

Van Shabu restaurant officially opens in Savin Hill

Posted by Patrick Rosso

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By Patrick D. Rosso, Town Correspondent

To the smells of crab rangoon, sushi, and hotpot dishes, Mayor Thomas M. Menino officially welcomed the Van Shabu and Bar to Savin Hill on Saturday.

The restaurant, owned by Karen Diep and her husband Van Mateo, has been operating since January at 1156 Dorchester Avenue. Diep is not new to the area; her parents use to run a restaurant across the street.

"I grew up here working for their restaurant, and I'm so glad to be part of the evolution of Boston and this neighborhood," Diep said.

Opening the restaurant has been a lot of work and a labor of love.

"This type of business can make or break you, and we were lucky because it brought us closer together," Diep said.

It took almost four-years and \$2.3 million -- including loans from the city -- to revamp the space that was once home to Nash's Pub.

"These small restaurants are the nucleus of our neighborhoods," Menino said Saturday as he sampled some sushi. "Putting neighborhood people to work builds strong neighborhoods and communities."

City Councilor Frank Baker also stopped by the restaurant with his family to sample some food and congratulate Diep and Mateo on their success.

"This restaurant represents all the good stuff happening in Dorchester," said Baker. "We are happy to support these types of business. It's a commitment to the neighborhood by them, and it's good to see people taking that initiative."

Baker said that although opening a restaurant can be a challenge, especially with some of the hurdles involving licensing and permits, he is happy to lend a hand and work to help guide businesses through the process.

"By the time it goes from an idea to an opening it can be a year and a half later," said Baker. "Any time we can help shave some time off that opening is great."

While the ribbon cutting was a milestone for the restaurateurs, it seemed the food was what attracted residents on Saturday. With home-cooked Asian offerings and a beautiful new space, Diep and her family were all smiles Saturday and even shed a few tears of relief.

"It took us a long time to get here, but we made it," said Diep.

Van Shabu and Bar is located at 1156 Dorchester Ave. For more information visit its website.

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