

# Inside Business

The Hampton Roads Business Journal

## Sanctuary brings tacos, artwork to Neon District

By Trevor Metcalfe  
trevor.metcalfe@insidebiz.com  
Jun 13, 2018



By Trevor Metcalfe  
trevor.metcalfe@insidebiz.com

Sanctuary business owner Trey Hanah and cook Joseph Macker show off some of the fresh ingredients they use in their tacos. The taco shop and bar recently opened in Norfolk's Neon District.



Courtesy of Sanctuary

Tacos, beers, wine and spirits are on the menu at Sanctuary, the new bar in at 109 Addison St. in Norfolk's Neon District.

Simplicity is a theme that emerges as soon as you approach Sanctuary – the taco shop and bar that recently opened in Norfolk's Neon District.

An understated black-and-white sign adorns the front door. It's practically identical to the sign that's on the doors to the sanctuary at the church owner Trey Hannah attends.

"That really does point to what we do," Hannah said.

Hannah and business partner Christian Simmons opened the space at 109 Addison St. in March. Hannah was looking for a new place to manage after operating a local Hallmark store for 27 years, and Simmons needed a place to promote and sell his artwork. A friend knew the landlord at the property, and helped set up the two for business.

Hannah was skeptical of the smaller space at first – the property measures 10

feet by 80 feet – but Simmons reassured him. During his time in New York City, Simmons had bartended at several smaller places, and he was confident the space could work.

“It would be a really cool little bar,” Hannah said his friend told him.

He also employed Simmons’ knowledge about what would make a cool bar space. Huge prints of Simmons’ collages – photos of icons like Andy Warhol and Marilyn Monroe juxtaposed with signs and face masks – adorn the walls. Candles light up the space at night. TVs at Sanctuary only show music videos or old movies.

“The aesthetics were totally him,” Hannah said.

The tacos presented the business with a great way to give customers simple, quality food, as well as help the bar acquire an alcohol license. In addition to barbeque chicken, ground beef and shredded pork, the bar offers an organic black bean taco.

“We only had room to do one thing,” Simmons said.

Toppings include standard fare like lettuce, tomato, onion, jalapenos, cilantro, sour cream, chili lime sauce and micro greens. Homemade coleslaw is also available.

Patrons often sit on one of the deck’s four tables during the daytime, Hannah said.

The business hopes to attract both young millennial and Generation Z bargoers, as well as the audience at the nearby Harrison Opera House.

“We want those patrons to feel comfortable coming in before or post-show,” Hannah said.

Sanctuary is open for lunch Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and for happy hour Wednesday through Friday from 4-7 p.m. It’s open late Friday and Saturday nights, and more hours are coming soon, Hannah said.