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By: Maggie Leenas

Restaurant Lorena's Moving to New, Larger Location in Maplewood

After a harrowing 2020, chef/owner Humberto Campos Jr. finds a silver lining during the pandemic.



Humberto Campos Jr., chef/owner of Restaurant Lorena's. Photo courtesy of the restaurant

For restaurants, 2020 was a harrowing year. Humberto Campos Jr., chef/owner of Restaurant Lorena's in Maplewood, knows this. But he's also grateful for a silver lining last year brought: The opportunity to relocate to a bigger space.

After opening Lorena's in 2005, chef Campos and his wife Lorena worked hard to make a name for themselves in the Maplewood community. When the pandemic hit last March, Campos remembers being terrified of what to expect in the coming months.

“It reminded me of when you first get a restaurant, and you’re building it from the ground up,” says Campos. “You’re waiting for that phone to ring, and those first three months were just hectic [for us].”

Despite the concern Campos had, it was their loyal community that kept them going. Cars were lined down Maplewood Avenue waiting for Lorena’s half-priced takeout—a time Campos describes as being busier than a regular Saturday night at the restaurant. A few months later, outdoor dining opened up, and what was once their thriving takeout service drastically dropped 80 percent. In order to keep up with what the public wanted, Campos and his staff had to adjust to another new dining system, and outdoor dining required more of a financial backing.

“Here we are trying to survive, and then here we are spending more money,” says Campos. “That was difficult, but we had to do it.” In November, with Covid-19 cases on the rise again, Campos decided to end indoor dining at Lorena’s as a precaution.

After a year of uncertainty behind them, the Lorena’s crew jumped into 2021 with high hopes and a new goal. Campos and his wife always wanted to relocate, and this past year allowed them to finally do it—and come to an agreement that was reasonable.

Their new space, just down the road from Lorena’s previous location, comes with new ideas and brand new dining experiences, all of which will expand the Lorena’s atmosphere patrons are familiar with. Their back dining room will pay homage to Lorena’s original opening, complete with a 35-40 seat space reserved for more formal dining service. A larger dining room will also be in the new space, perfect for a more casual night out, and a brand new chef’s table that will feature special tastings in the future.

The 4,500-square-foot space will continue to take all necessary precautions to create a safe and clean environment for all guests. After a year full of uncertainty, chef Campos, his wife and business partner, and the team at Lorena’s is looking forward to a fresh start in a new space.

“Being realistic is one thing, but you just have to push and make things happen,” says Campos. “Out of the terrible, sometimes good things happen, right?”

Lorena’s new location will open in mid-January at 160 Maplewood Avenue in Maplewood with socially distant indoor dining. It will operate Wednesday–Sunday for dinner only and readjust their hours of operation come February first. Check out their [Instagram](#) page for updates on the new space.