

SOUTH FLORIDA RESTAURANTS

Kanpai in Boca Raton reopens after fire

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Sun Sentinel

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Now open or opening

Cookie Plug,
West Palm Beach

At this rapidly growing California franchise of sweet shops, the soft and brownie-thick cookies are dubbed “phatties,” graffiti coats the walls, and ’90s West Coast hip-hop flows over loudspeakers. The bakery founded by Erik Martinez is bringing six locations to South Florida, the first of which had its grand opening on May 6 near Clematis Street and South Olive Avenue, a block west of the downtown waterfront. The menu includes the self-explanatory Snooperdoodle, Mac Daddy (white chocolate macadamia nut), Crunch Nugget (chocolate peanut butter), Bam Bam (fruity cereal) and the Pink Elephant (strawberry cheesecake). The five other locations are heading to Miami-Dade County, joining 300 total Cookie Plugs planned by the end of 2026. *105 S. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach; CookiePlug.com*

The House on the River,
Fort Lauderdale

The historic River House lives again. That’s what restaurateur Steven D’Apuzzo of Society 8 Hospitality Group says about The House on the River, a seafood-centric restaurant with 270 seats (120 on the patio, 150 indoors) that will open on May 12. Built in 1903, the landmark was originally the home of city fathers Tom and Reed Bryan. The city owns the property and has leased it to various restaurant brands over the years, most recently the short-lived Jonny NoBones Old Riverhouse Vegan Village. Society 8 currently operates Sistrunk Marketplace & Brewery, Park & Ocean, and Wild Thyme Oceanside Eatery. *301 SW Third Ave., Fort Lauderdale; TheHouseOnTheRiver.com*

Kanpai, Boca Raton

Shut nearly two years after an electrical fire caused structural damage to the restaurant in July 2021, this Japanese sushi-barbecue mashup from restaurateur Lixii Sun is back for its second act. “Transitioning from a fire can be challenging for a restaurateur, but it never stopped me,” Sun says. “Kanpai has been reborn.” The rebooted izakaya, which debuted May 10, will serve yakiniku (Japanese barbecue) on 13 smokeless grills, including prime steak and Wagyu beef sourced from Palm Beach Meats in West Palm Beach. New chefs Choum Loy and Jimmy Hernandez, meanwhile, will man the 256-seat Kanpai’s new sushi bar. The menu includes paella with Wagyu fried rice, housemade kimchi, poached egg and nori furikake; mentaiko udon (a creamy, spicy cod roe udon) with ikura, shiso and sake butter; and flame-grilled bluefin salmon belly with togarashi sauce, scallion, seared foie gras and black garlic shoyu. The decor, also refreshed, is distinguished with black-and-gold line drawings from Takeshi Kamioka (of Kaminari Ramen), while the bar features Japanese whiskeys and Asian-inspired cocktails. *20 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton; 561-361-8688; Facebook.com/kanpaiboca; KanpaiBoca.com*

South PMP Bar & Kitchen,
Pompano Beach

If Jet Runway Café is owner Mike Linder’s love letter to aviation and YOT Bar & Kitchen is his mash note to the sea, then his



Sopa de Tortilla at Epazote Mexican Restaurant in Fort Lauderdale. **EPAZOTE MEXICAN RESTAURANT**



Cookie Plug, a fast-growing franchise where treats are brownie-thick, has launched a location in downtown West Palm Beach. **COOKIE PLUG**



Kanpai, a Japanese izakaya that shut after an electrical fire nearly two years ago, reopened to the public in Boca Raton on May 10. **KANPAI**

newest restaurant, South PMP, is stuck securely on terra firma. Linder’s Southern comfort food kitchen debuted in early May in Pompano’s Old Town district. The menu features smoked and chili-glazed spare ribs, butter-milk biscuits with pepper jelly and whipped honey butter, boudin balls stuffed with Cajun-roasted pork, roasted beef po’boys, pork belly BLTs, shrimp ‘n’ grits and 14-ounce ribeyes doused in cowboy butter. *165 NE First Ave., Pompano Beach; 954-890-2000; SouthPMP.com*

Raising Cane’s, Boynton
Beach and beyond

This fast-expanding national chicken chain from Baton Rouge, La., specializes in one thing: hand-battered tenders served in several combo specials, from its three-finger deal to the Caniac Combo (six tenders with crinkle-cut fries, coleslaw and Texas toast). The first of four new South Florida entries had a grand opening on May 2 on Boynton Beach Boulevard — beside a Chick-fil-A, no less — while the rest are slated to open in Royal Palm Beach (100 N. State Road 7) by June and in Cutler Bay (19705 S. Dixie Highway) by July. In August, a fourth is scheduled to open in Pompano Beach (2501 N. Federal Highway) on the former site of steakhouse icon Bobby Rubino’s. Other Florida outposts are planned this year in Largo, Gainesville, Talla-

hassee and Port St. Lucie. *1550 Boynton Beach Blvd.; 561-237-1300, RaisingCanes.com*

Holy Bowly,
Fort Lauderdale

This whimsically named build-your-own bowl shop registered to Gianpaolo Di Risio and Ryan Sproveri debuted in early March near the corner of South Andrews Avenue and Davie Boulevard. It serves 15 signature bowls such as the Green Goblin, a pan-seared salmon filet atop a bed of mango chunks, diced avocado, white rice and coconut flakes; and the Bar-B, a medley of slow-cooked pulled pork, mac ‘n’ cheese, sweet cornbread, glazed Brussels sprouts and southern slaw. *112 Davie Blvd., Unit B; 954-295-0086; HolyBowlyFTL.com*

Serious Dumplings,
Boca Raton

Serving soups, scallion pancakes, Shanghai fried rice and Chinese street foods, this restaurant debuted in April in the Shadowwood Square plaza, replacing the former Sushi Yama. The fast-casual spot registered to Wei Lin, who operates two other Serious outposts in Davie and North Miami, also features xiao long bao (steamed buns prepared in a xiaolong, or bamboo basket), dim sum (such as Peking duck buns, braised chicken feet and beef sanji), along with boba and iced green teas. *9845 Glades Road, Boca Raton; SeriousDumplingsUSA.com*

Baresco Taqueria & Bar,
Pompano Beach

This trendy coastal Mexican eatery touting bamboo basket lighting, hardwood communal tables and chic tropical accents debuted in mid-April across the street from the Pompano Beach Pier hullabaloo. Baresco — which comes from Brimstone Restaurant Group (Beach House Pompano down the block, Brimstone Woodfire Grill in Pembroke Pines) — offers seven taco flavors, from short-rib birria and barbacoa to al pastor and chipotle pollo, along with carnita flatbreads, taco salads, seafood quesadillas, mezcal oysters, enchiladas de pollo and salmon a la Veracruz. There are also craft cocktails, margaritas, domestic beers and wines. *225 N. Pompano Beach Blvd., Pompano Beach; 954-904-4567; EatBaresco.com*

The Greek Joint Kitchen
& Bar, Davie

The first sister location of Jimmy and Chris Sklaventis’ popular Greek mainstay in downtown Hollywood, this restaurant opened in April on the corner of University Drive and Stirling Road. The menu, from chef Alex Dzbugan, will be identical to the flagship’s, and feature a variety of meze such as shrimp saganaki, tiropita and keftedakia. Meanwhile its entrees, straddling the line between modern and traditional, range from grilled pork chops and chicken souvlaki platters to filet mignon kebabs and spicy feta-encrusted salmon. *5810 S. University Drive, Suites 118-119, Davie; 954-541-5828; TheGreekJoint.com*

Epazote Mexican Restaurant,
Fort Lauderdale

Epazote, which opened April 8, bills itself as “a taste of Mexico” and that means a menu with a variety of tacos, fajitas, quesadillas, enchiladas, tortas, sopas, ensaladas as well as entrées such as the house special — half a duck roasted and coated in a mole sauce. “What makes Epazote unique is the authenticity,” says co-owner Simone Carrasco. “This is a Mexican-born, family-owned restaurant. Not only are all of our plates traditional and authentic, but they also have a gourmet-like presentation. A true Mexican culinary experience. Food, culture, love, that’s what we want to share with our customers.” *6206 N. Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale; 754-220-6996; epazotemexicanrestaurant.com*

Flanigan’s Seafood Bar
& Grill, Miramar

Locals know Joe “Big Daddy” Flanigan’s joint by reputation, finger-licking ribs and those indispensable green plastic cups, and now this longtime neighborhood grill has opened its latest location in the new Miramar Park Place plaza on Red Road. The nautically-minded seafood

bar — still unpretentious and refreshingly old-school despite the upscale surrounds — offers chicken wings, tumbleweed onions, garlic knots and rockin’ rib rolls, along with hamburgers, dolphin sandwiches, Cajun shrimp and pasta and prime rib with au jus. And green cups, of course. *11225 Miramar Parkway, Miramar; 954-251-4734; Flanigans.net*

Mo:Mo: Avenue,
Lake Worth Beach

Here’s one reason to rock on through to Mo:Mo: Avenue: Nepalese-style dumplings. Nepali cuisine from owner Sujan Dhimal is devoted to the humble momo, a steam-filled dumpling. The new Lake Worth Beach eatery’s menu, which is slim, does momo with chicken, pork, or vegetarian-style, and served steamed (traditional), fried or jhol (with a spicy sesame and tomato-based soup). There’s also thukpa, a Himalayan noodle soup; spicy veggie-and-pea samosas; and choila, a Newari dish made with boiled and fried chicken or pork, plus spices and veggies. *7030 Charleston Shores Blvd., Lake Worth Beach; 561-530-4175; MoMoAvenue.com*

RedWood Bar & Kitchen,
Hollywood

This Mediterranean-Caribbean fusion spot from Hollywood chef Ivan Dorvil (Ivan’s Cookhouse in North Miami) debuted in mid-March on Harrison Street, one of downtown Hollywood’s charming restaurant rows. Dorvil, for the uninitiated, has racked up much Food Network clout in the past decade, winning an episode of “Chopped,” competing on “Cutthroat Kitchen,” and showing off his Carib-Asian eatery Ivan’s Cookhouse for Guy Fieri on “Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives.” RedWood’s menu features shrimp tacos, mofongo (an open-face green plantain with pork belly glaze and a kimchi-pikliz slaw), slow-braised pork spare ribs doused in housemade barbecue sauce. There are also entrees including flatbread pizzas and pastas, kebabs with black mushrooms, and curry chicken with basmati rice and roasted plantains. *2009 Harrison St., Hollywood; 954-362-7152, RedWoodBarKitchen.com*

Jackson’s Chicken Shack,
Lake Worth Beach

Fried-chicken purveyors are having a moment in South Florida, and the latest example is this shack registered to owner Stephen Difiore, which opened in early April in a Jog Road plaza shared with Walmart Neighborhood Market. Jackson’s touts fried and grilled chicken handhelds, wraps, salads, fries — and tenders, naturally — slathered in toppings, dressings and cheeses. *6169 Jog Road,*

Lake Worth Beach; JacksonChickenShack.net

Cali Coffee, Miramar

This Broward County-born, drive-thru coffeehouse has quickly expanded since opening its Hollywood flagship in 2018. Its new outpost debuted in Miramar in early April on the northwest corner of Pembroke and South Hiatus roads. Other locations are scheduled for 2023, including in Cooper City and North Lauderdale. Their signature coffees include breves (an espresso-based drink made with half-and-half milk), served hot, iced or frozen. They also offer fruit-infused drinks with Red Bull as an option. *2101 S. Hiatus Road, Miramar; CaliCoffee.com*

Closed

Fiorello’s Fort Lauderdale

The oceanside Italian-Mediterranean restaurant opened in the winter of 2022 and closed this spring, sometime in mid-April, according to the real estate broker. Repeated calls and messages to Fiorello’s went unanswered. The eatery’s Facebook account’s last entry was dated March 11. The Instagram page at [instagram.com/fiorellosfortlauderdale](https://www.instagram.com/fiorellosfortlauderdale) has been deleted, though there is another page at [instagram.com/fiorellosflbeach](https://www.instagram.com/fiorellosflbeach) that is now touting party events in Atlanta. *905 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., Fort Lauderdale; 754-200-5146; Fiorellos-Fort-Lauderdale.Business.Site*

Martini’s Tuscan Grill &
Bar, Boynton Beach

This rustic grill devoted to Italian-American classics abruptly closed without fanfare in late April after three-and-a-half years in business on the Boynton Beach Boulevard drag. Along with soups and antipasto, there were 12-inch pies inspired by the Bronx’s Arthur Avenue, along with chicken marsala, veal and eggplant parmigiana, baked gnocchi sorrentino and tagliatelle bolognese. *6655 Boynton Beach Blvd; 561-734-1866, MartinisTuscanGrill.com*

Peters Road Deli,
Plantation

This reliable no-frills staple for items like subs and salads has permanently closed after 37 years on Peters Road, citing “economic factors plaguing small businesses” in a Facebook post in early April. “We will be deciding where we take Peters Road Deli. Perhaps a food truck, another location in Plantation or even local pop-ups,” the post continued. The shop, registered to Marilyn Sanchez, served up hot and cold subs, along with antipasto, garden and tuna salad plates, omelets, pasta salads, housemade chicken soup and kosher pickles. *4353 Peters Road, Plantation; 954-587-5456*