

Fruitful collaborations between star chef Michael Fojtasek, New Waterloo led to major Fredericksburg project

Albert Hotel set to open this summer with 3 unique restaurants



From left, Michael Fojtasek, Amanda Rockman and Justin Spencer are helming the restaurants at the new Albert Hotel.
JODY HORTON



By Sahar Chhala - Staff Writer, Austin Business Journal
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The relationship between Austin-based hospitality group New Waterloo and chef [Michael Fojtasek](#) began a few years ago over a beer.

Fojtasek and New Waterloo CEO [Bart Knaggs](#) were discussing Butler Pitch & Putt on the porch of Olamaie, the former's acclaimed Southern restaurant.

"He knew that Butler has been a big part of my life and wanted my input on the process of the renewal there," Fojtasek said in an email.

That eventually led to Fojtasek overhauling the Butler Pitch & Putt menu for New Waterloo, which was part of the group that in 2021 reopened the city-owned golf course just south of downtown Austin. Its success paved the way to additional collaboration, including with the Maie Day restaurant Fojtasek opened last year in New Waterloo's South Congress Hotel. Now they're working to open the Albert Hotel in Fredericksburg – which, when it debuts this summer, should elevate the food and lodging scene in the small Hill Country city to a whole new level.

New Waterloo is developing the 110-room hotel, located at 213 East Austin St., and Fojtasek's MaieB Hospitality will helm three restaurants, with help from New Waterloo's [Justin Spencer](#), head of food and beverage, and [Amanda Rockman](#), director of culinary projects.

The Albert Hotel, featuring design by architecture firm Clayton Korte, will also have a bar called the White Elephant. The historic preservation project involves four 19th century buildings, with new construction that holds the guest rooms, a pool, full-service spa and event space.

Fojtasek and MaieB Hospitality recently shared additional details about what can be expected at the restaurants: The Restaurant at Albert Hotel, Junebug's BBQ and The Pharmacy.

The Restaurant at Albert Hotel will use ingredients from surrounding farmers, ranchers, purveyors and artisans with a rotating seasonal menu. Dishes will include items such as a spring salad, rack of lamb with horseradish and a spring mélange with spaetzle. The restaurant and terrace will be 2,500 square feet, with room to seat about 135. It will also have a 400-square-foot dining room with about 20 seats.

Junebug's BBQ, located in the historic Brockmann-Kiehne house on Austin Street, will be a barbecue restaurant helmed by Spencer, a competitive barbecue pitmaster who's racked up accolades at competitions around the country.

The Pharmacy, located on Main Street in the historic Keidel Pharmacy, will be a 1,100-square-foot artisanal market offering breakfast and lunch with hand-made goods, locally sourced treats and gifts. It will also serve house-made pastries and bread, under the direction of Rockman. She was nominated as a James Beard Award semifinalist in 2015 and was the Chicago Tribune's pastry chef of the year in 2012.

There are no lease agreements between the restaurateur and hotelier because of the already close nature of the partnership between the two hospitality groups, according to Fojtasek.

The two companies are still figuring out how many employees will be needed at each restaurant, he added.

Joining forces with New Waterloo means opening more restaurants without absorbing too much cost, MaieB Hospitality CEO Ben Fordham said [last year](#). The company is also looking to expand independently, including with more locations of Little Ola's Biscuits, a small spinoff based on Olamaie's famed biscuits.

Central Texas' hotel scene has been undergoing change, trying to give guests an experience than [extends beyond just a bed](#). Many hoteliers have focused on elevated food and beverage programs to increase revenue and bring more locals into their establishments.

With its many vineyards and breweries, historic downtown and scenic Hill Country location, Fredericksburg is a popular weekend getaway for many Austinites. But the hotel industry has expanded significantly in recent years. Another hotel, The Menagerie, is also expected to open this summer is a renovated historic property at 302 W. Travis St. The hotel, totaling 9,500 square feet across multiple buildings and landscape design by Austin-based Twistleaf, will have room for up to 34 guests, although there are no restaurants planned. The Menagerie is owned by Nicole and Ramzi Al-Rashid.