



Chipotle restaurant coming to Derby Street Shoppes

By Carol Britton Meyer
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Hingham — A chipotle is a ripe jalapeño pepper that has been dried and smoked for use in cooking. It's also the name of the Mexican restaurant that will open soon at the Derby Street Shoppes.

Bryan Masse, manager of the new Chipotle Mexican Grill at the former Baja Fresh location behind Panera Bread, said he's excited about the upcoming grand opening Dec. 9. Chipotle operates several hundred restaurants nationwide.

Masse and Attorney Matthew Fogelman, representing Chipotle, appeared before the selectmen this week to request a license to serve bottled beer on the premises. The request was granted.

"Chipotle offers fast, casual food with an upscale flair," Fogelman said. "They serve all fresh meat and vegetables, prepared at the counter in front of you."

With regard to the beer license, Fogelman said the Chipotle manager and cashier "'follow' the beverages that are sold at the counter to ensure that customers purchasing them are the ones drinking them," and that they don't get into the wrong hands.

The restaurant will have 55 to 60 seats and an outside patio during mild weather. No beer will be allowed outside the restaurant and there is no bar. The staff serving alcohol will be trained in the proper procedures.

"We're also big on moving amongst our guests to see how their dining experience is going, Masse said.

As the former manager of the North Quincy Chipotle, Masse said customers would often ask when a Chipotle would be coming to the South Shore. "We think this new Chipotle will be a good fit for the unique Derby Street Shoppes experience," he said following the meeting.

"Chipotle offers fresh, high-quality food at a reasonable price in today's economy," Fogelman said. "It's a good place to stop by for a quick, tasty, healthy bite while shopping, and it won't hurt your wallet!"

Chipotle serves all-natural chicken, pork, and beef. "The food is gourmet but not pricey," Masse said.

The Hingham location will be the second in Massachusetts to sport the new Chipotle look — a departure from the usual stainless steel décor — which features crisp, clean white tiling.

"The kitchen is in full view so there are no secrets — no microwaves, freezers, or can openers!" Masse quipped.

One of Chipotle's most popular menu items is the chicken burrito. Other offerings include tacos, vegetarian fajita burrito bowls, and salads. Customers select their own "fixings" and accompaniments ranging from guacamole, black and pinto beans, a variety of fresh salsa, fajita vegetables, sour cream, cheese, lettuce, and another vegetarian dish, cilantro-lime rice — steamed every hour until it's light and fluffy and then tossed with freshly chopped cilantro, a dash of citrus juice, and a touch of salt.

"We're looking forward to opening our Hingham store," Masse said. "The excitement is growing! Every day is one day closer to opening day!"

Chipotle's slogan is "Food with Integrity," meaning "better-tasting, coming from better sources, better for the environment, better for the animals, and better for the farmers who raise the animals and grow the produce," according to the company web site.

The company philosophy is to serve food that is "unprocessed, seasonal, family-farmed, sustainable, nutritious, naturally raised, hormone-free, organic, and artisanal," which has influenced the way the company views other aspects of its business, from the materials and systems used to design and build Chipotle restaurants to its staffing and training programs, according to the web site.

The first Chipotle restaurant opened near the University of Denver in 1993, based on the premise of reasonable prices and a "hip, friendly, casual atmosphere." Since then, hundreds more have opened at various locations across the nation. Hours of operation for the new Hingham restaurant will be 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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