

FOOD, NEWS

NIGHTSHADE NOODLE BAR ANTICIPATES SUMMER OPENING IN LYNN

BY BILL BROTHERTON | April 22, 2019



Chef Rachel Miller will open Nightshade Noodle Bar in downtown Lynn this summer. (Andrew Wang)

LYNN — Acclaimed chef Rachel Miller has always dreamed of opening her own restaurant. That was her dream when she was executive chef at fine-dining establishments Bondir and Clio. That was her dream when her Nightshade pop-up venture, where she prepares and serves meals in borrowed kitchens and rented spaces, became hugely successful.

Well, Miller's dream has come true. She has signed a lease to open Nightshade Noodle Bar at 73 Exchange St. this summer. The small space currently is home to Campus Coffee Shop, whose owners are retiring.

She said her Vietnamese-American restaurant will be a casual place and have 26 seats, and she'll start renovating the space on May 1. She hopes it will open in late summer, Wednesdays through Sundays, probably 11 a.m. to 11 p.m./midnight. She expects cocktails and a late-night menu will be offered as well.

"I'm very excited to be opening in downtown Lynn," said Miller. "I've always wanted to open my own restaurant. Three years ago I moved to Lynn, on Exchange Street actually, and I had a feeling this is where my restaurant had to be. I knew I had to get in before the development downtown really began and the buildings, and rental costs, started going up. I lucked out.

"I love it here. Lynn has a nice small-town vibe in an urban setting. I can't wait to get started and get involved in the community"

Many of Nightshade's pop-up dinners took place in Lynn, including the first, on April 30, 2017, at the former White Rose in Central Square. She rented the Capitol Diner several times, and has whipped up delish feasts at Bent Water Brewing Co.

Miller said she will work with a restaurant architect and handle much of the demolition herself, to help keep costs down. "I'll be honest, I'm excited but I'm freaking out a bit."

She said the menu will feature 12 to 15 items, some permanent and some depending on what's fresh at local farm stands and what fishermen catch. There will be options for vegetarians, meat lovers and everyone in between. A focus will be on Vietnamese flavors.

"Nightshade Noodle Bar will be a small-plate restaurant," Miller said. "This will not be an apps and entrée place."

Miller has one business partner, a financial analyst. She will hire a general manager and beverage director. She plans to be at the restaurant nearly every day.

She raised \$31,000 through MainVest, a Salem investment-based crowdfunding firm that allows even investors of modest means to help entrepreneurs of small businesses get their dream off the ground. Miller said she started paying her investors back, even before a lease had been signed for the Exchange Street space, with money earned through Nightshade pop-ups. She also secured a loan from Lynn EDIC.

The city of Lynn has been a great partner, she said, adding she's developed solid relationships with many at City Hall in the two years she's had to secure licenses for her pop-up dinners.



Bill Brotherton

Brotherton is Features editor for the Daily Item. He is also editor of Essex Media Group's North Shore Golf, 01907 and ONE magazines. A Beverly native and Suffolk University graduate, Bill recently retired from the Boston Herald, where he wrote about music, edited the Features section and was Editorial unit chairman for The Newspaper Guild-CWA local 31032. This is his second stint at the Item, having labored as Lifestyle editor back in the olden days, when New Wave and Hair Metal music ruled the airwaves.

Bill Brotherton can be reached at bbrotherton@itemlive.com
