

FOOD & DRINK

Fried chicken restaurant Tumble 22 taking over old Magnolia Cafe space

By **Matthew Odam**

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Larry Foles knows the Austin restaurant world as well as anybody. Along with business partner Guy Villavaso, he opened Z'Tejas Southwestern Grill, Eddie V's Prime Seafood, Roaring Fork, Salty Sow, Hopdoddy, Red Ash and ATX Cocina.

He also knows that there's "something about a crunch." Specifically the kind of piquant crunch that comes with double fried chicken, dipped in seasoned cayenne oil after frying.

That style of Nashville-inspired hot chicken has served as the main draw for Tumble 22, the restaurant that he and partner chef Harold Marmulstein initially opened as a trailer in 2017. The chicken has been such a curbside and drive-thru draw at its Burnet Road location that it led the partners to continue with their plans to open a Cedar Park location in April in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. The immediate success in Cedar Park inspired a quick jump to open a third.

The next Tumble 22 location will instantly become the brand's most iconic. The fried chicken restaurant is preparing to take over the building on Lake Austin Boulevard occupied for more than 40 years by the Magnolia Cafe and the Omelettry West before it.

Foles' daughter called him when she saw the news in April that the beloved Magnolia was closing.

"About three hours later I was negotiating the lease," Foles told the American-Statesman in May. "What an iconic restaurant site. To me, it's the site in Austin, Texas."



Tumble 22 is taking over the space long occupied by the iconic Magnolia Cafe on Lake Austin Boulevard. [CONTRIBUTED BY ASHLYN ALLISON]

Foles, who opened Tumble 22 after seeing the lines of devoted customers at Hattie B's Hot Chicken in Nashville, plans to open the restaurant in July, initially serving curbside takeout and makeshift drive-thru service only.

"Unless, in a month or six

weeks everything gets back to a little more normal, we may seat some inside, but we'll wait and see," Foles said in late May.

The successful restaurateur and longtime Austinite, who introduced Popeyes to the San Antonio market in the 1970s,

recognizes the cultural significance of the restaurants that came before him in the space and says the minor updates to the restaurant will complement the historic building.

"We're gonna try and be real subtle in the way we do things and the way we paint

the signage and everything else," Foles said. "It's gonna be another homegrown business that has a culture of its own: Drinking beer, eating chicken and margaritas. One homegrown leaves and another comes in. It's pretty neat."