

'EACH MENU ITEM HAS A STORY' AT THIS RESTAURANT

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Storytelling is an important part of a new downtown Georgetown restaurant.

The Berwick opened in November and is the second instalment of owner Mike Murphy's Georgetown offerings.

The first instalment, Southpaw Café, named both for Murphy's left-handedness and its location in south Georgetown, while The Berwick's story ties Georgetown history to Murphy's.



Mike Murphy photo

Opened in November, The Berwick is owner Mike Murphy's second venture in Georgetown, the first being the Southpaw Café.

"George Kennedy had a house on the corner he called Berwick Hall named after his mother," Murphy said. "The Murphys are from Cork in Ireland, and in the middle of Cork is a fountain called Berwick Fountain."

Formerly employed advertising and marketing around the world, from London, to New York, to Warsaw and Frankfurt, Murphy said storytelling was an important part of his restaurants.

"Each menu item has a story, it has to have a reason," Murphy said.

Whether it's a locally-sourced ingredient that inspired the dish, or a recipe learned in his time living abroad, or a creative endeavour of the chef, each dish tells a story.

"Anyone can put chicken on the menu, but why this chicken?" Murphy said.

A recent project for the Berwick kitchen was the tuna tartar.

A traditional steak tartar is often served with a raw egg cracked on top, but Murphy shied away from mixing raw egg and raw fish.

"We're playing with a mango puree that we'll put in a sphere to look like an egg when it's served," Murphy said.

The Berwick's vegan and vegetarian option also plays with appearances.

"If you're vegan or vegetarian, you'll always get a stir fry," Murphy said. "How do we make something that feels more like a main course?"

The Berwick's answer is a grilled cauliflower steak set on cauliflower puree served with fried florets.

"It's substantial and it resembles what everyone else is getting," Murphy said.

When it comes to changing appearances, The Berwick's décor is also a fresh perspective on a familiar space.

Murphy said he learned a valuable lesson about the value of a name at the café. Originally, he'd stayed open as Schillaci Café and Espresso Bar, named after the former owners affinity for an Italian footballer.

Murphy quickly realized customers who hadn't been fans of the original Schillaci weren't giving the new ownership a chance. After closing and re-branding,

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the newly minted Southpaw Café developed a base of loyal patrons.

Taking over the former Latitudes space, he said a rebrand was in order, having closed the restaurant for minor renovations to add a bar and a lounge area.

"Georgetown needed another place you could go and have a drink," Murphy said.

While patrons will see similarities in the space, Murphy has made The Berwick stand out from the previous incarnation.

The Berwick is located at 99 Main St. S., and is open Wednesdays to Saturday.

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