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RETAIL DINING DEVELOPMENTS NEWS

# Murals, mid-century design and fried chicken highlight new Creative Village restaurant

By LAURA KINSLER  
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*Front Porch*

*The Monroe*



Two pillars framing the front door of the restaurant would be painted black. The restaurant is on the ground floor of The Julian apartment building in Creative Village. (Good Salt Restaurant Group)

Murals painted by local artists will highlight the mid-century inspired design at The Monroe restaurant and Front Porch, scheduled to open next month in Creative Village on the ground floor of The Julian Apartments tower.

The Orlando-based **Good Salt Restaurant Group** submitted its design concepts this month to the city staff for approval. Owners Jason and Sue Chin announced last September they had leased the 6,000-square-foot commercial space and have spent the last six months developing a new concept for the restaurant, which will be named “The Monroe.” They told GrowthSpotter they’re working around the clock to pass their final inspections and open by the second week in April.

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The Chins named Josh Oakley, **formerly of The Smiling Bison**, as executive chef, and they created a menu focusing on modern comfort foods in Oakley’s elevated style, using locally sourced ingredients. “He can take a burger and have it be something that is, like, kind of just mind-bending,” Jason Chin said. They picked a signature dish, too. “We’re going to have the best fried chicken you’ve ever had. It’s going to be really well executed — really flavorful, nice and crispy — just everything that you would want in a really good fried chicken.”



Warm wood tone and hanging plants complement a color palette of blues and golds in the restaurant interior. (Sue Chin)

The menu includes also includes pasta, fresh seafood and sharing plates. Since the restaurant is located on a college campus, the Chins wanted the food to be accessible and affordable, while also giving Oakley the freedom to offer limited selections and multi-course tasting menus. “Chef Josh is definitely very skilled and creative. We definitely want to be able to, you know, if somebody wants to have a higher-end experience we can definitely put that together, too,” Jason Chin said.

Sue Chin designed the restaurant interior, which includes the main dining room, a bar/lounge that doubles as a study area, a semi-private dining area and outdoor space that overflows into the building’s interior courtyard. She paired a color palette of blues golds and blush, similar to the building’s stained glass windows, with warm wood tones and hanging plants.

“I wanted to keep it colorful,” Sue Chin said. “We’re just surrounded by new construction and white concrete everywhere, so I wanted to add as much as I can, color-wise, and make it more vibrant and lively.”

The Chins are adding their own sweat equity to the interior buildout. “We’re here literally every day,” Jason Chin said. “There’s a lot of little things that need to get done. Sue stained every single piece of wood in the space. There’s a lot of wood, and wherever you see wood, Sue stained it,”



The Chins will bring color and plants to warm up the white concrete walls of the Front Porch open-air gathering space on Terry Avenue. (Sue Chin)

The Chins also will manage the adjacent open-air public space known as the front porch, which opens out onto Terry Avenue and overlooks the new Luminary Green Park in Creative Village. Sue Chin will paint the mural titled “Sunshine State Social” along the back wall of the space using a mid-century cubist-inspired style. Noted **muralist Maureen Hudas** will paint a Florida-themed mural on the Paseo wall featuring a panther, peacocks, oranges and alligators.



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around town, or see familiar streets or parks throughout the restaurant celebrating Orlando.”

Good Salt currently operates Seito Sushi Baldwin Park, The Osprey and Reyes Mezcaleria.

Creative Village [master developer Craig Ustler](#) is a partner with the Chins on Reyes, and he recruited them to operate the first full-service restaurant in Creative Village. He said gave the Chins creative control of the project. “The design and artwork is attributable to Sue Chin and her creative vision/direction,” Ustler said. “She is the best I’ve ever worked with.”

Ustler, who co-developed the UnionWest building and The Julian, said more dining options will open in the fall, when UCF and Valencia College resume more in-person classes at the downtown campus. “At UnionWest, Vera Asian and Qdoba are scheduled to open in August 2021 to align with a more active UCF/Valencia Downton Campus in Fall 2021,” he said. “We have also been focusing on lease-up and stabilization of The Julian Apartments. Given the COVID context, things have gone well. We have over 150 leases in 7-8 months and we are happy with that result.”

Ustler said the Front Porch is a critical element to The Julian’s integration into Creative Village. It’s a pet-friendly space with TVs, foosball and cornhole. “It is a large outdoor space that faces the new Luminary Green Park and is unlike any other patio or outdoor dining area in Downtown Orlando,” he said. “As master developer of Creative Village and as Owner/Landlord of The Julian Apartments, we thought it was really important to provide this type of “front porch” area and “casual hang out” space. When the Luminary Green park is done in Fall 2021 and the Electronic Arts Orlando Studio is done at roughly the same time, there will be a great interaction of the park/public space framed by buildings and the outdoor dining space at The Monroe is an integral part of that.”

*Have a tip about Central Florida development? Contact me at [lkinsler@GrowthSpotter.com](mailto:lkinsler@GrowthSpotter.com) or (407) 420-6261, or tweet me at [@byLauraKinsler](https://twitter.com/byLauraKinsler). Follow GrowthSpotter on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).*



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