

Home > Business > Entertainment

One Walnut to close in downtown Cleveland, but chef will open a second spot near Gordon Square

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Joe Crea, The Plain Dealer

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Lisa DeJong

Marlin Kaplan, chef-owner of One Walnut (seen here in Luxe Kitchen and Lounge, his restaurant in the Gordon Square neighborhood) will close his downtown restaurant June 25.

Score one for the Detroit Shoreway area, and minus-one for downtown Cleveland.

One Walnut, the nationally acclaimed restaurant and longtime watering hole for Cleveland's powerbrokers, is closing later this month. Owner Marlin Kaplan, who also operates the highly successful Luxe Kitchen and Lounge in the Gordon Square neighborhood, will shift even greater attention to the emerging West Side arts district when he opens a second restaurant a few blocks down the street from Luxe.

Kaplan has formed a partnership with restaurateur Rosita Kutkut to transform her recently shuttered spot La Boca, 5800 Detroit Road, into an upscale taqueria.

"My wife, Melissa, and I decided to close One Walnut after a lot of heartfelt thought," Kaplan said. "Times have changed since we opened nearly 11 years ago."

The couple's move had long been under consideration, as a growing number of vacancies in

neighboring office buildings steadily eroded the restaurant's core customer base. Meanwhile, the air of dressy sophistication that characterized One Walnut and earned it the praise of publications such as Esquire and Gourmet seemed increasingly detached from the far more casual tone of

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

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modern dining -- the very style that has drawn droves of dinner guests to Luxe.

"[One Walnut] had its heyday, and at a time when Cleveland didn't have a lot going on in terms of restaurants," says Kaplan. "It's lasted 10 years; there aren't a lot of restaurants downtown that can say that."

Josh Taylor, a spokesman for the Downtown Cleveland Alliance, regrets the departure of a prestigious name on the city's landscape. But he points to the recent opening of Chinato on East Fourth Street and the soon-to-debut Zinc around the corner on Euclid Avenue as indications of downtown's continuing revitalization.

"That's not to diminish Kaplan," Taylor says. "And just because one opportunity closes doesn't mean another won't open. We hope he can be a part of downtown again in the near future."

The restaurateur won't be too far away -- certainly not for fans of his cuisine. When the new spot, Roseangel, opens sometime in early July, they will find house-made margaritas, more than a dozen moderately priced tacos and a variety of a la carte menu items.

"It's a good change, I think," says Kutkut, who will lend her behind-scenes expertise. "This is the direction I've wanted to take, going smaller and making the corner even better."

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ultra

June 09, 2010 at 8:12PM

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Oh, well. There's always Captain Tony's.

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4day4daysale

June 09, 2010 at 8:43PM

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Worked for Kaplan one summer in college, what a disrespectful jerk he was! Totally unnecessary but that was his nature. He can fail over and over but these banks will still give him a loan to open another business, can't figure it out.

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gayperson

June 09, 2010 at 9:37PM

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Jeez! You people are idiots! Marlin Kaplan is a hugely successful restaurateur in Cleveland. You people would be happy if everything nice in Cleveland went away. He's closing a long successful place now that the business simply isn't there and the place has run its course AND he's opening a new place. Comments like chagrin investors have no business being posted - as if he really

70



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knows Kaplans business and as if it is any of our business what his arrangements are with his landlord. Go away all of you.

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LetshaveaTeaParty!

June 10, 2010 at 9:51AM

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Because you are Gay, you can say that, BUT, before you call me all sorts of names and a Homophobic.....LOL I have 17 years in the restaurant business and have NO phobias. I too knew him very well AND my wife and I both worked for him. It has NOTHING to do with wanting Cleveland to fail, I want just the opposite, I want Cleveland to succeed and as a Chef my self who has retired and moved on to another career, I can remember when This man placed a VERY negative article on each table of his FIRST success in Cleveland "Marlin's" of a VERY young Chef, Mike Simon when he became the Chef at the Caxton Cafe when I think the PD KILLED him in a review, Marlin was SO happy and joyful and I can't remember if the article mentioned Marlin's restaurant or not as an alternative place to go, I had left his restaurant after helping him, along with my wife that night never to return. He called and couldn't understand why we left?? How someone can celebrate another's bad review like that RIGHT DOWN THE STREET and they were FRIENDS.....was not my Cup of TEA Party!

Well we ALL know where Mike ended up, tossing scraps to Marlin.....Marlin will always have his circle of followers, he is talented, VERY talented. He makes good food and he does deserve a place in Cleveland's success of great restaurants, but I couldn't post all that he has done, lets just leave it at I wish him another decade of success at his new location and I hope his new wife has chopped some of his Elitist and pompous attitude and made him into a better man.....

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cleagain

June 09, 2010 at 10:54PM

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Marlin had the One Walnut space thru the Amtrust Goldberg's and we all know what they've done to Cleveland! He had the other space on east 6th before that when the Bohemia cafe in Tremont started the new Cleveland restaurant scene which has now evolved to Symon town. Certainly miss Bohemia and the vibe they set to produce incredible food in a cool atmosphere. They invented Tremont. Hope that Marlin isn't spreading too thin with 3 spots in Gordon Square as he doesn't have the Goldberg's to ante up when the bills are due... One thing Gordon Square doesn't need is the shuffle of average restaurants coming and going. James Levin of CPT who is the driving force that resurrected G Square deserves better.

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