

Fort Worth BusinessPress

Latest Dish: Changes afoot at Monty's Corner

By Celestina Blok, October 19, 2012

Based on the slew of restaurants he's been involved with on a short-term basis, it's not too surprising that **Shawn Horne** has already skipped town less than eight months after partnering with the owners of **Sushi Axiom** to open **Monty's Corner** in Montgomery Plaza.

The Dallas-based restaurateur has headed back east to serve as the general manager of Stephan Pyles' newest creation, **Stampede 66**, set to open in Uptown Dallas late this month.



Horne previously opened Dallas' now-closed Kitchen 1924 and Horne & Dekker and was once the general manager at Five Sixty by Wolfgang Puck atop Reunion Tower. His reunion with Pyles comes a couple of decades after they worked together at one of Pyles' first ventures, Star Canyon.

Monty's Corner is still open with the same continental-style menu and a new manager in Samantha Bales, although a link titled "Who's Shawn?" still exists on the restaurant's website, along with Horne's direct email address for comments and questions. Executive chef Corey Smith, who worked with Horne at Horne & Dekker and Dish, is also gone. Monty's culinary team member Justin Benavidez has taken over the kitchen.

"We're going to keep some of the same items but we've added a few new items," Benavidez said. "I'm adding some fall vegetables like butternut squash and I just put my shrimp and grits on the menu. I'm changing things slowly."

Monty's Corner will still host Monty's Monthly Mutt Mover pet adoption event the third weekend of each month. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday and for brunch on Sunday.

Mother-daughter duo opens Mariposa's Latin Kitchen

After originally being encouraged by her family's pediatric dentist, for whom she catered her first event, Irma Gamez launched Irma's Catering in 2008, partnering with her eldest daughter, Crystal Padilla, to create tamales and Mexican dishes. Years earlier, the Lubbock native made tamales and hot sauce primarily for church functions and fundraisers to support mission work. Gamez graduated from the Culinary School of Fort Worth in 2009 and now, after more than a year of planning, she and her daughter have opened their first restaurant, Mariposa's Latin Kitchen, located at 5724 Locke Ave.

"We offer homemade taste with fresh ingredients," said Padilla, who primarily handles the administrative side of the business while her mom does the cooking. "Our menu items derive from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico and Spain. We will feature items from different Latin countries monthly."

Tacos and mini tacos with beef, pork, shredded chicken and grilled tilapia and tamales grandes are sold a la carte. Enchiladas come two to a plate and include rice and beans. Mariposa's - the name means "butterfly" in Spanish - is also serving tropical ceviche with avocado, mango and pineapple and colorful corn and black bean salads.

Gamez and Padilla will continue the catering portion of their business. Mariposa's lengthy catering menu ranges from empanadas and fajitas to coconut cupcakes and chili pepper cookies.

"Our complete menu is made from scratch daily," Padilla said. "You can definitely taste the love in our food and visually experience the passion behind it when you walk into our place."

Mariposa's is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday and for breakfast on Saturdays only beginning at 8 a.m. and offering mini sopapillas and a huevos rancheros "stack."

Houlihan's now open in North Fort Worth

Parents of young children will appreciate the new Houlihan's, a Kansas-based "hip-casual dining" chain that opened its first Fort Worth location Oct. 15 at 9365 Rain Lily Trail in Alliance Town Center.

"We encourage kids," said manager Kevin Hillsbery. "We're a casual dining room and we don't require people to put on suits and ties to enjoy a great homemade meal."

But grownups will welcome Houlihan's semi-sophisticated atmosphere, drink specials and diverse menu, which runs the gamut from pot stickers, barbecue ribs and salads to fish tacos, carne asada and fettuccine Alfredo. The Alliance locale, the fourth for the DFW area, represents the restaurant's new prototype and features a new menu with items that won't be found at other outlets. Also note: this new Houlihan's doesn't offer a buffet as the others do. Houlihan's is open for lunch and dinner daily and until midnight on Friday and Saturday.

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