

Restaurants coming to Naples in 2018



(Photo: Sails)

Although new restaurants are readying to open throughout the area, the city of Naples remains a hot place for launching dining spots.

Today, we quickly preview a half dozen or so targeted to launch this season within the city limits. Last year in Naples, we welcomed restaurants such as The French, The Bevy, Kitchen, Timeless and La Colmar. This year, new places still coming downtown range from an upscale, sophisticated seafood restaurant to a casual, old-fashioned hot dog stand.

In the coming weeks this month, we'll widen the scope and look at newcomers targeted to open in North Naples, East Naples, Marco Island and elsewhere. We'll even loop back for some more in Naples that weren't quite ready by today's deadline.



Daurade, a fish common in France, will be on the menu at Sails, a restaurant targeted to launch near the end of January at Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South in downtown Naples (Photo: Sails)

Sails

Getting ready to set sail near the end of January, the [Sails Restaurant](#) team is busy building out a former bank branch on the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South.

The cut-above dining experience will start the moment when guests walk through the double doors at Sails, planned as a European-style coastal restaurant. The extreme attention to imported details — a Greek marble bar, chairs upholstered in Italian leather, French oak flooring, European crystal, plaster moldings, mosaics and mirrors — was a logistical head-spinner to pull off behind the scenes for a public payoff that's sure to be a head-turner.

"It's worth it. It looks stunning," said Veljko Pavicevic, who co-owns Sails with fiancée Corinne Ryan.

The well-traveled couple intends to replicate the finest flavors and dining experiences of France, Italy and Greece. They have worked many months with chefs and a sommelier to perfect menus for dinner, wine and handcrafted cocktails.

They also have designed a restaurant with a stunning seafood display, an inviting sail-shaped bar and a French-style open kitchen with a wood-fired grill. Sails will have intimate spots to dine inside as well as many tables for outdoor dining on both Fifth and Third beneath an overhang, awnings and umbrellas.

Dorona

The third restaurant in Naples owned by Chef Fabrizio and Ingrid Aielli is targeted to open Jan. 18.

The couple behind the acclaimed Sea Salt and Barbatella restaurants on Third Street South will launch [Dorona](#), a modern Italian steakhouse, in the former home of Midtown Kitchen + Bar and TGI Friday's on the northeast corner of U.S. 41 and Golden Gate Parkway. So, ironically, their third local restaurant is the first one not on Third.

Their latest creation will feature approachable main menus for lunch and dinner as well as a special tableside menu featuring the finest custom cuts of beef available from select farms across the United States. Dorona's casual fare will include reinvented sandwiches and burgers, pasta dishes, fresh garden salads, seafood, chicken, pork, lamb and duck offerings.

Dorona wine, made with a "golden grape" from Italy, will be on the restaurant's wine list, which also will feature unique selections by the glass. A full bar will include craft beers, handcrafted cocktails and wines on tap.

The idea is to create a "fun, neighborhood get-together place," Ingrid Aielli said.

La Trattoria

La Trattoria, promoted as a classic Italian kitchen, is targeted to open at the end of January in the former spot of La Bazenne, a French restaurant located between Café Lurcat and Osteria Tulia on Fifth Avenue South in downtown Naples.

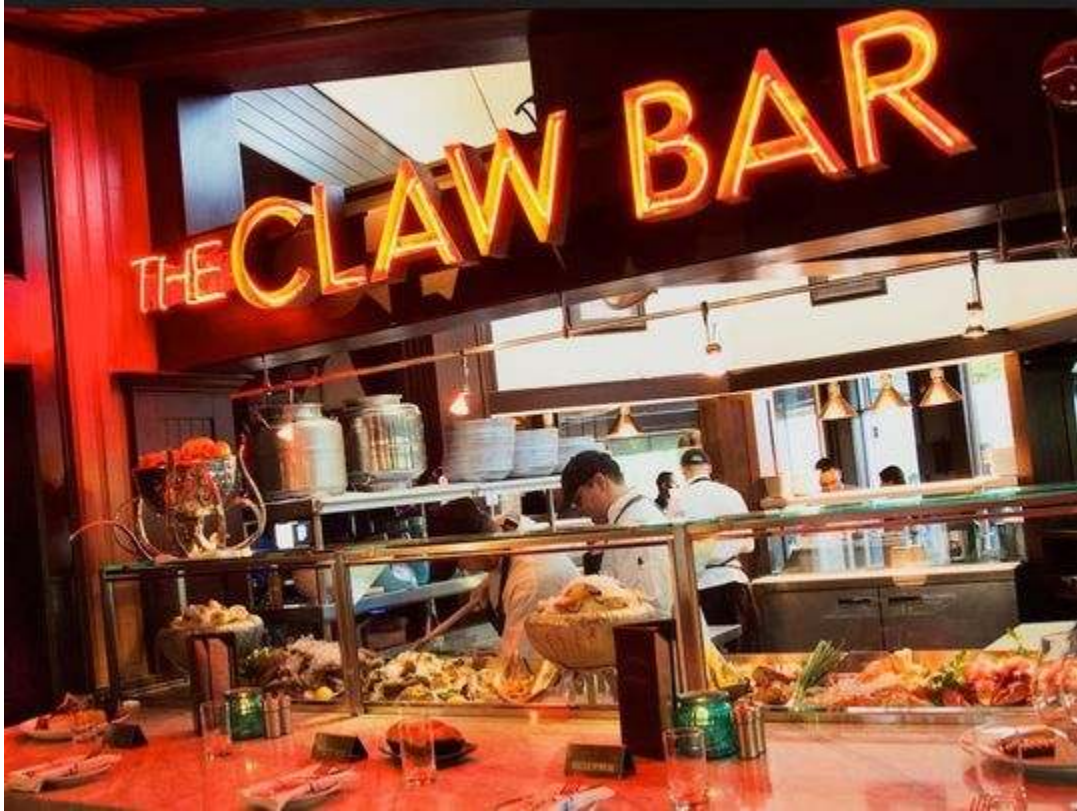
The new restaurant will have a menu of traditional Italian cuisine, plus a menu of special dishes "from market to the table" that will change daily depending on what fresh products and ingredients the chef is able to obtain, said Marina Novikova, manager of La Trattoria.

"It's a small, cozy place," Novikova said. "It's going to have a very nice selection of wine and wine-based cocktails."

La Trattoria will have about 75 seats between indoors and outdoors at small tables with checkered tablecloths. The façade with two glass garage doors will remain, opening the restaurant's interior to outdoor dining along Fifth Avenue.

A post-supported, 30-foot-long awning covering the outdoor dining area from the single-story building to the sidewalk will replace the retractable awnings of the previous restaurant. The awning color is expected to remain bright yellow, though.

La Bazenne on Fifth closed in early August after operating for more than three years in downtown Naples. The building at 474 Fifth Ave. S. was purchased by South Beach restaurateur Stefano Frittella, who also is a partner in four other Fifth Avenue South restaurants: Bice Ristorante, Caffè Milano, Kitchen, and Vergina, which will be rebranded Monticello.



The Claw Bar at Tierney's Tavern, 799 Walkerbilt Road in North Naples, is being cloned for a second Claw at Bellasera Resort in Naples. (Photo: The Claw Bar)

The Claw Bar

Renovations are underway at Bellasera Resort to create The Claw Bar, targeted to open this month.

Peter Tierney, who owns The Bay House and [The Claw Bar at Tierney's Tavern](#) on Walkerbilt Road off U.S. 41 in North Naples, took over the former Zizi Naples Kitchen in the Bellasera Resort and began work at the end of August to convert it into a new seafood restaurant.

“We were always eager to bring our hospitality from the north to the south,” Tierney said. “We want to bring that brand of hospitality downtown and try to do something a little bit differently than what everyone else is doing, which I think we will. We are very excited about what we are going to do.”

Tierney’s new hospitality project spills out into Bellasera’s lobby, adjacent terrace and even an upstairs terrace at the resort, 221 Ninth St. S. The rebirth includes a lobby bar menu and The Claw Bar’s trademark towers of seafood with a Southern flair.

“We are going to bring chic hotel dining back,” Tierney said.

Fans of the longtime companion to The Bay House can expect a similar menu and presentation.

“A lot of things we do up north will be represented here,” Tierney said. “We also are accommodating some new ideas.”

Look for the new dining and entertainment spot to launch in January, if all goes as planned.

“I won’t open it until everything is right,” Tierney said. “We’re very pleased with the way the design is coming along.”

Schnapper’s Hots

The target opening date is now March 1 for [Schnapper’s Hots](#), a longtime Sanibel Island eatery that is planning a second location in the tiny red A-frame on U.S. 41 in Naples that hosted Dairy Queen for decades and most recently All American Shake Shop.

Chili dogs are one of the specialties at Schnapper's, which will carry on a half-century tradition of ice cream, hot dogs and more at the old DQ on the corner of Fourth Avenue North. All American Shake Shop closed at the end of July after operating for more than 2½ years in the Naples landmark.

“We’re the perfect fit, the perfect restaurant for that little building,” said Schnapper’s owner Dave Acheson.

The iconic red roof will remain, but Acheson has proposed adding storefront glass and doors to enclose the existing covered outdoor area to create a small indoor area for patrons to come in to place orders. The eatery will continue to have only outdoor seating, though.

In addition to ice cream and char-grilled hot dogs, Schnapper’s features an extensive menu of comfort food such as fresh-cut fries, hand-battered fresh Vidalia onion rings, freshly ground and hand-pattied burgers and cheeseburgers, Buffalo wings and fish and chips. The menu also features sandwiches such as grilled ham and cheese on rye, grilled cheese, a BLT, Polish kielbasa, bratwurst, Italian sausage, foot longs, and grouper and chicken sandwiches and baskets.



A proposed rendering of a restaurant to be built this year at the former site of Dolphin Car Wash, 944 Seventh Ave. N., in Naples. (Photo: MHK Architecture & Planning)

Fishers Fish & Chips

Plans have greatly changed in the couple of years since Naples developer Adam Smith proposed a mixed-use development to replace the former Dolphin Car Wash on Seventh Avenue North. Smith still plans to put a restaurant there on the small lot behind the DQ Grill & Chill and across the street from Skyline Chili, but he still hasn't finalized some of the details.

Smith grew up in the United Kingdom with Alan Fisher, who co-owns [Fishers Fish & Chips](#), a legendary eatery for at least 35 years in London. The longtime friends have wanted to team up to bring authentic fish and chips here.

However, the recent Naples Design Review Board presentation by architect Matthew Kragh shows the name Smith Organics on renderings for the redeveloped car wash and Beach Bugz golf cart rental business that operated at 944 Seventh Ave. N. So what's the restaurant's actual name and concept?

"I just haven't made that determination yet," said Smith, who successfully launched The Bevy restaurant last year in Old Naples.

Regardless, construction should begin within the next couple of months on a restaurant targeted to open there Aug. 1, he said. The plan received preliminary design approval Dec. 22 by the Design Review Board, but the project still needs City Council approval for its outdoor dining.

The restaurant is proposed to have 2,173 square feet of dining inside and 845 square feet of dining outdoors, including a fire pit area in the rear, plans show.

Bayfront

Building on the launch a couple of weeks ago of [Stoney's Stone Crab](#) in Bayfront, at least three other new restaurants are planned this year in the mixed-use development on the Gordon River.

[Shane's Cabana Bar](#) will finally get an extreme makeover and be converted into a waterfront dining spot, an organic café is planned for space formerly occupied for years by Roy's, and the new [Southern Latitudes Brewpub and Grub](#) is redeveloping a corner unit that previously was not a restaurant.