

How Deep Ellum won over Pecan Lodge

Candace Carlisle
Dallas Business Journal
November 28, 2013

After nearly a year of looking at real estate, Justin and Diane Fourton realized the couple's award-winning barbecue business, Pecan Lodge, needed to move to Deep Ellum.

"The Farmers Market was changing ownership, and we were getting a feel for what else was out there," Justin told the Dallas Business Journal. "This was a new process for us and we were looking all over Dallas and in surrounding suburbs trying to find a place."

Earlier this year, the couple toured Deep Ellum locations with their broker, Steve Ewing of EDGE Realty Partners of Dallas. Ultimately, they liked the character of the neighborhood, Deep Ellum's proximity to downtown, and the property's ability to accommodate the restaurant's numerous smokers.

The 4,850-square-foot restaurant and patio space off Main Street in Deep Ellum gives the Fourtons the ability to help revitalize a Dallas neighborhood, which is something they enjoyed doing at the Farmers Market.

"Part of this decision was about the broader community," Justin told me. "We have fond memories of Deep Ellum and we wanted to be part of the revitalization."

The Fourtons remember Deep Ellum as a scene in the couple's 20s, with nightclubs, music venues and art galleries.

"It's kind of a personal thing for us to help bring the neighborhood back," Diane told me.

Deep Ellum's history and roots in Dallas culture is one of the selling points of the neighborhood, said Mike Geisler, a partner at Dallas-based Venture Commercial, which is marketing developer Scott Rohrman's properties.

"Deep Ellum was Dallas' best urban experience and goes the farthest back; we don't have a lot of that anymore, but that's what more people want today," Geisler told me.

Rohrman's company, 42 Real Estate, owns the most commercial real estate in Deep Ellum, and he's planning a massive redevelopment with the help of a number of other property owners -- such as Westdale Real Estate Investment and Management and Madison Partners Properties.

"We are working with other property owners, and it's really been a community effort," Rohrman told me. "Before now, there was so many fragmented owners it wasn't worth the while to get everyone on the same page, but that's changed."

Pecan Lodge is already planning foodie collaborations with new-to-the-neighborhood BrainDead Brewing and pizza restaurant Cane Rosso, which would showcase the award-winning barbecue.

The Fourtons say they hope to be open in mid to late spring.

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