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Historic building draws new eatery

Triangle Business Journal - by [Amanda Jones Hoyle](#)

RALEIGH – The executive chef of a German restaurant in New York is hanging up his lederhosen as he makes a return to his Tar Heel roots with plans to open an all-American restaurant in downtown Raleigh.

Jake Wolf and his wife, Shannon, have leased the former **Champa Thai Cafe** space on the ground floor of the Capital Club Building at 16 West Martin St. The couple plans to open a restaurant and bar called Capital Club 16 by April.

Jake Wolf, who recently relocated from New York City to the Triangle, traveled the world to fulfill his culinary ambitions after graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. He has cooked in kitchens from Atlanta, to Munich, Germany, and most recently was head chef at Zum Schneider in New York City's East Village.

Wolf says that he and his wife, who worked as a television producer in New York, have been talking for years about returning home to North Carolina and opening their own restaurant. Both husband and wife grew up in the Southern Pines region. Jake Wolf's father, Larry Wolf, was director of tennis at Pinehurst Resort for 14 years.

"We decided to come back to North Carolina to raise our family," Jake Wolf says. "Raleigh seemed like the perfect place to be, especially in downtown." The Wolfs are expecting their first child, a boy, in late January, he says.

"We just decided we are ready to do our own place," he says.

Downtown Raleigh is proving to be a magnet for new restaurants, but not all succeed. In 2009, 24 restaurants and bars opened in downtown Raleigh while 14 closed their doors in the district, according to data from the **Downtown Raleigh Alliance**.

Wolf's Capital Club 16 restaurant, which is unaffiliated with the private **Capital City Club** in the Progress Energy Building on Fayetteville Street, will focus on American foods with a mix of his German specialties, French classics and other European food influences.

He estimates that the average dinner ticket for food and drink per person will be \$20 to \$25. The restaurant will be open for lunch. In addition to several German beers on tap, the bar will offer North Carolina microbrew and craft beers, other American beers and English ales.

The restaurant will be able to seat 45 people inside and 20 people outside, plus there will be a private event room for about 30 people.

The space had been vacant since Champa Thai Cafe closed in fall 2009.

Businessman Tom Hendrickson has owned the 12-story building since 1998. "We're leasing him space to the Capital Club building, and I believe this will help the rest of the building," Hendrickson says. "Good retail often helps office and in this case, getting a classy restaurant with a bar could be appealing to our current and prospective tenants."

Wolf was represented by Eddie Coleman of Coleman & Associates Commercial & Investment Real Estate Services of Raleigh in lease negotiations. Coleman since has taken over the marketing and leasing duties for the rest of the 55,000-square-foot building at the corner of Martin and Salisbury streets. North State Bank currently occupies the top floor of the building. Much of the remaining space is occupied by law firms.

The Capital Club Building is listed on the National Registry of Historic Properties and dates back to the 1930s.

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Steve Wilson

Downtown's Capital Club Building will soon house a new restaurant.

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