

The Virginian-Pilot

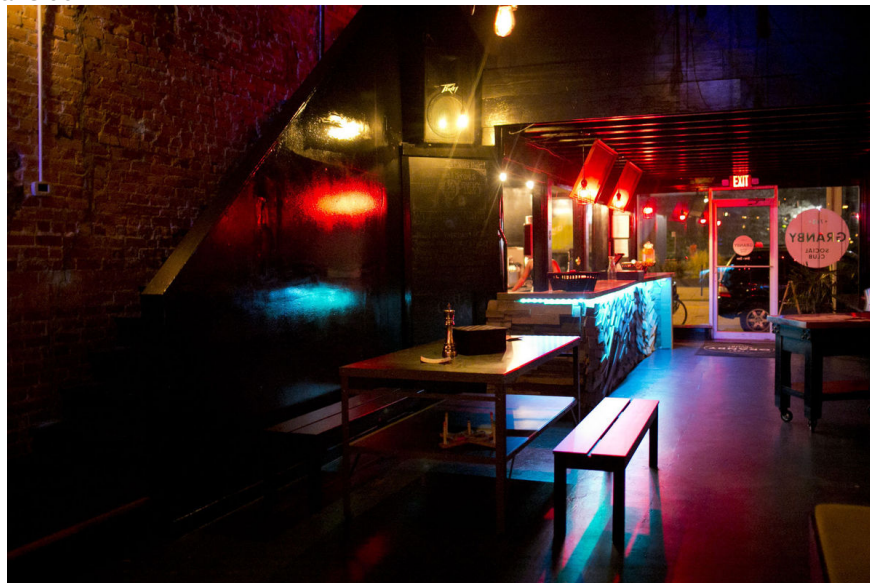
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Arts district lounge Granby Social Club rebrands as island-style restaurant

By Elisha Sauers
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Kristen Zeis | The Virginian-Pilot
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NORFOLK

With swing seats and beanbag chairs, a Mediterranean menu, Skee-ball and pool tables, Guy Derenoncourt admits his lounge in the arts district has been searching for an identity.

That's why after about a nine-month run, Granby Social Club is undergoing renovations and will relaunch in February as Island Canteen Bar and Grill.

Say what?

Derenoncourt, who has been testing a food truck called Island Canteen, said he plans to convert his nightclub at 765 Granby St. into more of a family-style restaurant with some entertainment. He remains the owner, though his business partner Landon Anderson is no longer affiliated with the company.

The truck's concept has been refined, he said, and his team has developed a spice and sauce line that includes chutneys, dry rub and jerk sauce. The club's Facebook page, which has already switched the names, has begun advertising the products for sale from its website and [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

He sees the potential for retail sales growth and franchising for Island Canteen in the future. The company has sought advice from 757 Angels, a group of Hampton Roads business leaders who offer investment capital and mentoring to startups.

"It's not that Granby Social Club is closing," he said. "We don't really want to be a

nightclub. ... One (business concept) seems to have stronger legs than the other.”

When Granby Social Club opened in April, its owners wanted to cater to the after-work, cocktail-hour set. The Parlor, its predecessor, closed in 2015, citing challenges with the neighborhood over its loud music at night; Push Comedy Theater, which holds live stage performances, operates in the space next door. Trying to avoid the noise issues of the past, Granby Social Club would cut off amplified music earlier in the night.

Later the owners attempted to market the club as a gay bar because of its already strong LGBT customer base. But once the club officially started promoting itself as such, Derenoncourt said revenue declined by about 75 percent. He believes that might be because there are other well-established lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender venues in the area.

“Regardless of rebranding ourselves, we still want to remain LGBT-friendly,” Derenoncourt said.

Derenoncourt described the Island Canteen menu as a fusion of Caribbean foods, including some unique entrees, such as a goat burger.

Island Canteen also will have a stationary food trailer at Norfolk Naval Station, Derenoncourt said.

“As of right now, we already got a commitment from them,” he said. “We’re just waiting for the green light.”

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