

FALL TRACKING

Suzukiya Ramen Officially Heading to East Bayside

by Adam H. Callaghan | @AHCcallaghan | Aug 27, 2014, 6:57am EDT

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229 Congress Street, Portland, next to OTTO Pizza's East End location. | Photo: Adam H. Callaghan

Stop me if you've heard this one before: [There's a Japanese noodle bar in planning at newly-renovated 229 Congress Street](#). Early this month, word spread of three things: A man named Cory Suzuki and his father were involved; they had signed a lease; and they were aiming for an October opening.

One catch: They hadn't signed the lease. That just happened yesterday, as it turns out. **Suzukiya Ramen** is on its way to the East End.

Cory got in touch to clarify details of the venture. He said his father, **Katsuaki Suzuki** from Hokkaido, Japan, "is the brains (and chef) behind the operation."

I'm not quite sure when he got the idea to open a ramen noodle shop, but for as long as I can remember he has been making noodles. It wasn't until several years ago that he started talking about leaving his job as executive producer for Fujisankei Communications International and opening a restaurant. I honestly wasn't sure he'd actually do it just because he had been working the same job since I was born so I just couldn't imagine him doing something else. I am so glad I was wrong. It is great to see him working on something with so much enthusiasm and passion.

Cory, who grew up in Jackson, NJ, said the business name is Suzukiya LLC and the restaurant will be called Suzukiya Ramen. The Suzukis are still hoping to open sometime in October with a "very casual" sit-down atmosphere as well as take-out service. Cory described his interior design plan as a blend of Maine farm culture and Japanese culture: "Think of an old Maine barn meeting traditional Japanese architecture...a simple, rustic, and fluid space."

This in turn reflects Cory's own experience on Maine farms, which began when he arrived to apprentice at **Merrifield Farm in Cornish** in 2010. A six-month agreement stretched into three years, "the most memorable and fulfilling experience of [his] life" under bosses Molly Nelson and John Pease.

It was there that he met his girlfriend, another apprentice named **Hannah Brilliant**, and last year the couple founded their own small vegetable operation, **Mossbraker Farm in Pittsfield**. Cory looked on the bright side as he explained that things didn't work out with the landlords: "Right around that time was when my dad told me he planned to move to Maine to open his noodle shop. I offered to take some time away from farming to help him get it all started."

With his background, Cory "absolutely" plans to source most of the ingredients locally for his father's cooking. "I've just begun the process of finding farms who will be able to provide us with the vegetables and meat we need." He admitted the biggest challenge so far has been finding wheat flour to use for the noodles.



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that we need to maintain the biggest challenge is the best thing there is to do for the noodles themselves, since many types do not work well for ramen noodles. They've had a measure of success with local flour, though, and are hopeful they'll be able to find a good, reliable source.

The wall space of the restaurant will be decorated with art from Maine. Cory said he hopes to exhibit the work of several new artists each month, giving local artists a chance to get their names out there and customers "an exciting reason (in addition to the delicious noodles) to keep coming back." Keep coming back to this space for updates as the noodle bar develops, and share thoughts in the comments section.

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