

French Restaurant Lorena's In Maplewood Moves To Bigger Space

The restaurant is already serving takeout from the new space next door, steps from the Maplewood train station.



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MAPLEWOOD, NJ – Restaurant Lorena's, a popular French American restaurant and 15-year staple of the Maplewood community, is relocating to a 4,500 square foot space nearby at Clarus Maplewood, developer JMF Properties announced Friday.

The new location at 160 Maplewood Ave. is just steps from the restaurant's previous location at 168 Maplewood Ave., steps from the Maplewood train station.

There will be no disruption in service and Lorena's is already open for curbside pickup and local delivery at its new location ([menu is here](#)), said a spokesperson.

Lorena's joins a collection of street-level retail at Clarus Maplewood that already includes Starbucks, BCB Bank and Abby Haliti Salon.

Restaurant owners Humberto and Lorena Campos recently signed a lease and are in the process of making interior design improvements to the new space.

Once the new restaurant space is ready to open, Lorena's hopes to re-open for limited capacity indoor dining, depending on current conditions and guidelines.

The restaurant is aiming for a late February grand opening.

"We've always considered a move to a larger space, but over the 15 years we have been here nothing of this caliber ever became available until now," said Humberto Campos, who is the restaurant's chef in addition to its co-owner. "Clarus Maplewood is the perfect fit for us. It's a beautiful building, barely three years old, and the proximity relative to our current location is super convenient. We've created a huge client base over the years, so we wanted to stay close by. Our regular customers will have no trouble finding us here. They'll actually be parking in the same parking lot."

Upgrading from 1,400 square feet to 4,500 square feet will give chef Campos flexibility to enhance the customer experience in ways that weren't possible in the confinements of his previous location.

He plans on offering dual-concept dining. The haute cuisine prepared with seasonal ingredients and classic French techniques that Lorena's is famous for will be served in the restaurant's formal dining room. A broader, approachably priced menu will be served in an upscale-casual section of the restaurant. Both dining rooms will have an updated seating configuration.

Both long-time customers and first-time visitors will feel right at home in the new setting. The restaurant's interior design improvements and décor will evoke the same warmth and intimacy customers of Lorena's have enjoyed for the last 15 years, while also infusing it with new energy.

Lorena's has been a BYO restaurant in the past, but the new location will offer a full-service bar. Chef Campos plans to offer a wine list and a rotating menu of five seasonal cocktails.

Other new features Lorena's will be able to offer its customers in the near future include patio dining, wine pairings, and varied [menu](#) formats, such as tasting menus. The new kitchen is larger, more functional, and partially open to the dining area. That gives Lorena's the ability to offer special seating with kitchen views and unique experiences such as a chef's table in the future.

Chef Campos aims to preserve the intimate atmosphere, exceptional service, and warmth of the dining experience that helped his restaurant build such a loyal following while also being able to accommodate more patrons and offer his cuisine to a wider audience at a more accessible price point. His previous location was frequently booked and he'd have to turn away walk-in customers.

"What we're really looking forward to is seeing our clients again soon and sharing the joy of the new space with them, as well as seeing new faces and making new connections," chef Campos said. "The fact that we are able to stay in Maplewood is quite comforting. We've formed a lot of friendships here over the years, not just with our long-time clients, but also with the town's merchants. It's a tight-knit community. People look out for each other. I couldn't ask for a better town."

Clarus Maplewood community

The new home, Clarus Maplewood, is distinguished in its own right. The boutique mixed-use community, which opened in 2017, is one of the most innovative buildings in New Jersey. It is the first residential community in the state to achieve WELL Certification through the International WELL Building Institute's™ (IWBI™) multifamily pilot, and only the 13th in the world. WELL certification recognizes buildings that were carefully designed, built, and maintained to strict standards that enhance the health and well-being of its occupants.

Clarus Maplewood is also the recipient of the New Jersey Business Association's 2019 New Good Neighbor Award and the Metropolitan Builders & Contractors Association's 2018 "Community of the Year" honors, among other accolades.

"We are thrilled to welcome Restaurant Lorena's to Clarus Maplewood," said Joseph M. Forgione, Founder and Principal of JMF Properties. "Lorena's is one of the businesses that make downtown Maplewood a special place, a popular destination for both Maplewood locals and people from nearby communities. The fact that we were able to accommodate their desire to upgrade their space without the need to move out of Maplewood Village is something we are very proud of."

For more information on Restaurant Lorena's, visit www.restaurantlorena.com. For more information on Clarus Maplewood, visit www.jmfrentals.com/clarus-maplewood.