

OF KITH AND KIN

Former State & Lemp duo open Boise's newest restaurant

By Hayden Seder



Chef Kris Komori (left) and Remi McManus (right)
in the new space that will become Kin.

The word “kin” is defined as one’s family and friends, an apt name for the new restaurant of restaurateur Remi McManus and Chef Kris Komori, who developed a family-like following at their former restaurant, State & Lemp. After closing down State & Lemp, the duo opened bars Amper-sand and Art Haus for seven months before beginning their journey into new bar and restaurant Kin, scheduled to open before the end of the year.

A culinary institution from 2013 to 2018, State & Lemp had a devoted following—one that will hopefully follow McManus and Komori into their new endeavor, which strives to be very similar to their previous restaurant, though with the desired space needed.

“We reached our limit at State & Lemp,” McManus said. “We had been there five years and [had] done the same thing a long time. It just felt like it was time to grow in the community.”

McManus and Chef Komori met when Komori joined State & Lemp just several weeks before it opened. McManus was co-owner of the small restaurant, which focused on exclusive tasting menus served at what felt like a single communal table.

But after feeling like they had reached their peak and with the lease renewal coming up, Komori and McManus began scouting for new spots to realize their culinary dreams. While still looking for a home for Kin, the two signed a long-term lease in the former Angell’s Bar & Grill space, a 6,600-square-foot downtown spot with a homey feel, to house two bars that would allow them to maintain a liquor license.

“Falling in love with the space we were operating the bars out of led to finding the location for Kin and deciding it would be our permanent home,” McManus said.

Art Haus closed in September and Amper-sand is still operating on the 14th floor. Meanwhile, the restaurant space is currently undergoing a major remodel that includes replacing pipes and every single piece of plumbing, all new electrical, walls, floors, and ceilings.

Once complete, the space will be divided into a restaurant with a tasting room to seat 24 to 30 diners and a 64-seat bar with a small food menu. The tasting room will have a private bar as well. The tasting room portion of the restaurant will be similar to State &

Lemp, featuring a communal table as well as food inspired by a theme.

“The tasting menu will be the heart of the restaurant,” Komori said. “On the other side, the sort of ‘workhorse’ will be the cocktail bar.”

The menu will rotate every three to four weeks and will feature wine pairings as well as a theme usually inspired by the local artists whose art will hang on the walls. The art will also rotate every few months.

“We get a chance to sit down with the artists and learn their techniques and inspirations and base menus on them,” Komori said. “It helps a lot to lean on other creatives and draw inspiration from them. It allows us to see different ingredients through a different lens.”

This idea of art-themed menus was developed toward the end of State & Lemp with one menu based on fire cycles in Idaho during August when the state was engulfed in flames.

“You never know where inspiration will come from,” McManus said. “Our cuisine is not pigeon-holed into one style; we have influences from Japan, Korea, Spain, Mexico, New York City.”

Food and drinks will be served to patrons at the same time, making the communal dining in the restaurant feel more like a dinner party. A little bit of “show” comes with the dinner in the form of an open-concept kitchen as well as the presentation of each dish and the story of how it was developed and what farms and ranches contributed to it.

The bar side of Kin will feature a menu in the same vein and philosophy of the tasting menu—using local ingredients from farms, ranches, and orchards. The cocktails will feature local, seasonal ingredients, including homemade syrups and shrubs. Komori said that while he and McManus are great at going to cocktail bars, they’re not as great behind the bar, which is why they’ve hired bar guru John Shubar and a full team to help design the cocktails.

With the remodel under way, it’s only a matter months until Kin is ready to open its doors. It’s been a long road to this venue that will hopefully encompass all of the goals McManus and Komori have for it: more space, more creativity, and more room for all of the friends and family—patrons and staff included—that make Kin. ■

TASTE

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