New Developments Elevate Boise’s Appeal

Boise welcomes more eclectic culinary experiences and outdoor attractions

June 2019 – The City of Trees sees continued growth in its restaurant, bar, and hospitality offerings in 2019. New restaurants and bars have been steadily opening throughout the year and exciting outdoor attractions are scheduled to open later this summer.

Attractions

Zoo Boise finished a 2.5-acre, $8.9 million expansion opening in July 2019 featuring a partnership with Gorongosa National Park in Africa. The Gorongosa expansion includes wild African dogs, baboons, Nile crocodiles, hyenas, and many more. Proceeds from each Zoo admission goes into a conservation fund supporting endangered species—now donating more than $2 million to conservation to date. The Gorongosa exhibit will continue and celebrate that important work.

The beloved Boise River Greenbelt is turning 50 years old this fall. Boise Parks & Recreation and the Boise City Department of Arts & History will host a three-day celebration with a food truck rally, concert at the Gene Harris Bandshell, and special walking/biking tours this September to honor the 25-mile-long pathway.

Boise has more than 90 parks with diverse amenities within city limits. Now, the city is poised to welcome Sue Howell Park in eastern Boise to the mix. The new site was designed to highlight important Idaho landmarks with interactive displays and activities to enjoy for generations to come. The Boise River Greenbelt currently runs through the site and Boise River access will be preserved for anglers who currently enjoy the area.

The Boise Whitewater Park is a premier urban water recreation park, featuring a hydraulic wave and other amenities for surfers, kayakers and paddle boarders. Phase two construction of the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation Whitewater Park began in September 2018. This $11 million expansion includes a second adjustable wave and two other features designed to create a rolling wave for beginner and intermediate kayakers and surfers. The project is expected to be complete in August 2019.

The Military Reserve Bike Skills Park, donated by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation, is slated to open in August 2019. The park is the first of its kind with tracks, rollers, hills, and trails for cyclists of all skill levels and ages. The 726-acre Military Reserve is located in the Boise Foothills, and includes an archery range, trails, as well as a dog park coming in 2020.

Dining

A taste of New Zealand cuisine was added to the Boise restaurant landscape in early 2019 with the opening of Kiwi Shake & Bake in downtown Boise. The New Zealander-owned eatery makes meat pies, milkshakes, lolly cakes, mousetraps and many other scratch-made, traditional New Zealand dishes—as well as a fun spot to watch cricket and rugby games.
Petite 4 fans and the former Bleubird Sandwich Shop regulars rejoiced when owners Sarah and Dave Kelly purchased the historic Roosevelt Market in Boise’s East End Neighborhood. The Kellys plan to transform the small market into an all-day eatery with fresh coffee, baked goods, and a small menu opening in Fall 2019.

The owners of popular pizza spot The Wylder, are opening Certified Kitchen + Bakery in another historic Boise location—Certified Inc. Rug & Furniture Cleaners in Hyde Park. The kitchen and bakery will be open for breakfast, lunch, and additional catering opportunities. The Wylder’s famous 52-year-old sourdough starter will be used for English muffins and breakfast sandwiches. Plans are also in the works for The Cocktail Co. —a new bar to accompany the eatery. The bar will have room for 87 patrons with patio seating and garage door-style opening.

High Note Café opened next to Flying M Coffee House on 5th Street in 2012 but overhauled their menu in spring 2019 to be entirely vegan. Their new vegan menu includes items made with vegan cheese, sauces, homemade breads, and dressings. High Note Café still serves all-day brunch, lunch, and dinner.

Slated to open in autumn 2019, a Café is located in downtown Boise on 10th Street in the newly-built Kount building. The café will have seating for 48 people including counter, bar, table and window seating. The project is described as “simple and familiar, cozy and welcoming, delicious and wholesome.” The concise menu will include house-made granola, soups, salads, sandwiches, and avocado toast to pair with coffee or tea.

The downtown lunch spot staple Main Street Deli has extended its hours and its space to include a new fast-casual Italian restaurant, Il Sugo. Diners can choose their sauce, pasta noodle (gluten-free options are available), and protein to pair with beer or wine. Il Sugo is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. after Main Street Deli closes up for the day.

Yen Ching has been a downtown Boise Chinese food favorite since it opened in 1986. The restaurant underwent a remodel in 2019 to add Bēi Lounge, a “modern Asian” bar. The lounge has an extensive beer and wine list with local options in addition to their signature cocktails like the Lychee Martini.

RamaPong, the newest concept from the people behind Boise Fry Co. and Press & Pony, opened late Spring in the historic Adelmann building. The basement spot serves up hot “Idaho-inspired” Japanese ramen with a side of Saki and ping pong. RamaPong has ping pong tables, beer pong tables, and is family-friendly until 4 p.m. It is open for the late-night crowd until 2 a.m. on weekends. Stadium seating will allow for future ping pong tournaments and concert space.

The ping pong and axe throwing trends are alive and well in Boise with the opening of Basecamp Pong & Axe near Boise State University. Basecamp is a full-service bar and grill with plenty of ping pong tables and eight lanes for axe throwing.

Chef Kris Komori and Remi McManus—the former owners of the high-end Boise restaurant State & Lemp—are working on a new project in the former Angell’s Bar and Grill space on Main Street. A new restaurant, Kin, will feature a similar creative dining experience with a modern menu. The same pair opened Art Haus & Ampersand in the same location in 2018, but will be renovating the space again to make Kin come to life.
Seattle-based pizza chain, **MOD Pizza**, will be opening two locations in downtown Boise and near the Boise Towne Square mall. The 390-store chain specializes in quick, custom artisan-style pizzas around the United States and UK. The two Boise stores will be the first in Idaho.

Hailing from Asheville, North Carolina, **Tupelo Honey** specializes in scratch-made southern cooking. The spot is anticipated to open in the former Piper Pub & Grill spot, which closed during the renovation of **Main + Marketplace**. Tupelo Honey’s downtown Boise location will be the restaurant’s furthest west location.

**Beer, Wine & Spirits**

People will no longer be afraid to sing karaoke in front of a crowd when **Voicebox Karaoke Boise** opens later this year. The Portland-based concept is moving into a vacant Urban Outfitters space in downtown Boise’s BoDo district. It provides patrons with private karaoke booths to share with friends as well as food and a full-service bar.

Ever heard of a Water Bear? How about their scientific name: Tardigrade? This “adorable microscopic animal” is the name of one of Boise’s newest bars. **Water Bear Bar** will open in summer 2019 in the historic Jefferson Building. The menu is made up of classic and modern cocktails, limited beer and wine, and fresh oysters.

Popular Snake River Valley winery, **SCORIA Vineyards**, will be opening a downtown tasting room this fall. SCORIA will join fellow local wine and cider companions, **Coiled Wines** and **Meriwether Cider**, as they expand with tasting rooms in the downtown Boise market.

**Hotels & Meeting Space**

**Wheelhouse**, a downtown Boise shared workspace, opened in early 2019 on the second floor of **Business Interiors of Idaho** on the Basque Block. Wheelhouse includes several small open workspaces and private offices to rent on a month-to-month basis. Conference space is available to Wheelhouse tenants and are free to use for local nonprofits and groups.

Downtown Boise hotel, **Hotel 43**, renovated an entire floor of rooms into spa-like, allergen-free PURE Wellness rooms. Each room has undergone a 7-step purification process to remove 99.9% of all allergens. Specialty amenities include 24/7 air purification, PURE bedding encasements, filtered shower heads, and PURE shield bacteria barriers.

The **Red Lion Downtowner** has been a downtown Boise landmark since it was built in 1960. The hotel will be getting a $10 million overhaul to completely gut and renovate 182 rooms, shared spaces, and restaurant. In addition to a new life, it will also be getting a new name—Delta by Marriott Downtowner. Construction will begin in 2020 and is expected to be completed in 2022.

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**About the Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau**: The Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau is a nonprofit organization that works to enhance Boise’s economy through the marketing, promotion and selling of the city and region as a site for conventions, corporate meetings, trade shows, leisure travel,
cultural, sports, and special events. Each year, Boise hosts hundreds of meetings and special events, which are significant contributors to the local economy. The Boise CVB was established in 1982.