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SMALL BUSINESS

Cannabis Infused Pop-Up Restaurant Debuts in Detroit

The women will serve a four-course meal rich in vegetables with one lamb chop course that can be substituted for a roasted mushroom dish. The first four plates will feature an element that is infused with THC, the psychoactive element of cannabis.

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While marijuana has only been legal in Michigan a short while, let's face it, weed and food have gone hand-in-hand for ages. Two women with a variety of experience in the culinary world, April Forbes and Key Locke, took their love of food and friendship launched 2 Dope Chefz, a pop-up series featuring THC-infused sauces and dressings.

“Even if you are not a person that partakes in cannabis but you're thinking about it, the dinner is still a great thing to attend because they can control their own sauces, they can choose not to have any cannabis at all and still have a good time,” said Locke, a vegan chef who hosts dinners around the country under the moniker Phat Vgan.

The first 2 Dope Chefz event in their series is Saturday at a private residence in Ferndale.

The women will serve a four-course meal rich in vegetables with one lamb chop course that can be substituted for a roasted mushroom dish. The first four plates will feature an element that is infused with THC, the psychoactive element of cannabis.

For example, the opening course is called “Get Yo Greens” and is a plate of arugula, grilled asparagus, pomegranate, roasted cherry tomatoes and honey cashews served with a THC-infused champagne avocado vinaigrette. A second vegetable-forward dish is paired with a hazy herb chimichurri oil.

“We don't know everyone's tolerance,” said Locke. “With each ticket purchase, you're going to get a waiver and we're going to let you know that there's going to be approximately 25-30 milligrams at the end of the dinner.”

The THC is only in the sauces or the dressings that come with the first three courses, not baked into the food itself. So diners can decide if they want to use all of it, half it, or just try a taste.

The dessert course — hummingbird cake, made with bananas, coconut, pecans and pineapples — comes with a cream cheese that is infused with CBD instead of THC. The chefs say CBD tends to help mellow some of the effects of THC.

“With this being our first public event like this, we really wanted to keep in mind people's tolerance,” said Forbes. “CBD is known to combat the THC. And the thing with THC in edibles, as opposed to smoking it, you don't feel the effects until about a half an hour, sometimes an hour, depending on your tolerance and other factors.”

“It’s like alcohol, everybody absorbs it differently,” she adds. “So we end with the CBD so that we’re just monitoring and being proactive on making sure everybody has a pleasant experience. The CBD will bring them down a little.”

Locke said she anticipates that the ticket holders are people familiar with consuming edibles. Like a multi-course meal with alcohol pairings, people should know their limits and not drive if going under the influence of any substance. There is no alcohol served or permitted at 2 Dope Chefz events, by the way.

“If there are people who are still nervous, they can come and get the educational experience behind it and have a good dining experience because each course we’re going to talk about our blends that we use, why we use it, what the strains do,” said Forbes. “It’s definitely going to be an experience everyone can enjoy whether you’re high or not, it’s just going to be a great time.”

“Most importantly, we are going to talk about the healing concepts of the food and the flower, the bud, that’s going to be amazing, too,” said Locke.

Two women met about five years ago when they both won a community engagement award while working in Pontiac. Locke ran a community hub and Forbes was running the Menagerie, a pop-up kitchen where Locke eventually started a taco Tuesday series.

Now, Forbes is running a bakery and ice cream shop, April’s Famous Bakes, in a historic house in Pontiac that has been converted to commercial space. Here she can show off her prowess for sweet goods. Forbes, a former pastry chef assistant at Wolfgang Puck’s restaurant at MGM Grand Detroit, won a battle of “Cupcake Wars” on the Food Network in 2012.

April’s Famous Bakes is also where Locke sells soups and other savory items.

“We clicked through the love of food,” said Forbes.

Besides another 2 Dope Chefz dinner coming up next month, Locke will also have an all-you-can-eat “naked sushi” event with models wearing body paint at the Liberty Bar in Pontiac on Feb. 9.

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