this month, the self-described "biggest bar in Texas" is putting down roots in The Woodlands at 1700 Lake Robbins, directly across from the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. It's a huge project: 28,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space with more than 60 televisions for this third location of the popular ice house. Guests can enjoy their favorite tap brews and cocktails and food from a rotating roster of food trucks.

Williams Smokehouse BBQ & Blues:

Sugar Land natives Kenneth Williams and Furrest Greenwood are planning this Texas barbecue concept with modern Creole flair, opening in November at Sugar Land Town Square, 2105 Lone Star. The 5,500-square-foot restaurant with a patio will offer a menu that includes smoked turkey legs stuffed with dirty rice and topped with a shrimp and sausage alfredo sauce, sausage and smoked gouda armadillo eggs and Creole candy smoked wings.

EZ's Liquor Lounge: Agricole Hospitality, the restaurant group responsible for Coltivare, among other ventures, is planning a fall opening of a new neighborhood dive bar in partnership with Houston bartender Matt Tanner. Expect

wine, beer, cocktails (including on-tap and frozen) paired with a no-frills menu of bar snacks, such as chips and dips, hot dogs and Frito pie. The space, 3302 White Oak, is a 1950s building next door to Coltivare.

VinSanto: This European-inspired wine bar, shop and bistro is scheduled to open in November at Memorial Green, 12525 Memorial. The menu will offer gourmet bites as well as a curated selection of fortified wines, vermouth, sake, beer, cider, wine-based cocktails and mocktails.

Navy Blue: This seafood restaurant from the Bludorn team is sure to create a buzz when it opens this fall in Rice Village. Chef Aaron Bludorn, his wife and co-owner Victoria Pappas Bludorn and Bludorn general manager Cherif Mbodji are the principals in this sister project to the posh Bludorn on Taft. It's set to go into the failed Politan Row food hall space at 2445 Times Blvd.

Riverhouse Houston: Described as a family-friendly restaurant and patio bar, Riverhouse Houston will anchor the East River 9 public golf course, part of Midway's 150-acre East River development in Houston's historic Fifth Ward. Set to open this fall at 65 Hirsch, the restaurant will offer a menu of American fare, such as burgers, wings, tacos, guacamole, steaks, beer, wine and cocktails, in a space overlooking the golf course, Buffalo Bayou and the downtown skyline.

greg.morago@chron.com



Wild Concepts

Wild Montrose will offer specialty cocktails, coffee drinks and hemp-infused products.



Memorial Green

VinSanto is a European-inspired wine bar, shop and bistro scheduled to open in November.



Kirby Ice House

Kirby Ice House is set to open in The Woodlands across from the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.