

Business

TempeNews.com

Cookie shop transitions into bakery

BY MELODY BIRKETT
Tribune Contributor

Chunk Cookies is now Chunk Bakery. The Tempe business started in 2018 and was the first cookie company in Arizona to deliver freshly baked giant cookies to a customer's doorstep. It then expanded to Gilbert and Queen Creek. "It was a new concept," said co-owner Ryan Palmer, who joined the business in 2021. "It was really popular. It became so popular and people liked the idea so much that over the last six years, it (the cookie business) became oversaturated. There's a cookie shop on every corner."

The proliferation has caused many of those businesses to crumble.

"But luckily we have a good foothold in the community. I feel we have a lot of loyal customers," Palmer said.

Kurtis Toolson started the business. He and Palmer were born and grew up in Arizona, raising families in Gilbert and Mesa. They met at Greenfield Junior High School at age 13, close to 20 years ago, and have been best friends ever since.

While the cookie business had been a sweet experience for the friends, they felt it was time to roll out a new concept.

"Business has slowed for many reasons," Palmer explained. "It has become less hyped than it used to be. Many businesses, including ours, have struggled just to sell cookies. It's become very slow."

While Palmer said customers loved their cookies and ice cream, the frequency of their visits told the owners more.

"We realized that if we can make such a superior product, why couldn't we do that with more stuff like croissants, cinnamon rolls, sweet bread, brownies, bars and muffins," said Palmer.

The bakery also sells lemon bars, Carmelitas, banana bread, blueberry bread, muffins and six flavors of cinnamon rolls – original, raspberry, blueberry, lemon, orange, and maple.

In all, Chunk Bakery has over 60 items as opposed to 10 cookies Chunk Cookies offered.

A few savory items will be rolled out in the coming months, including sandwiches with homemade bread. All new items will

have the same Chunk Cookie standard customers have come to expect, according to Palmer.

"We want to make sure everything we sell is baked perfectly, is the right size and flavor and not overly sweet."

The business partners have three locations in Tempe, Gilbert and Queen Creek.

"We love our community," said Palmer. "We want to be your local bakery. We want to serve the Arizona community."

One day, the owners want to expand into other states but want to grow first in the Valley.

As far as what will set their bakery apart from the competition, Palmer says it's the product.

"I believe some people think they'll get the same thing at any bakery. I can tell you that's not the case.

"We want people to enjoy what they eat and come back. We spent a lot of hours fine-tuning these recipes....Our goal is to have the community feel this is their home-grown bakery, something they can be proud of."

Information: chunkcookies.com will link



Kurtis Toolson and Ryan Palmer have created Chunk Bakery, an evolution from their previous business, Chunk Cookies. (Special to the Tribune)

to the new website chunkbakeries.com, which is still under construction. ■

New bar promises Western high in Tempe

BY TRIBUNE NEWS STAFF

Clive Collective, a Scottsdale-based hospitality group, says it hopes to enliven the Tempe bar scene with Neon Spur.

Championing "unique, elevated experiences," Clive Collective has partner with kNOw Name Concepts to open the new bar at 680 S. Mill Ave.

"Designed to bring a nostalgic yet fresh experience to the area, Neon Spur combines the laid-back vibe of the 1970s with a retro cowboy aesthetic to bring to life its unique take on a classic dive bar."

The venue boasts an indoor space and

outdoor trailer bar, complete with vintage furniture, western decor and neon signs among other distinctive elements.

The food menu will feature recognizable American comfort food curated by celebrity chef Beau MacMillan, Clive Collective's director of culinary operations and partner.

"Neon Spur is designed to stand out amongst the local bar scene," said Mikis Troyan, Clive Collective co-founder and managing partner. "While developing the concept, we focused on creating a fun, unforgettable experience where every detail, from the atmosphere to the drinks to the

vibe, sparks something fresh and exciting.

"The intention is to foster a lively, hospitable space where locals and visitors come together to socialize and enjoy cold cans, stiff drinks and good backyard grub."

Clive Collective has established its place in the Valley as a premier restaurant group with the likes of two Scottsdale projects: Cala, a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant and Tell Your Friends, a speakeasy.

Led by co-founders and hospitality veterans Mikis Troyan and Justin Massei, it boasts "a group of leading industry professionals with decades of experience creating authentic experiences" and said

it is expanding into Tempe "to deliver its unique experiences to a greater audience with Neon Spur."

"Neon Spur isn't just another bar on Mill. It's a chance to breathe new life into the area and deliver a space for guests to create moments they'll remember long after they leave," said Massei.

The venue will be open Tuesday-Sunday 3 p.m.-2:00 a.m., and closed on Mondays.

Information: @neonspur and TikTok @neonspuraz. ■