12 Southwest Florida restaurant openings, closings and updates

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From a waterfront seafood restaurant closing to grand openings galore, it's a busy time on the Southwest Florida food scene.

And it's not even season yet.

Here's a taste of what's been happening ...



3 Fishermen closed its longtime North Fort Myers location on Oct. 20. ROBYN GEORGE/ FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS

3 Fishermen

Tuesday, Oct. 20, was this longtime North Fort Myers staple's last day. John Browning opened the seafood restaurant at the base of the Best Western on the Caloosahatchee in January 2011.

"This is a special place," he said when it opened.

And it was — with its open-air seating, view of downtown Fort Myers and waterfront breezes.

It was the second location for 3 Fishermen. Browning, his brother Paul Browning and business partner Dan Miller opened the original one in the Sam's Club plaza on US 41 in Fort Myers in August 2001. That one closed in 2016 after its lease ended.

Browning sold this second location in late 2021.

An Oct. 9 social media post announced its closing.

"We appreciate the support and all our customers," the post concluded. "We will update you for any changes in the future."

Follow Three Fishermen on Facebook.

Bullig

It's official. About a month after going into hibernation, this downtown Fort Myers coffee shop has closed.

"On September 18th, I was informed that my lease would not be renewed," an Oct. 6 post on Bullig's Facebook page read. "And because I tend not to beg when I'm asked to leave, at 6:30 PM on September 30th — after nine years — Bullig officially left the building at 1815/1 Fowler Street."

For those last nine years, the pup-loving neighborhood café was a go-to stop for scratch-made waffles, creative coffee combinations and a warm and welcoming vibe.

Sabrina Schoellchen opened the dog-themed café in Gathering Place's former location at the Butterfly Estates in June 2018, after moving here from Germany.

"As for Bullig's future, I am looking forward to what comes next and will update you all here," Schoellchen's Facebook post continued. "... and if you happen to walk by a vacant space that feels like the right home for Bullig's Chapter 2, I would love to hear your recommendations! Thank you for nine years of warmth, hugs, waffles, and community at 1815/1. As the saying goes, we always meet twice in life."

Twila Mae's

After building a dedicated following at farmers markets in Southwest Florida, this chicken salad-loving business is ready for the next step.

And it did just that on Friday, Oct. 23, when owner Landon Stevenson opened the family's first restaurant in San Carlos plaza in south Fort Myers.

"This restaurant is a milestone for our family, but it's also a celebration of the customers, market communities, and employees who have helped us get here," Stevenson said in a news release. "We're grateful for the opportunity to open our doors, serve our neighbors, and build a business that reflects our faith and our commitment to caring for people."

Twila Mae's, named in honor of Stevenson's grandmother, is a quick-service restaurant that customizes your order — including choice of bread, chicken salad flavor, toppings, side and beverage.

Visit Twila Mae's at 18011 S. Tamiami Trail, Unit 30,

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south Fort Myers; hours will be 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily; (239) 523-5360; twilamaeschickensalad.com or on Facebook.

Whataburger

Southwest Florida got its second taste of this fast-growing Texas-based burger joint on Oct. 22. That's when its Estero location held an opening day ceremony in the former Pollo Tropical space at 22927 Lyden Drive, off US 41 in the Coconut Point area. Unlike the 24-hour Fort Myers Whataburger, which opened Sept. 10, Estero Whataburger is open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily with dine-in and drive-thru services. Breakfast is served until 11 a.m. daily. Go to whataburger.com for more.

Coastal Dayz

This downtown Fort Myers area brewery along McGregor Boulevard reopened on Oct. 17 after its first remodel in eight years. The patio got a makeover, restrooms were upgraded, new lights and taps were added to the bar and "just about everything was painted."

"The vibe didn't change," owner Alex Tatko said. "I just made it more beachy."

The biggest and brightest change is the addition of a mural of endangered and native Florida marine life by Jacqueline Richard (aka Pixie).

"A lot of thought went into that," Tatko said. "She put in 136 hours and three all-nighters to get it done."

Check it out at 2161 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers; (239) 204-9665; coastaldayzbrewery.com or on Facebook

Mel's Sunrise Café

When Gerhard and Melanie Wassink bought Bread Pete, the authentic German bakery and café on Del Prado Boulevard in Cape Coral had been a local and visitor favorite for 13 years. Now, two years later, the couple decided to change things up.

"We wanted to make it more our place," Melanie said. "Put more personality in it."

So on Oct. 15, they held a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the breakfast and brunch joint's new chapter — as Mel's Sunrise.

"I was really surprised by the turnout," Melanie said. "I'm really grateful. We have many loyal customers."

In addition to the name change, the Wassinks said some new menu items will be added.

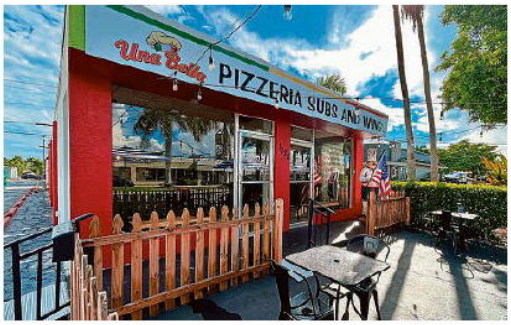
"More croissants," Gerhard said. "They are most popular."

Mel's Sunrise also has baked goods, breads, pastries, omelets, sandwiches and specialties.

"We want to bring a smile to every customer who comes here," Melanie said. "We have a very welcoming atmosphere."



The patio fronting McGregor Boulevard at Coastal Dayz has been updated. PHOTOS BY ROBYN GEORGE/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS



Una Bella took over Lehne Burger's old spot on Cape Coral Parkway in South Cape.



Mel's Sunrise Cafe & Bakery is the new name of the old Bread Pete Bakery in Cape Coral.

Check it out at 4402 Del Prado Blvd., South Cape; (239) 471-7420; melssunrisecafe.com and on Facebook

More grand openings and ribbon cuttings

Una Bella: This fast-casual pizzeria, sub and wing shop — which quietly opened in Lehne Burger's old space on Cape Coral Parkway this summer — held its grand opening on Oct. 17. Owned by Kimberly Pace Arquilla (who also owns Neapolitan Gourmet in Naples) and Bruce Pleeter (who owns South Street in Naples too), the South Cape neighborhood pizzeria features hand-stretched New York-style pizza, hand-tossed wings and premium subs. Beer and wine are also served. 1232 Cape Coral Parkway, Cape Coral; (239) 257-1759; unabellapizza.com

Burrito Shak: A grand opening and ribbon cutting

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