


THE LATEST DISH

Bryan Voltaggio Gives Empire a Jolt With Expansion Times Three

Bryan Voltaggio, chef/owner of Volt in Frederick, Md., is in high gear. In addition to his new North Market Kitchen in downtown Frederick as well as his new bistro Range (as in “down on the ...”) in Chevy Chase, he also plans to open a soup-and-sandwich concept on Frederick’s Carroll Creek Promenade where La Dolce Vita used to be, called Lunchbox. The casual 30-seat restaurant is slated to be open before the end of the year. In the first quarter of 2012, Volt will introduce a prix-fixe \$80 per person menu that changes each month, to replace the a la carte menu. Lunch service will be offered only on the weekends. Bryan also has an idea for a diner, yet to be named, that he wants to open on East Street in Frederick in what used to be a car dealership. He hopes for an early second quarter 2012 opening.

And speaking of Bryan, Brian McBride has joined forces with Robert Wiedmaier (Marcel’s, Brasserie Beck, Brabo and Mussel Bar) to create a model for restaurants he and Wiedmaier hope to open together. He’s currently headquartered at Brasserie Beck creating protocols and menus. They have just hired a new chef de cuisine, Will Morris, formerly of Bourbon Steak. It was time for new challenges and new horizons, as Brian had been at Park Hyatt for 25 years.

Mike Isabella is moving at warp speed, it seems. Graffiato has been open only a few months and now has plans to open a Mexican



BY LINDA ROTH CONTE



Brian McBride, Robert Wiedmaier, Will Morris

restaurant in first Q 2012 in Georgetown where Hook was, until it caught fire – literally. Bandolero will serve modern Mexican small plates. The frequently-changing menu will feature ceviche, tacos, vegetables, and “carbons,” which are Mike’s version of fajitas. Jonathan Umbel remains owner of the space.

Falls Church restaurant landmark, 2941, will close the first two weeks of 2012 to undergo renovations – from the décor to the menu. It will become more casual and more appealing to every-week dining, not just special occasions. This more casual concept has worked well for Michel Richard’s Central and Fabio Trabocchi’s Fiola.

Stephen Starr is to Philadelphia what Danny Meyer is to New York. Now he’s set his scope in DC and plans to open a French bistro at 14th and Q Streets NW before the 2012 fall session of Congress starts. His big hit concepts in Philly include: Buddakan, Continental (love the martinis), Morimoto and El Vez.

Renowned mixologist (PX/Restaurant Eve), Todd Thrasher, plans to open a new bar called

TNT, named for his son Tristan Noah Thrasher. It will accompany Eamonn’s: A Dublin Chipper on Columbia Pike in Arlington. A March or April opening is planned. He will offer two cocktail menus—one of old favorites, and one that’s brand new.

Quick Hits: Matchbox Management Group signed a deal to open a Ted’s Bulletin at 14th and S Streets, just a block from the next matchbox to open, at 14th and T Streets, NW. Geoff Tracy signed a lease to open in Rockville where Agaiinn and Houston’s used to be. He has his sites on a second Q 2012 opening. SoHo, aka Southern Hospitality, serving American food, will open at 1813 Adams Mill Rd where Adams Mill Bar and Grill used to be, by the end of the year. Teatism plans to open in Old Town, Alexandria in March. Plans to open in the U Street Corridor are on hold for now. Hawthorne Homemade Organic Juice Bar & Market plans to open on Macomb St, NW where River House used to be. Maddy’s Tap Room inked a deal to occupy 1100 13th Street, NW. Cava Mezzo Grill has leased a 2,100-square-foot space for its next location in

the Mosaic District (Merrifield, Va.) now under development. They have locations in Rockville, Bethesda, Capitol Hill, Clarendon and soon, Tysons Corner.

More Quick Hits: Look for a new bakery concept from Mark Furstenberg, formerly of Bread Line. Maranon Café will open in the old Tegeste location on 14th Street, NW. This new Latino full-service restaurant plans to serve Mexican, Salvadorian, and Dominican food. BlackFinn American Grille signed a deal to open in Halstead Square in Merrifield, Va. It plans to open in summer of 2012. Jason McCarther plans to open Box Bar & Grill in Bethesda, featuring 15 televisions with all sports all the time and burgers and wings. Although Chidogo’s at 14th & U Streets, NW has closed -- as have several other retail operations there due to building renovation – Chidogo’s Robert Hisaoka continues to move forward, planning to open in College Park before end of year and at National Harbor by Spring 2012.

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Steak and Cheese, the new concept from restaurateur **Michael Landrum**, creator of **Ray's The Steaks** dynasty, stealthily opened in Rosslyn where Hell Burger Too was ... has closed. Well, not exactly as have no fear, Landrum says he made an "oops" and asks for a second chance ... for the return of **Ray's Hell Burger Too** because it's what his customers want.

Openings Update: **Nick's Riverside Grill** and **Tony & Joe's** are now slated to re-open in April, in **Georgetown Harbour**. Nick's will expand into the former Cabanas space and will offer an expanded menu for lunch, dinner and brunch. **Ray's The Steaks** in East River (Anacostia) plans to be open in January, with no menu changes planned. New York-based **Boqueria** now plans to be open in January at their downtown DC spot at 19th and M Streets, NW. **Cathal** and **Meshelle Armstrong's** "epicurean emporium," **Society Fair**, is expected to open by Christmas. It will include a bakery, butchery, wine shop, bar, and demo kitchen. **Four Fields** (Ireland's 4Ps) in Cleveland Park negotiated with its new owners to stay open until March 2012.

Chef Update: **Duane Keller** is the new executive chef for the **Hamilton Crown Plaza Hotel** and 14K Restaurant. Keller was most recently executive chef at the **Mason Inn and Conference Center Hotel** in Fairfax, and before that at **Capital Grill** in Chevy Chase. **Mio** is getting a new chef **Giovanna Huyke**, who is apparently the Julia Child of Puerto Rico. **Zentan** sushi chef **Jason Zheng** will be working for **The Hamilton**, the newest venue from **Clyde's Restaurant Group**, when it opens this month. Though the restaurant will be open 24 hours, sushi will be served until 2 am. **Alexander Zeppos** is the new chef at **Logan Tavern**. Prior to that he was the executive chef and director of operations for **Growlers** of Gaithersburg. Chef **Robert Weland**

recently of **Poste** at the **Hotel Monaco** is now at **Cork Wine Bar** at Logan Circle. And chef **Ron Tanaka** of **Cork Wine Bar** is now at **New Heights** in Woodley Park.

Mari Vanna is a Russian home-cooking themed restaurant planning to open on Connecticut Ave, NW in Dupont Circle next fall. It will be three stories and will have décor that is noticeably Russian-grandmotheresque (think tchotchkes). It will have a club-like atmosphere (think Mansion on O). It's owned by **The Ginza Group**, which owns **Mari Vanna** locations in Moscow, New York, and London as well as more than 70 other concepts in Russia. Menu varies from beef stroganoff to blinis topped with caviar. And vodka.

Just like **Jose Andres' minibar** within **Café Atlantico** (now **America Eats Tavern**), **Amy Brandwein** will offer a seasonal 12-course menu at **Tavola 12**, a 12-seat restaurant within **Casa Nonna** on Connecticut Ave, NW near Dupont Circle.

Phil Sardelis, of **Sardi's** (College Park and Frederick, Md.) plans to open another **Sardi's**, specializing in Peruvian chicken, in Capitol Heights, Md. He also plans to open a franchise location of **Fox's Pizza Den** in College Park too, since he that's his home turf. He has the rights to open more **Fox's Pizza Dens** in Gaithersburg, Rockville, Silver Spring and Olney.

Pie Sisters plans to open this month on M Street in Georgetown near Key Bridge. It appears the parent company is **O'B Sweet**, created by the **Blakely** sisters: **Alli**, **Erin** and **Cat**, who announce on their website that "Homemade pies are and have always been a staple in our family tradition ..."

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