

ZUZU

Napa Valley Register



Since ZuZu Tapas and Paella opened on Main Street in Napa in 2002, it's been a local favorite with a problem: The Spanish-inspired restaurant was too small. They didn't even take reservations for a long time.

This will change dramatically, when owner Mick Salyer unveils his new "block party" that will triple ZuZu's space. Salyer was hoping to open this Thursday but the project has been plagued with construction delays.

ZuZu is adding a bar and dining room in the adjacent space that was once Asia Chop Suey Café, and it has converted the next space, the former Henry's Tavern that closed in 2019, into a space for private dining with a takeout window labeled Hank's Takeout in its honor. It is scheduled to open in mid-October.

That is including La Taberna, the Spanish-style tavern that opened next door in 2013. It's more for drinking and nibbling rather than dining, but its tapas will also be available at Hank's Takeout.



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"There's an exciting buzz and energy in downtown Napa now, but it was a very different place when we opened in 2002. We're proud to have been here since the beginning of this period of redevelopment and growth," said proprietor Mick Salyer.

"ZuZu was always a gathering spot for locals and industry, and with our expanded space, we'll be better able to serve both our loyal friends and new visitors."

The new modern rustic half of ZuZu was designed by Kimberley Nunn and Dan Worden of Shopworks with a Mediterranean flair, with rough-hewn wooden tables, terracotta tile floors and ironwork, though the large bar is the most prominent — and inviting — addition. It was actually built by Salyer and staff members; there's no "Golden Investor" involved here, just hard work.

They weren't able to cut out a big section of the wall between the two spaces in the old building, but are adding a doorway, mostly for use by staff.

With the larger space (and kitchens), they can also expand the menu of food — and add spirits to the present wine and beer.

To start with, ZuZu will offer a wide choice of gin and gin-based cocktails.

If that seems odd for a Spanish restaurant, Spain is the biggest market for gin, the quintessentially British cocktail. (In return, the United Kingdom is the biggest market for Spanish sherry.)

It will offer a wide selection of gins from around the world and cocktails.

The preliminary menu includes four categories of gin, each with selections from Mexico to Goa in India: London Dry/juniper forward, citrus/fruit forward, spice, earth/sea and floral/botanical.

They even have eight types of tonic, one using foraged Napa essences.

Bar manager Josh Weed also has created gin-based cocktails such as April Showers, with lavender, rose and lemon, and the Capisce, with gin, tomato water, basil oil, truffle and lime.

They will also offer other spirits in addition to the wine and cider list focusing on Iberian and artisan Californian producers. That naturally includes sherries and ports.

New will be their own beer brewed on site; they got a brewpub license, which also allows them to sell spirits.

The menu is also expanding. It will continue to offer a wide selection of its popular cold and hot tapas from Catalonia and the Basque region like boqueróns, ceviche, tortilla Español and gambas al ajillo (garlic sauce).

New from chef Armando Ramirez are larger plates intended for sharing including grass-fed Northern California beef and whole fish like sole and sanddabs.

To add authenticity, they're adding a *plancha* (griddle) and live-fire grill for cooking.

Also new will be more paellas, and they have a special new oven to speed their preparation.

Of course, outside, the welcoming tables and chairs stretch in front of the four store fronts from the original ZuZu to La Taberna.

This section of Main Street, which was closed due to the pandemic, has become immensely popular and brings a bit of San Sebastian or Barcelona in Napa's riverfront and the park across the street.

Apparently, the street closure is not necessarily permanent, as some in the city are placing demanding conditions on the restaurants along the street to keep it closed.

— ZuZu, 829 Main St., open Wednesday to Sunday, noon to 10 p.m. ZuzuNapa.com

— La Taberna, 815 Main St., Wednesday to Friday, 4 to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 2 to 10 p.m. LaTabernaNapa.com

— Hank's Takeaway, 825 Main St. Opening mid-October 2022.

Press Coverage