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HD Time out to fight addiction
BY Eunice Quek
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Broth to close next month for chef-owner Steven Hansen to deal with alcohol addiction

Australian restaurant Broth was one of the first few restaurants to open in Duxton Hill in 2001, way before the area became a dining destination.

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After a 13-year run, its last day of operations is on Sept 28.

Broth, short for Bar Restaurant On The Hill, is not closing because of the usual manpower or rental woes that have plagued the food and beverage industry. Its Adelaide-born chef-owner Steven Hansen, 42, tells Life! he is battling alcohol addiction and "needs a time-out" for a few months.

He says: "It's easy for me to say I'm closing because of the lack of staff and increase in foreign worker levy. But to be brutally honest, I have an alcohol addiction. I don't want to hide anymore and I want to help others who may be like me. I can be strong and I am okay to talk about it.

"The addiction crept up over the last few years and I'm now like a diabetic running the lollipop shop. I need to remove myself from the equation."

With a month left to the restaurant's closure, diners can still enjoy signature dishes such as baby spinach and portobello mushroom salad with raspberry vinaigrette and crispy shallots; and lamb loin in a green coat with fine beans, rosemary potatoes and mint jus.

Next month's menu will also feature specials from the restaurant's history, including smoked kangaroo pappardelle with virgin olive oil, pine nuts, currants and parmesan; and prune, cognac and honey parfait.

Diners can also buy Australian wines such as Henschke Hill of Grace 1997 and Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 1996. And if the wine should run out, says Mr Hansen, he will offer free corkage to diners.

He started his culinary journey at the age of 15, dropping out of high school when he was offered a position to work at the restaurant where he had been washing dishes. He then travelled to work in Hong Kong, the Bahamas and Mauritius, before coming to Singapore to work at the then Westin Stamford's restaurant, Compass Rose.

His move to set up the 76-seat Broth came after the hotel sent him for what he calls a "life-changing" training course. It motivated him to run his own business.

He recalls Broth being "the only restaurant in a 200m radius that was down a dark alley" - a stark contrast from the buzzing area today.

He also ran modern Australian restaurant River Cafe at Robertson Quay from 2004 to 2007, but closed it as the business was "too much to handle" for the self-confessed "control freak".

He also started doing catering in 2004 and will continue doing so after Broth closes.

One thing he will not do is sell the **business** as he is "too attached" to the **brand**. But he has already **sold** the 1,600 sq ft space to a new F&B operator, whom he declines to reveal.

After his break, he will work as a restaurant consultant and hopes to open a pop-up concept. "I could reopen Broth as a non-alcoholic bar, but we are not meant to be a mocktail restaurant. Perhaps I'll do a healthy cafe selling juice and coffee instead."

A reminder for him to sober up was his father's death in 2005. His father, a cellar hand at Australian **wine** producer Penfolds, died of pancreatic cancer and was also an alcoholic.

Mr Hansen, who has a partner, has three brothers - two in the aviation industry and another a lemon farmer. His mother, 71, is a housewife.

He is on a mission for a fresh start. Calling the interview "therapy" for him, he says: "I should look sad but, actually, I'm quite happy."

"The standard reaction from customers is they are sad. But I want them to be happy for me and say, "Congratulations.""

euniceq@sph.com.sg

Broth at 21 Duxton Hill closes on Sept 28. It opens from noon to 2.30pm, 6.30 to 10.30pm, Monday to Saturday, and is closed on Sunday. Call 6323-3353 or go to www.broth.com.sg.

ART	Adelaide-born Steven Hansen (above) is unlikely to reopen Broth, but plans to open a pop-up concept. -- ST PHOTO: AZIZ HUSSIN
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