

Listermann Brewing Co. nears completion of first-ever taproom kitchen



Image: Cincinnati Business Courier

From left, Listermann Brewing General Manager Jon Vollman, owner Terrie Ipson, founder Dan Listermann and head brewer Matthew Daniel. PHOTO BY: CORRIE SCHAFFELD | CBC By [Christian LeDuc](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Dec 20, 2023

Keep an eye out in early 2024 for the launch of Listermann Brewing Co.'s new kitchen. Terrie and Steve Ipson purchased the brewery, which is located at 1621 Dana Ave. in Evanston, [in February after founders Dan and Sue Listermann announced their retirement](#). It will be the first time in Listermann's history that they've taken over the kitchen and actually owned the experience, Terrie Ipson told me.

Historically, the brewery has contracted with third parties to run its food service. Most recently, the space was home to a Tickle Pickle. [The burger joint announced it was closing the location in August](#). Ipson used the opportunity to help push her vision forward. She said the kitchen is small but mighty, and not a large investment. "It was pretty much there. I just purchased equipment and put it in place," she said.

Ipson said with the brewery taking over the taproom kitchen, customers will get a more well-rounded experience catered to beer lovers. "I think it (will be) a good complement to our beer offering," she said. Ipson said that beer is her No. 1 priority, and she's using it as culinary inspiration. She plans on integrating her beer into as many dishes as possible, including the sauces. Alain Ratinoff, who was formerly at Nicola's, is the chef in charge of executing that vision.

"This is his first opportunity to run his own kitchen, and he's done a fantastic job of working with myself as well as our head brewer (Matthew Daniel) and our director of customer experience (Abby Bricking)," Ipson said. "They're going to be working very closely to ensure that our customers are delighted."

The new kitchen's official grand opening has not been announced, but the brewery has already started rolling out tastings of select menu items.

According to its website, the brewpub menu will feature small plates including charcuterie boards, baked artichoke asiago gratin with grilled pita and pretzels and Listermann Hop Head beer cheese complemented by a vast selection of salads, sandwiches, mac 'n cheeses and flatbread pizzas. Ipson said a recent tasting of the new pork wings went well. She thinks they'll be a hit. "Everybody's like, 'They're delicious,'" she said. "Those were very well received." According to social media.

Ipson said that once everything is up and running the kitchen will have the same hours as the taproom: noon-7 p.m. Sunday; 3-9 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; noon-9 p.m. Thursday; and noon-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Opening the kitchen will create an additional eight to 10 jobs, according to Ipson. "We've actually had a very good response to our recruitment efforts," she said. "We're trying to get a blend of Xavier students and folks that can work when the students can't."

Listermann is one of Cincinnati's oldest craft breweries. It was one of the first three breweries to kick off the city's craft beer boom. According to its website, the home brew store has been operating since 1991, and the brewery has been producing a variety of award-winning beers since 2008. Just this year, "Chickow! Coconut Fudge" won gold in the U.S. Open Beer Championship, while "Ichor | Zeus" won silver.

Chef Jordan Anthony-Brown to open the Aperture, a Mediterranean-style restaurant in Walnut Hills next to Esoteric Brewery



The Lumache Amatriciana at Aperture in Walnut Hills. Photo By: MATT STALF By [Christian LeDuc](#) – Staff reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier Dec 20, 2023

The wait is almost over for chef Jordan Anthony-Brown's new Mediterranean restaurant, **the Aperture**. Driven by wood-fired cooking and natural wine, Anthony-Brown is bringing his culinary expertise of Old World-inspired cuisine to Queen City diners. Located at 900 E. McMillan St. in Walnut Hills, the space is the anchor tenant inside the Paramount Square building in the historic Peebles Corner district, [next to Esoteric Brewing Co.](#) "I started the process of opening this restaurant five or six years ago. It's been a very long journey," Anthony-Brown told me at a private tasting Tuesday night.

Anthony-Brown, who's known for his work as a sous chef at Michelin-starred Washington, D.C., restaurant Rose's Luxury and Cincinnati fine-dining institution Boca, [signed a lease for the space with Model Group in 2019](#). The original plan was to open the restaurant in April 2020, but the pandemic uprooted everything.

"We were at a point where it didn't really make a lot of sense to go forward," Anthony-Brown said. "We could afford to slow down." He and his investors, mostly family and friends, managed to hold onto the space. Anthony-Brown and his team used the time to refine what the Aperture was going to be. "If you were to look at plans of what this would look like before the pandemic versus now, they were very, very different," he said. "I've had a lot of time to think about this. Maybe more so than I ever wanted."

Anthony-Brown said what people will see and experience when walking into the space all coalesced within the last six to seven months. "The space itself came together in a really organic way," he said. "It informed the concept a little bit more." Over the years, Drawing Dept spearheaded the architecture while working collaboratively with Indio Studio on the interior design. "As the vision for the project became more distinctly Mediterranean, the overall structure and color palette shifted toward cool earth tones (and) incorporated the use of clean lines and symmetry," according to a news release. Initially, the space was going to be much darker. The finalized design is now all about using the bright energy of the restaurant to reflect the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern-style cuisine. Anthony-Brown designed his menu by taking influences from southern France, Italy, Greece, and the Levant, which includes part of the Middle East. He is implementing what is called "mezze-style dining" – a Mediterranean approach involving small, rustic plates that reflect seasonality. The goal is to create a natural progression and flow throughout the meal.



The oyster mushroom plate at Aperture. Photo By: MATT STALF

The official menu isn't finalized yet, but here are a few dishes that will likely make an appearance:

- Housemade sfincione and cultured butter
- Chicken liver and foie tartine featuring El Camino pain de campagne, pomegranate, winter radish
- Charred carrot featuring merguez, zhoug, ras el hanout, mint
- Oyster mushroom featuring brown butter tahini, hazelnut pesto, scallion, Paski Sir
- Lumache Amatriciana featuring guanciale, San Marzano tomatoes, pickled Fresno, Fiore sardo
- Berkshire pork Coppa featuring nduja, collards, pickled shiitake, chive oil

The restaurant's staple is the wood-fired hearth, visible to diners through a massive open space that exposes the main kitchen. "One of the most important things to me was being able to use wood fire," Anthony-Brown said. "It's integral to the flavors ... whether it's smoking meat or grilling vegetables."

According to Anthony-Brown, the kitchen design was one of his biggest challenges. He said everything is custom, even the wood-fire grill. It's a design crafted by Jamie Payne from Fire Lab in Pleasant Ridge. "The kitchen installation was one of the craziest things I've ever seen," Anthony-Brown said.

The Aperture also will have a pastry program that will feature flavor combinations unique to the Mediterranean region including sesame, pomegranate, pistachio and za'atar. Will Velarde is the general manager and beverage director at the Aperture. He's been working to create unique cocktails that emphasize balance, focus and intention. Specialty cocktails include the Don Johnson, a mango colada milk punch featuring pomegranate and Campari; the I'm Her, which includes bourbon, pomegranate, Vermouth di Torini, rosemary and bitters; and the #lemon, which has limonverbello, gin Saler and thyme.

Velarde's wine program will feature a rotating menu of 13 wines by the glass and more than 50 bottles. He will pull inspiration from around the region for the beer list, he said. Velarde told me he is especially proud of the restaurant's nonalcoholic beverage program. He is working to create high-quality "zero-proof" cocktails that will pair well with the rotating menu items. He said it's important for a restaurant to put value in its customers even if they don't drink. He essentially wants everyone from all walks of life to feel included in the overall experience of the Aperture.

Velarde is a Cincinnati industry veteran. He's spent the past 15 years working in the area's fine-dining scene. He's spent time as the general manager of Sotto and Boca. Velarde said once the restaurant is up and running, there will be around 20 staff members. "People continue to gravitate toward this industry. It is hard to get away once you've been pulled ... we want to continue that in the best way possible," Velarde said. "We not only want to develop their hunger for knowledge in food and beverage, but in hospitality in general."

Anthony-Brown anticipates having a few soft openings in December with an official grand opening happening at some point during the first week of January. Initial restaurant hours will be 5-10 p.m. Wednesday to Saturday. Anthony-Brown said he hopes to implement dinner service on Tuesday within the next few months along with an option for Sunday brunch. The total capacity for the space is 86 guests, which includes a private dining room with more than a dozen seating options. The average price per person is expected to be around \$65 to \$70 for the full dinner service. Along with Anthony-Brown and Velarde's decades of experience, the restaurant has recruited some major industry talent. Jimmy Lucas, a Cincinnati-native, is the chef de cuisine. He's worked alongside chef Ryan Pfeifer at the Michelin-starred Chicago restaurant the Blackbird. He was most recently pastry chef, head baker and chef de cuisine at the Baker's Table Bakery in Northern Kentucky.

Matt Owens, of Owens Culinary Consulting, was brought on board as the head of culinary operations. He oversees the standardization of operations, training, and quality control management. He's spent more than 15 years in the industry. The New England Culinary Institute graduate helped open Columbus' renowned Harvest Pizzeria as executive chef. He also worked for the Thunderdome Restaurant Group before starting his consulting business. His creative footprint can be seen at Pepp & Dolores and Findlay Kitchen. He currently works as chef and co-owner of the pizza pop-up restaurant Companion.

Trevor Biggs is the assistant general manager. He's a Cincinnati-based creative working across the mediums of fine art and film photography, interweaving his work into his decades-long hospitality career, according to a news release. His art can be seen highlighted across the restaurant.

Anthony-Brown said the restaurant's leadership team is big on creating a culture within the Aperture. According to Anthony-Brown, it is very important that people who live in the Walnut Hills community can take ownership of the space as a neighborhood spot, but also serve as a destination restaurant for the Greater Cincinnati community. Broker Blake Bartley with Urban Fast Forward told me it's been wonderful working with Anthony-Brown and his team to create the Aperture. He believes this restaurant will make a serious impact on Cincinnati's fine-dining scene.

"Jordan has everything it takes to be a star in the industry. As a chef he's as talented as it gets, but what makes him so rare is that the talent is combined with clarity of vision, a strong business acumen and an equally strong drive to create something new and special," Bartley told me. "He's one of those operators capable of really pushing the hospitality scene in Cincinnati to new heights."

Anthony-Brown previously told the *Courier* that he was attracted to the all-day nature of Walnut Hills as a neighborhood: The mix of retail and residential tenants lent itself to residents and visitors being able to spend an entire day in the neighborhood and have all of their needs met, whether it be starting the day with a coffee, doing some shopping, getting lunch or a cocktail and then finishing the day with dinner and drinks.

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Tri-County Mall eatery BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse to close



Image: Cincinnati Business Courier

BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse opened at 11700 Princeton Pike in 2008. The location will close at the end of the year.

LIZ ENGEL | CBC By [Liz Engel](#) – Digital editor, Cincinnati Business Courier Dec 26, 2023

A restaurant that's operated for 15 years at one of the region's largest – but now defunct – shopping malls is closing permanently at the end of the year.

BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse will shutter its Tri-County Mall location at 11700 Princeton Pike effective Dec. 31. The news was announced in recent days on the company's website.

"We have made the difficult decision to close our Tri-County location," the announcement read. "We're so grateful to our Tri-County community for years of endless support. We hope to see you again soon!"

BJ's Restaurant, a Huntington Beach, Calif.-based brand, first opened at Tri-County in 2008. The website urged patrons to visit its other existing location in the region. [The restaurant in 2018 opened at Rookwood Commons & Pavilion](#) in the former Max & Erma's at 2631 Edmondson Road. It also has a location in Miamisburg south of Dayton and in Florence, Kentucky.

[Market Space Capital and Park Harbor Capital, two Texas-based commercial real estate firms, purchased Tri-County Mall](#) last year with plans to repurpose the property. [The estimated \\$800 million to \\$1 billion effort](#) will include apartments, complementary retail and restaurant space and other amenities and operations.

The transaction was finalized in March 2022, and [Tri-County Mall formally closed a few months later in May](#). [Progress on the project has slowed](#); but the development team still hoped to deliver phase one by 2025, its team told the *Courier* for an Aug. 18 cover story. At the time, it said existing tenants BJ's, Mi Cozumel, and Open Box Outlet, along with Outback Steakhouse, Chipotle, Starbucks, and Men's Wearhouse, would continue to operate. Open Box Outlet has since closed all its locations.

BJ's, founded in 1978, owns and operates more than 200 casual dining restaurants in 30 states. The menu features entrees like prime rib, a cherry chipotle glazed salmon, deep-dish pizza and its "world-famous" Pizookie dessert, served alongside a selection of proprietary handcrafted beers.



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*Tickets nonrefundable. Purchase tickets at [EventBrite](#) or call the taproom at 513-482-6970.

We're doing something a little different this year. Taproom opens at 3pm and we're ringing in 2024 with a champagne toast at 6pm -- that's Midnight in Munich! Dinner buffet follows with live music from the Red Idle Rejects after the Bengals game. Click [here](#) to purchase tickets online or call the taproom at 513-482-6970.

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- New Year's Day (Monday 1/1): 10AM - 10PM (make reservations)

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