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New Haven Register

Halal Guys opening a restaurant on New Haven's Chapel Street



Mary O'Leary - New Haven Register Window at 906 Chapel St., New Haven, is covered with a sign for The Halal Guys, which is coming in September.

By Mary O'Leary

June 6, 2016

NEW HAVEN >> Hello, Halal.

The popular Halal Guys, which began as a food cart in New York City 25 years ago, will open a restaurant on Chapel Street this fall.

Jack Yeung, a Trumbull resident and pharmacist, has a franchise for the Halal Guys, famous for its chicken dish with rice and its famed “white sauce.”

The business began [as a hot dog cart in 1990](#), run by Mohamed Abouelenein, Ahmed Elsaka and Abdelbaset Elsayed, but they switched two years later to offering a halal-certified meal for the Muslim taxi drivers who needed a quick lunch or dinner while working.

The popularity of the Middle Eastern food spread [to a much wider clientele](#), with long lines at its five cart locations in New York, according to the New York Daily News..

The founders opened their first brick and mortar restaurant only two years ago in the East Village in New York City and they have since opened franchises in California, Chicago and New Jersey with [hundreds more franchises in the works](#).

Yeung said he chose New Haven because the “city is a food mecca.”

“I’m confident Halal Guys will be well-received by the people of New Haven,” he said.

The restaurant, unlike the cart, will offer fresh toppings, said Yeung. He said the chicken is never frozen and is cooked to order after being marinated over night.

Yeung, who owns pharmacies in Southbury, Danbury and one in the Bronx, said the New Haven plan is already getting positive feedback.

He hopes to open the 906 Chapel St. location in September as the college students start arriving. Radio Shack was the last tenant at that space.

Yeung said the restaurant will seat about 50 people and he expects to hire more than 30 workers.

It initially will be open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., but once it gets established, officials hope to welcome people after the bars close by staying open to 2 a.m. or 3 a.m.

He said food preparation follows strict halal rules. No alcohol will be served, in keeping with the Muslim tradition.

The [biggest seller](#) is a combo platter that has chicken and rice over salad with pita.

In addition to being a working pharmacist, Yeung said he also recently opened The Panic Room in Norwalk.

It is an entertainment activity where groups of six to 10 people try to solve the crime or mystery that Yeung and his two other partners have invented as having taken place in that space.

There are clues that move the story along and you get an hour to solve it. There are no prizes, just bragging rights, [The Hour reported](#).