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Food & Lifestyle

Elevated Pizza, McGinnis' Grill to join Budd Dairy Food Hall



Image: Columbus Business First

Budd Dairy Food Hall will welcome two new tenants this summer.

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Story Highlights

- Elevated Pizza Kitchen and McGinnis' Grill to join Budd Dairy Food Hall.
- Both will open in the food hall this summer.
- McGinnis' will take the place of Pokebap, closing this month.

A pair of Columbus food trucks will bring pizzas and burgers to the Budd Dairy Food Hall in the next two months.

The Cameron Mitchell Restaurants-owned venue at 1086 N. 4th St. in Italian Village, after four years in business, has seen the first big changes to the chef-tenant lineup in the last year with four concepts leaving and another four coming in.

But that's always been the expectation.

"This is working exactly as it was intended," said Steve Weis, vice president of development.

Elevated Pizza Kitchen will move into the former Borgata Pizza spot this June. Borgata [left in April](#).

McGinnis' Grill will take over the Pokebap space in July. Pokebap will close inside the food hall this month.

Both Borgata and Pokebap have [other locations](#) in Central Ohio.

Elevated Pizza Kitchen is owned by Tom and Margaret Peponis who launched their Elevated Wood Fired Pizza mobile operation in 2021.

Weis said Budd Dairy won't have a wood-fired oven, but fans can still expect the popular pizza recipes as well as a few French influences, including pastries. (Margaret Peponis is [a former French teacher](#)).

Tom Peponis knows his pizza. Previous stops in his culinary history include both Marcella's and Harvest.

John McGinnis launched the [pub-food-focused McGinnis' Grill Food Truck](#) in 2021.

"It's been great to see the evolution," said Jeremy Hughes, who has been the general manager at Budd Dairy since day one.

Building a pipeline

The best illustration of the philosophy in place at Budd Dairy Food Hall is the Hatch space, which was built for short-term tenants and regular rotation of cuisine.

"Hatch is our best lead generator," Hughes said.

McGinnis' Grill spent time in Hatch last summer and saw strong enough sales that Budd Dairy reached out when a spot opened.

Zaki's Mediterranean Grill [made a similar jump](#) from the temporary spot to a permanent one last spring.

Marlow's Cheesesteaks did that too. It moved into the Alphabetical Comfort Kitchen [spot a year ago](#) as Alphabetical moved out for a brick-and-mortar space of its own. It [is now Stacked Burger Co.](#) at 1089 Worthington Woods Blvd.

Burgers weren't even on the original Alphabetical menu, Weis noted. That's a product owner Jordan Lamatrice developed while at Budd Dairy and with some

assistance from the Cameron Mitchell team.

Its “graduation” to a stand-alone spot and the backfilling of the Budd Dairy space with a Hatch occupant represents the imagined progression entrepreneurs can have in the space.

The Jerk Spot [joined the Hatch space](#) in February and though the food hall historically keeps that space on rotation, it’s been so successful, it will stay in that spot until the end of the year.

Owner Troy Wheat spent 14 years with Cameron Mitchell Restaurants before leaving to start his own catering business, which led to The Jerk Spot.

“In his first week he broke the Hatch sales records,” Hughes said. “Two weeks later he broke them again.”

Budd Dairy opened in 2021 with a second space that was intend to rotate among bakery/sweets concepts, but its early success with the Cheesecake Girl led them to just make that shop a permanent addition.

Weis said they do plan to keep Hatch as an incubator and hear from potential occupants all the time.

Staying fresh

When Hughes talks about evolution, he doesn’t just mean the arrival of new tenants, but the growth and expansion of existing ones.

He pointed to Tacos Rudos, an original tenant, and its success with its Tuesday birria specials and Boni’s Filipino Street Food’s conversion to a new concept, Beep Beep, which offers [a broader pan-Asian menu](#) instead of strictly Filipino (though the chicken adobo is still there and still a top seller, Hughes noted).

Weis said Modern Southern Table, which just remodeled, is the space's busiest tenant.

Cameron Mitchell Restaurants runs both the bar and the event business at Budd Dairy Food Hall.

Hughes said they're working to build out a slate of community events starting with Fourth Street Fridays, which launched last year and highlights multiple area businesses.

The food hall also will begin a summer movie series in addition to [other happenings](#) including trivia, karaoke, live music and more.

Weis said the location was strong when they first began planning, but is only getting stronger as the area continues to develop bringing more residents and commercial space to Italian Village.

Lykens Cos., which owns the Budd Dairy building, has multiple projects in the area as does Thrive Cos.