

Ginger Grill Becomes Commons



by
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Starting this week, the restaurant formerly known as Ginger Grill reopened its doors with a new look, a new vision, and a new name: Commons.

A lot of people were disappointed when Ginger Grill closed its doors, and even more will be disappointed when they find out that the old menu no longer exists. What they will find at Commons, though, is a new, more eclectic menu, a more spacious layout, a stage that will feature a wide variety of performances, and most importantly, a new vision—to create change in the downtown community and the city of New Bedford as a whole.

Owners JT Ghim and his wife Augustina, alongside their new partner and downtown New Bedford resident and former New Bedford Public School Teacher Nicholas Baptist, are excited for the opportunity to reach a wider variety of people. They see Commons as a place where people gather to share ideas and turn those ideas into actions, as well as a place people can go to for a good meal and to be entertained. Picture it as a Community Center with food and entertainment to accompany it.



Baptist has been involved in the local community as the creator of the “Where Are You Headed” attendance initiative program for New Bedford Public Schools. He also has volunteered his time as a basketball coach at the High School, as well as in the Citizen Schools program within the cities Middle schools. JT took him on to help him with his vision. “Who better than someone who already has some valuable experience in the community?” said Ghim when I spoke with him recently. “I’m really excited about what he has to offer as an individual.”

Together, they feel that they can change the current landscape of Downtown New Bedford while running a venue/restaurant at the same time. Baptist sees it as a meeting place for young professionals, philanthropic groups, community service outreach programs, as well as people looking to get their foot in the door within the community. He mentioned his plans to have a Teen Night and a book club as a few of their initial goals, as well as booking local musicians and DJ’s to perform, among other forms of entertainment.

One thing is clear: Commons will no longer be the same Ginger Grill that so many have come to know and love. Many of Ginger Grill’s former customers are worried about these changes. Myself, for one, will miss the old menu, and I’m a little skeptical about the idea of axing the Korean food.

“Things just weren’t working out the way they wanted them to,” said Baptist. “The rising cost of food was hurting them, and because they always served such high quality, fresh foods, they weren’t making enough money to turn a reasonable profit.” So JT decided to shift his focus.

The menu, in its former state, was too difficult to pay for

and keep up with. Under the new regime, the menu will be geared more towards the Bristol Community College crowd during the day, and more toward late-night crowds in the evening, rather than the traditional dinner crowd Ginger Grill catered to.

One thing that Commons will be is different. There aren't many places in the city where you can get a good meal, see some quality live entertainment, as well as rub elbows with like-minded people, people who aspire to see New Bedford grow as a community. The people exist, and the ideas exist, but up until now, there hasn't been a comfortable atmosphere aimed combining all these elements. The Ghim's and Nick Baptist see the potential for Commons as limitless.

To keep up with Commons news and information like their Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/villagenb>.