



Waterbury, Connecticut

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FROM PHARMACY TO FOOD

Businessman plans Halal Guys franchise

BY KYLE ARNOLD REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

NEW HAVEN — A pharmacist and businessman is adding another notch to his expanding portfolio — a new location of the famous Halal Guys restaurant.

Jack Yeung, of Trumbull, and Southbury pharmacy owner, has purchased a franchise location of the chain at 906 Chapel Street in New Haven. The restaurant is known for its white sauce and chicken dish.

The business was started as a hot dogcart in 1990 by owners Mohamed Abouelenein, 59, and Abdelbaset Elsayed. After two years they switched the product to halal-certified food for Muslim taxi drivers that needed a quick stop for lunch.

The popularity of the restaurant exploded among more than just taxi drivers, and they opened their first brick-and-mortar location in the East Village in New York City in 2014, according to company history. Since then, the chain has continued to grow to over 200 locations worldwide and more planned.

Yeung, 36, said he chose the location in New Haven because it's a "foodie town."



Jack Yeung, Trumbull resident and Southbury pharmacy owner, has purchased a location in New Haven for the famous and quickly expanding Halal Guys chain.



"This is a great spot," he said, "There's a lot of great restaurants here, lot of diverse food and people are very open minded here."

The location — which will employ roughly 30 employees and seat about 50 — now has only part of a ceiling and floor but the space, when finished, will have glossy red tiles covering parts of the walls and an open kitchen adorned with chrome appliances and fixtures.

Yeung said he has plans to purchase a lease for another location in Stamford.

According to the Halal Guy's website, there is a five- to 10-unit commitment, a minimum deposit of \$1 million and a minimum total net worth of \$2 million to purchase a franchise.

Yeung also owns Reliant pharmacy in Southbury, Main Street Pharmacy in Danbury and Relion Pharmacy in the Bronx. He attended St. John's pharmacy school which he graduated from in 2005. His wife, Jenah Yeung, is also trained as a pharmacist and works at the Southbury location.

"I am a pharmacist by trade, but I think I'm a business person at heart," Yeung said.

He said his transition from pharmacy to food is entangled in nostalgia. Throughout high school Yeung said he frequented the stands, long lines and all, and has been a fan ever since. He said his history with the restaurant and the apparent success of the chain worldwide made the decision to take a stake in it easy.

Although there is no specific date set, Yeung said he hopes to open the New Haven location in late August or early September.

The storefront is under heavy renovations because of the transition from its previous, nonfood related tenant, Radio Shack.

In addition to his other businesses, Yeung also owns The Panic Room in Norwalk, which is an entertainment activity where groups of six to 10 people attempt to escape from a room by solving the crime or mystery that has occurred there. Whoever completes the challenge the quickest gets bragging rights.