

Frankfort eatery to add TC Location

Owners of Fusion Restaurant to open Fusion Love

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Record-Eagle/Tessa Lighty

Shane Inman poses for a picture on the deck of what will be the new restaurant, Fusion Love. Inman is president of the firm designing the restaurant.

TRAVERSE CITY — Asian American cuisine from a popular Frankfort restaurant is slated to debut in downtown Traverse City late this fall.

The Fusion Restaurant, 300 Main St., announced plans for a second eatery, Fusion Love, at 317 E. Front St., that will offer Asian Streetfare cuisine along with some of the original restaurant's most popular dishes.

"It's going to have all the foods that people love and go out to Frankfort for, but with an additional takeout section as well," said Marsha Stratton, owner of Idea Stream, a local marketing firm that has long represented Fusion.

Fusion co-owners Bobbiesee and Ba Ku will offer Fusion Love diners a scaled back version of the restaurant's original menu. The two hired Shane Inman, president of New York-based design firm Inman Company, to ensure their dining experience is a memorable one.

"The entire experience is more than just amazing food," Inman said. "It's the dining room staff and the service and enjoying yourself in the 30 minutes before that food reaches the table. This client understands that, and they wanted to bring something beautiful to Traverse City."

A gold-and-black color scheme will decorate the 3,000-square-foot restaurant. The dining area overlooking Grand Traverse Bay will seat about 45 customers, Inman said.

"I wanted to do something fresh and new," he said. "A lot of people are still scared of black because it's a hard color. This is going to be very metro and very bold."

Each table will also be equipped with an iPad on which customers can order and pay for their meals, allowing the restaurant to operate with a smaller wait staff, he said.

"It's going to be very electronically advanced," Inman said of the restaurant. Tables and takeout area will be equipped with electrical outlets and USB ports.

Customers who arrive without a phone charger will be able to grab one — branded with a Fusion label — from the hostess station, free of charge.

"There will be boxes and boxes of Android and Apple phone chargers in this beautiful case built into the countertop, so people can just grab their own," Inman said. "If you want to return them, great — but you don't have to."

Inman also designated space next to the hostess stand for a tea bar, where three rotating flavors of Fusion's tea will be available for customers to sample while waiting for a table or carryout.

Fusion Love, despite its amenities, will cater mainly to customers looking for a quick bite to eat.

"The huge emphasis on this restaurant is takeout," Inman said.

An area inside the restaurant designated entirely to carryout orders will serve up Asian Streetfare cuisine, Stratton said.

"The streetfare part of it is more grab-and-go food," she said. "It will already be prepared and packaged."

The restaurant has been years in the making for the Kus, who envisioned a second location in Traverse City since The Fusion Restaurant first opened in 2004.

"We are delighted to be coming to Traverse City and bring the food that Frankfort has loved for the past 12 years to our new friends in Traverse City," Bobbiesee Ku said in a press release.

The Kus originally approached Inman roughly five years ago to design a location in Traverse City, but plans fell through when they couldn't find a location on Front Street. Inman's design firm had moved from Traverse City to Manhattan by the time they inquired again three months ago, but he was happy to take on the project.

"Designing a restaurant is my dream, and doing one on Front Street that's very visible is just awesome," Inman said.

He recruited local companies like KA Construction, Kitchen Choreography, Robert A. Yvon Architect and Consolidated Electric to make his design plans a reality. Customers can tune into social media for updates on the restaurant via a series of short videos documenting the design process.

“Everyone gets to be a part of this amazing restaurant as it comes together,” he said.

Visit www.Fusionlovetc.com for more information.