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Can You Wait? Just Another Weekend? *Frankie D's Italian Chophouse Opens Next Tuesday*



image:seaton

By **Tony Seaton**
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Owner Dave Denti is very excited. His long-awaited grand opening is Tuesday, April 22. That would be the grand opening of his latest contribution to the culinary options of Pullman Square visitors, Frankie D's Italian Chophouse. It's also an homage to his father, THE Frankie D.

Upon entering, the hungry patron will find a look inside that differs markedly from Denti's restaurant on the other side of the escalators on the top floor of Pullman, Max and Erma's. It's mahogany, granite, oak and leather woven seating for nearly 300 that greets. Is Denti afraid his 'new kid on the block' will draw from what is currently his Number One restaurant in Pullman?



Talking with Denti on his cell the other night as they were wrapping up their fourth day of employee training, (more on that later) about business at Max and Erma's, he said, " Ah...there's about a half-hour wait right now. " This on a Wednesday night. It WAS a beautiful evening, perfect for dusk dining on the patio, but still, Wednesday? Then there's the weekend. You know what he's talking about, you've no doubt been to Max and Erma's. We all decided

it's worth the wait. You can carry those little pagers all over Pullman while you wait, for one thing, and the experience, food and service are unmatched.

Denti's Frankie D's and Max and Erma's have adjoining out door dining, so he's counting on giving all those satisfied customers another option. He expects he'll get some of that and many new to his style of restaurant management because of the way he trains and retains his staffs, among other fine touches. "We've had employees from all these other restaurants come looking for work here," he says.

He speaks disdainfully of 'Boot Camp' style employee training regimens and 'absentee owners,' without mentioning any names.



There'll be none of that at his restaurants. He says the chefs he's hired for Frankie D's didn't even have to be told what to do, so eager were they to get to it in his state-of-the-art kitchen. He regales with the tale of one recent training night when he came in after merely saying, "that's it guys." The chefs were up on the counters on their knees sanitizing the upper shelf cooking equipment and everything was back in its place.

Similarly with the server and wait staff, "they haven't had much to do tonight except sit around and sample the food and wine," he says.

Another unique to Frankie D's item, a wine room with bottles of wine behind glass for observance and only accessed through mahogany sliding pocket doors. The room can also be rented out by what Denti's envisions as customers such as pharmaceutical reps and physicians or any group, really, that needs an elegant meeting site with a giant built-in flat panel that can be used for any type of video presentation or Power Point presentation. That will be available any week day as Frankie's is not doing lunch in the beginning.

There's an invitation-only party Saturday night, an Autism benefit Monday, and then the doors open Tuesday for dinner.

See you there.

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