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RESTAURANTS

Belden Place burger joint; another new chef at Fork

► SCOOP

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Called Best-O-Burger, "the whole concept is based on mini," Weber said. The burgers will be a high-quality version of sliders, three to four bites each, like the ones currently on the menu at Mecca that, says Weber, "are selling like hot cakes."

A bag of three or four will sell for about \$5, he says. They'll be complemented by a menu of fries, onion rings, mini gelato shakes, and mini cookies and brownies.

The place will be mostly take-out, with just 15 to 18 seats, including some on Belden Place.

The partners are scheduled to break ground on June 15. In the meantime, they're already on the lookout for two other Financial District locations.

At the same time, Chip Conley and his Joie de Vivre Hospitality team are scheduled to open Custom Burger/Lounge the first week in July in the current Best Western Americana (121 Seventh St.), just down the block from their SoMa Grand project and the new San Francisco Federal Building.

The dining area, which will be counter service, will seat about 60, with an additional 45 full-service seats in the lounge.

The menu will feature an array of burgers, including non-beef burgers. Renovations on the hotel itself will start in the fall.

And over at the former Clown Alley (42 Columbus), which new owner Tom Duffy (of Myth) has renamed Pickles, the traditional burger menu continues — for now.

In July, Duffy plans to remodel a bit and focus on gourmet bur-

gers and Chicago-style hot dogs.



Chef-go-round: In yet another chef change at Fork in San Anselmo (198 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.), sous chef Eric Joppie, who rejoined the restaurant as sous chef few weeks ago, has taken over for chef Jonathan Kosorek.

According to what we've been able to figure, this is the sixth chef change at Fork since the restaurant opened six years ago. As Fork co-owner Charles Low wrote in an e-mail, "Maybe ... we could be recognized by the (James) Beard Foundation for creating the new restaurant concept of not only a seasonal menu but a seasonal chef."

At another highly seasonal restaurant, Cetrella in Half Moon Bay (845 Main St.), Robert Holt has taken over for Lewis Rossman. As Scoop reported previously, Cetrella co-founder Paul Shenkman sold his interest in the restaurant to concentrate on Sam's Chowder House a little farther up the coast.



Polishing up: In the Tenderloin, the Original Joe's folks have finalized plans for several projects.

They'll celebrate the 70th anniversary of Original Joe's (144 Taylor) in October with special events and rollback prices. The restaurant will close for two three-day periods over the next six weeks for remodeling intended to restore its earlier look, according to partner Frank Klein.

Much of the tweaking will be in the rear banquet rooms, which

will become the space for Sunday family dinners — "an Italian Social Club atmosphere," says Klein.

In addition, Klein, co-owner John Duggan Jr. and sis Elena Duggan (the third Original Joe's generation) are going ahead with what they're now calling 2 Fathoms in the Mark Twain Hotel (345 Taylor): The 40-seat seafood restaurant scheduled to open in August will feature entrees under \$20, 40 wines under \$40, and an all-you-can-eat fish and chips night. Designer is Sheri Sheridan, who also did Salt House.

The name is a link to Mark Twain. The story goes that "Mark Twain" is what Mississippi River steamboat skippers hollered out when it was safe for the boat to pass — meaning the water was at least two fathoms deep.

The threesome has also narrowed down San Francisco locations for their Joe's Jr., an upscale family steak house. If all goes well, look for a spring 2008 opening.



So long, Solano: After four-plus years, Beauregard's California Bistro in Albany (1373 Solano Ave.) has closed. In its new persona, the restaurant will be a sushi emporium.



More hours: Nob Hill Grille (969 Hyde St.), a longtime breakfast and lunch spot now owned by Rich Paez and Fabio Stefani, has added dinner service under new chef Eric Rud.

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