

News

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La Marsa owners buy 2 former La Shish restaurants

By Elizabeth Voss

The three owners of two La Marsa Mediterranean Cuisine restaurants will re-open two former La Shish restaurants in Farmington Hills and Troy under a new name but with similar food offerings.

Fadhel Gannouni, Adal Ahmed and Moe El Nager plan to purchase the former La Shish franchise at 37610 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, from the state of Michigan for an undisclosed price, said Gannouni. Next week, they plan to sign a lease with the Halsted Plaza management. The property managers will do repairs to the roof and some plumbing work before the restaurant re-opens under the name La Marsa in six to eight weeks.

On May 8, the three restaurateurs agreed to purchase the former La Shish at 3720 Rochester Road, Troy, from the state for an undisclosed sum. Monday they signed a lease with Oakland Management for the property at the Troywood shopping center. Plans are to re-open the restaurant under the name La Marsa in about a month.

Currently, La Marsa has two Mediterranean restaurants in Bloomfield Hills and Farmington Hills. One of the co-owners, Adal Ahmed, was formerly a top chef at La Shish, working at the Dearborn headquarters and later the Farmington Hills restaurant. He brought the same Lebanese recipes to La Marsa when the Farmington Hills eatery opened 16 months ago and the Bloomfield Hills one followed in December. La Marsa also offers several Egyptian and Tunisian dishes. The mid-priced menu will be the same in the new restaurants.

Currently, the trio has no plans to buy any more of the former La Shish restaurants.

The area's franchise-owned and company-owned stores closed after La Shish Founder Talal Chahine and his ex-wife Elfat El Aouar were indicted on tax-evasion charges in 2007. El Aouar was convicted and sentenced to 18 months in prison; Chahine remains a fugitive and is believed to be in Lebanon.

Voss is a freelance writer.