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RESTAURANTS



STAFF FILE PHOTO

Chef Ryan Adams of Three Seventy Common tries some of his popular fried chicken.

Hey, KFC: Chef has his own recipe for Orange chicken

Ryan Adams' new eatery Buttermilk is bringing his family supper to Old Towne

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Not many fine dining chefs openly admit they want to take on KFC.

Then again, chef Ryan Adams is not your typical Laguna Beach chef. Adams, who lives in Santa Ana, has been serving fried chicken at a monthly Sunday Supper at Three Seventy Common Kitchen+Drink for nearly seven years.

He uses his grandmother's dry cure method and serves the pieces in a bucket with all the fixings. On most Sundays, he goes through 200 pounds of free-range chicken. Now he plans to bring that elevated fried chicken experience to a wider audience with Buttermilk, a counter-service restaurant coming soon to Old Towne Orange.

Adams, a free-spirited, brazen chef, is unabashed about his intentions.

"My idea is to go after The Colonel and have a better experience," Adams said during a phone interview this week.

Buttermilk Fried Chicken is opening next month in the space previously occupied by LinX, an artisan sausage house that recently closed in Old Towne Orange near Wahoo's Fish Taco. Adams said he's been toying with the idea for years of turning the wildly successful Sunday Supper event into a "fine casual" restaurant.

He has been scouting locations, including Orange. When the LinX space came open, he said he jumped at the chance to open a restaurant in the historic district, where he used to live years ago. He also launched his career as the opening chef at Citrus City Grille, a premium casual din-



PAUL RODRIGUEZ — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Three Seventy Common's bucket of fried chicken, surrounded by some signature side dishes.

ing restaurant in downtown Orange.

"I've always loved Old Towne. I've always felt at home there," said the Floral Park resident.

Buttermilk will join a handful of new restaurants entering Old Towne in recent months. A block away, Los Angeles-based Urth Caffe is coming soon. Other newcomers include Pandor Artisan Boulangerie & Cafe and The Wall Restaurant.

Adams said he plans to modernize and brighten the nearly 1,000-square-foot restaurant space. He said he's going for a "modern farmhouse look" with white walls.

With other premium fried chicken concepts opening in Orange County recently such as Crack Shack, Two Birds and Rooster Republic, Adams knows he faces stiff competition.

He hopes to differentiate himself by offering a simple, limited menu of bone-in traditional fried chicken and fried and honey-roasted chicken sandwiches. Beer and wine also will be offered. But he's not looking at being a bar concept like Richard Blais' Crack Shack, which opened late last year in Costa Mesa to snaking lines.

The fast-casual concept offers a full bar with cocktails, as well as bone-in chicken, chicken sandwiches and salads.

"Chef Ryan Adams' fried chicken at 370 Common is exponentially superior to KFC, served family style with phenomenal mashed potatoes and gravy, along with fresh green beans, kale salad, coleslaw and leafy greens braised with pork belly. Chicken night comes only once a month at 370 Common, so you really must plan ahead," Register restaurant critic Brad A. Johnson wrote when naming Adams' fried chicken to his best bucket list.

At Buttermilk, Adams plans to serve the same recipe along with side dishes such as smoky braised greens, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes and succotash. He also plans to serve an alternative preparation: honey-roasted chicken. This recipe is based on a family-style dinner he shares with his crew the Monday following Sunday Supper.

The menu also will feature fried chicken nuggets, seasonal pies, chorizo deviled eggs and smothered tater tots.

Prices for the bone-in chicken, available for takeout, will be \$12.95 for a three-piece plate, \$17.95 for a five-piece small bucket and \$29.95 for a 10-piece large bucket. Each plate or bucket comes with two sides and jalapeño cheddar corn bread.

Creating a fast-casual concept is not new to Adams. He previously announced plans to open Parallel Pizzeria in Dana Point. The restaurant, which is coming to the renovated The Row retail center, will feature New Haven-style pizza cooked in a charcoal-burning oven.

He and his business partner James Nunn are combining New Haven-style pizza crust with West Coast ingredients. That opening, however, has been delayed. Adams said he is not sure when this year it will open.

Buttermilk will be open for lunch, dinner and late night dining. Address: 238 W. Chapman Ave.