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New Eatery Aims to Jazz Up South Los Angeles

DINING: Chef Richard Petty to serve up Southern cuisine at legendary music venue.

CHEF Richard Petty plans to bring a Southern-style dining experience to a South L.A. site once known as a venue for jazz legends Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald.

Red Yam Southern Grille and Bakery will open in December on the ground floor of the Dunbar Hotel, Petty announced last week. He plans to open two more Red Yams later if he raises enough investment money.

Petty, chief executive of 20-year-old catering company **Okra Restaurant Group Inc.** in Reseda, is also a cookbook author and chose the Dunbar, which reopened last year, as his first location because the culture of his food is shared with the hotel's history. The restaurant will feature live jazz.

"The Dunbar was where all the jazz greats stayed and played," said Petty. "There's rich history there and the Red Yam food is Afro-heritage food."

He's using a provision of the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act to raise money toward opening the planned fast-casual chain, and has registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission to raise his targeted \$5 million through preferred shares sold to accredited investors.

If he raises the full amount, he plans to open other Red Yam locations in downtown Los Angeles and Koreatown.

Petty described the restaurant's decor as "Chipotle on steroids," a reference to Denver-based Mexican-food chain **Chipotle**



On Menu: Richard Petty at opening of Dunbar Hotel in South Los Angeles.

Mexican Grill Inc.

He said the Jobs Act, which allows small companies to raise money through general solicitation such as press releases and magazine ads, might be the way he can fulfill his longtime goal of opening restaurants.

"I knew that someday I'd be in this position," he said. "When I saw President Obama sign the Jobs act into law, I said that may be the ticket."

Kitty's Grand Slam

Sanrio Co. Ltd.'s popular line of Hello Kitty products now has a deal with all 30 teams in **Major League Baseball** through a Hermosa Beach licensing agency.

Tokyo's Sanrio expanded its deal with MLB and will allow teams to sell branded Hello Kitty merchandise. The merchandise

was launched on Opening Day last week. **David Marchi**, senior director of brand management and marketing at Sanrio's U.S. headquarters in Torrance, said talks of expansion started last year.

"It has been in the works for a while and it kind of built on what we started last year," he said.

Hermosa Beach licensing firm Your Event Inc.

had worked out an agreement between Sanrio and MLB last year. Hello Kitty products began selling in July at Dodger Stadium and four other California pro baseball venues, as previously reported by the Business Journal.

Sales were promising enough to allow Your Event to negotiate expansion throughout the league.

The merchandise will include items such as pins, key chains, bags, apparel and cellphone covers. Select items will also be available in late spring at Sanrio.com and select Sanrio boutiques.

"Each of these teams have their own fervent fan bases and what we've seen from Hello Kitty is that there's a lot of love there as well," Marchi said. "It's about doing something that's going to surprise and delight fans."

Revolving Doors

Fashion and bridal designer **Vera Wang** opened her L.A. flagship store last week on Rodeo Drive. The two-story, 5,500-square-foot space will sell the designer's bridal gowns as well as shoes, eyewear, accessories and apparel. ... Lifestyle brand **Kinfolk Studio** will be opening a boutique and bar in downtown Los Angeles. The 10,000-square-foot space is expected to open in September. ... Sporting goods

RETAIL & RESTAURANTS

SUBBRINA HUDSON



retailer **Sports Authority Inc.** will be opening a location in Mid-City. The Fort Lauderdale, Fla., company expects to open its store in May. ... **Catimini**, a Paris luxury children's brand, is opening in Beverly Hills next week. The brand is part of **Zanier Group** in Paris. ... Kansas City, Mo., chain **Applebee's Grill & Bar** opened at the Signal Hill Gateway Center in Long Beach last month. Its opening was the final step in completing the Gateway Center, a 24-acre retail shopping center owned by **Signal Hill Petroleum**. ... High-end men's and women's clothing retailer **Oak NYC** opened a 2,100-square-foot space on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles. ... Beauty retailer **Selects Apothecary** opened this month in West Hollywood. Its 500-square-foot store sells luxury beauty brands such as Caudalie and Davines. ... Japanese apparel and home goods store **Muji** will open in Santa Monica in late spring. That will be the retailer's ninth U.S. store. ... This summer, Beverly Hills luxury watch retailer **Westime** will be opening its fourth boutique, at Malibu Country Mart. The store will sell men's and women's watches and jewelry.

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