

Mac's Purchases Rights To Mini Corral To Bring It Downtown In March or Early April

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Mac's in Downtown Alton has purchased the rights, recipes, and menu from the Mini Corral, a landmark Upper Alton business for many years, Rob Lenhardt of Mac's, announced Monday afternoon.



Mac's plans to operate the Mini Corral business at the back of Mac's facility for call-in orders and eventually walk-ins. Sal Manescalò, one of the founders of Mini Corral, died on Sept. 22, 2021. Sal and his sister opened the first Mini Corral in East Alton in 1980 and moved the business to Alton and it took off. Co-owner Angie Wiegand, his sister, operated the business at 1500 Main St. in Alton before it closed when Sal was no longer able to work. Sliders, fish sandwiches, burgers, and the famed homemade root beer were the Mini Corral favorites.

"We were able to get the deal done in December 2021 to buy the Mini Corral in Upper Alton rights, recipes and menu to buy the rights to Mini Corral," Rob Lenhardt of Mac's in Downtown Alton said on Monday afternoon. "We actually have been working on building a second kitchen on Mac's property since last August.

"We were looking for a concept to do and when the opportunity to purchase the rights to the mini-Corral was presented, it fit the bill. It is looking like it will be together to open by March or early April 2022 at the latest. Mini-Corral is perfect to be a ghost kitchen and maybe the next year if things go well we will a storefront for Mini-Corral. It will back of building toward the parking lot."

Rob Lenhardt said one of the things that intrigued him was 80 percent of the Mini Corral business before COVID carry out so it fits perfectly in the ghost-kitchen concept. Ghost kitchens are restaurants that only deliver food to customers. Ghost kitchens have a variety of other names in the restaurant industry, including virtual restaurants, cloud kitchens, or dark kitchens. Ghost kitchens can function as their own business and establish a restaurant's brand in a market allowing a restaurant to build consumer loyalty before deciding to have an open dining space.

"We will keep the original brand and the original recipes of the Mini Corral," Rob Lenhardt emphasized.

The Mini Corral has been closed for about four months and Rob said he believes the community will widely embrace its return.

"This has been something in the works for about six months," he said. "I have been dreaming about doing it for about a year and I am thankful it is now going to happen. It will be great for the community."