

R

street

REVIVAL



After years of planning, this bustling corridor in the heart of the city has finally come into its own.

BY CATHERINE WARMERDAM



BAWK 1409 R St.

A fried chicken joint with a focus on cocktails—that’s the concept behind Bawk, a new eatery from Rob Arohie (of Urban Roots and Pangaea fame) and Selland Family Restaurants opening this fall in the spaces vacated by Nido cafe and Stone Vintage Music Boutique. “Rob and I are dear friends, and Bawk will be a mash-up of our palates, the kinds of things you’d find on our dinner tables,” says Josh Nelson of Selland Family Restaurants.

TAKATA-YA 1100 R St.

Daniel Takata and Jennifer Joo, who own I Love Teriyaki in midtown, have brought fast-casual teriyaki and sushi plus wine, beer and sake to the corner that formerly housed Amaro restaurant. Takata has adorned the space with vintage hats and umbrellas from his grandmother’s native Okinawa for a touch of “nostalgic history,” as he puts it.

THE SNUG 1800 15th St.

“A very dark and intimate cocktail bar” is how Simon de Vere White describes The Snug, an Irish-style watering hole slated to open by year’s end in a cozy space behind Mas Taco Bar at 15th and R. And stay tuned: The de Vere Whites are also working on a yet-to-be-named eating and drinking establishment on the ground floor of a mixed use development at 11th and R streets.

FRANK 1610 R St., #150

Look for a fall opening for this whiskey-centric bar from the proprietor of Naked Lounge, Tupelo and Orphan Breakfast House.

MENDOCINO FARMS 1610 R St., #125

The Southern California-based sandwich chain with a cult following makes its Sacramento debut this fall, bringing their brand of inventive sandwiches—think Peruvian steak, pork belly banh mi and smoked tempeh sandos—to the central city.

THE HALAL GUYS 1610 R St., #130

Get your gyros here! The New York City-based fast-casual chain serves up three types of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean sandwiches and platters—chicken, beef gyro and falafel—with fitting sides like hummus and baba ghanoush.

MILK MONEY 1715 R St., #100

Pastry chef Rebecka Smith, formerly of Grange, will run the kitchen at this highly anticipated gourmet doughnut venture that’s aiming for a fall opening.

ALL GOOD 1715 R St., #150

The flagship store for the ultimate California lifestyle brand is relocating this fall to the Ice Blocks, where shoppers can buy one of their signature color-block anoraks or peruse their selection of hiker-chic accessories.

BONOBOS 1710 R St., #140

The online menswear retailer with a focus on perfect-fitting chinos, button-down shirts and suits launched this brick-and-mortar “guideshop” where shoppers can check out the goods in person before buying.

BUTTON UP BOUTIQUE 1710 R St., #100

This locally owned retailer carries a variety of contemporary apparel, shoes and accessories for women from popular brands including Free People, Michael Stars, Kendra Scott and Seychelles.

WEST ELM 1610 R St., #160

The national retailer known for its relaxed-modern home furnishings finally has a presence in Sacramento. Associate manager Jenny Jun says the response from locals has been “incredible” and the turnout for the grand opening party in August “surpassed what we ever imagined.”

COOKIE CONNECTION 1610 R St., #115

A longtime favorite of Sacramento sweet tooths, Cookie Connection expects to open its Ice Blocks location this fall.

DEVICE BREWING COMPANY 1610 R St., #145

Ice Blocks is home to the second location of this hometown brewery, which is situated on the sleeper southern edge of the development overlooking what has got to be Sacramento’s best-looking alley, thanks to the spiffy mural by San Francisco artist Brian Barnecllo.

BEAST + BOUNTY 1701 R St.

Arguably the prettiest restaurant in Sacramento, Beast + Bounty is already packing in fashion-forward diners who come here to sip swank cocktails and chow down on wood-fired steaks and imaginative vegetable dishes.

R Street has come a long way. Back when its remaking was merely a twinkle in the eye of developers and city planners, there were competing visions for what this urban corridor, which straddles downtown and midtown from Ninth to 19th streets, ought to be: a succession of traditional office buildings with virtually no signs of life after dark, or an energetic, all-hours hub for shopping, dining, culture and entertainment. The dreamers won.

“I’m very proud that leaders in the city of Sacramento and local advocates fought for a just outcome and recognized that R Street is special,” says Michael Heller of Heller Pacific, the developer behind the game-changing Ice Blocks project at the east end of the corridor. “The street has a rich history and great physical character. It deserved to be a mixed-use pedestrian corridor and not just a street lined with bland office buildings.”

Todd Leon, development director with the Capitol Area Development Authority, which for years has been an integral player in the R Street renaissance, takes great pleasure in

witnessing the area’s transformation. “It’s becoming a destination not only for locals but also for visitors to experience something that’s uniquely Sacramento.”

In an earlier wave of development, R Street stalwarts like Fox & Goose Public House and Arthouse on R were joined by new neighbors Café Bernardo/R15, Shady Lady Saloon and Ace of Spades as the corridor slowly took shape. When the Warehouse Artist Lofts opened in 2015, it was clear that R Street was ready for its close up. Today, new shops and restaurants are opening with such frequency that practically every visit promises something new.

Interestingly, a number of creative firms—architects, designers, furniture retailers and more—have flocked to the area, which is fitting, says Heller. “R Street is all about creativity and art and dreaming and making those dreams possible. It makes sense to have the design district be on R Street.”

And the R Street revival likely won’t stop there. “There aren’t many places in the central city where you can walk from point A to point B and experience so much,” says Leon. “And there’s room for so much more.” **SI**