

Saint Germain restaurant owners to take over Empire space

- [By Elisha Sauers](#)
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- Sean Kennedy | [The Virginian-Pilot](#)

Empire Little Bar Bistro in downtown Norfolk will remain open through April 17, 2016.

NORFOLK

Though Empire Little Bar Bistro only has a few days remaining in its spot on Granby Street, another familiar restaurateur is on her way in.

Tiffany Kidwell-Gaylord, who co-owns the adjacent restaurant, Saint Germain, has plans to move into 257 Granby St.

The name of the new venture: to be decided.

“We haven’t actually nailed the name down yet,” she said. “By Monday, I’ll have the name.”

The original concept was Secret Society, but they’re going back to the drawing board after developing some new ideas. She and her brother, chef David Hledik, want to create a casual, approachable eatery with vintage craft cocktails and growlers – something perhaps a little less “outside the box” than Saint Germain.

Though they weren’t planning to open another restaurant, Empire’s announced closing seemed like a good opportunity to grow their business, Kidwell-Gaylord said.

“There are just so many great things happening in Norfolk right now,” she said.

Saint Germain, which opened a year ago, will remain in the space next door, continuing to offer a menu featuring modernist cooking techniques.

Kidwell-Gaylord will ask the city for permission to add outdoor patios to both restaurants. Requests are going before the Planning Commission on April 28.

Empire’s last day is April 17 after 16 years of business in downtown Norfolk. Bob Glover, one of Empire’s owners, said traffic snarls and construction-caused parking problems contributed to the decision to close. If everything goes as planned, the new restaurant will open in late May or early June, Kidwell-Gaylord said.

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