



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pine Grove Hall Sets Open Date
online order | curbside pickup & beer/wine/cocktails takeout
opens
Thursday, June 25, 2020

PINE GROVE MILLS, Pa.---Opening a new restaurant/entertainment venue is always a daunting undertaking—a from-the-ground-up project where every piece, from suppliers to menus to seating to staffing and point of sale systems, as well as a bevy of other details large and small, need to be carefully, accurately figured out.

Now consider the challenges of opening a people-centered establishment when the whole world is—unthinkably—on hold because of a global pandemic.

“Yes, we were thrown a little off course,” said Pine Grove Hall owner Liz Grove with a laugh. “We redid our business plan, oh I don’t know, six or seven times?”

“Pine Grove Hall” is the new identity of the former Old Oak Tavern in Pine Grove Mills, owned until last year by Kathy Herr and her late husband, Steve Herr. Grove finalized the purchase of the building and the liquor license in July 2019 with a still developing vision for a grown-up restaurant/bar/live music venue.

After hiring Mark Johnson, the founding chef of the Elk Creek Café in Millheim as a consultant for the food side and Jess Glick of J. Rose Bartending as a consultant on the beverage side, Grove got to work immediately assembling a team of local artisans and craftspeople to reinvigorate the historic building physically.

And one by one, the “right people” showed up, said Grove. Serendipity was at work.

An important side note: Grove’s background is NOT in hospitality; she spent 20 years in New York City as an executive vice president at an independent record company before returning to the Centre Region in 2001 to assist in the family real estate business. Her background in music (she’s the keyboardist for “Cone of Silence,” a local band with a dedicated following that assembled in 2012) meant that the vision for the new venue had to have a state-of-the-art sound system. A place where, she explained, musicians would love to play and people would love to hear musicians—*of all types*—gig on a regular basis.

The initial plan to was to have Pine Grove Hall up and running by May 2020; but effective mid-March as state-mandated changes came down regarding the quarantine and businesses temporarily closed, all progress stopped, explained Grove.

“We had to pivot,” said Grove. “How would we open a new restaurant that was focused on live music, great ambiance and great food and translate that into takeout? We just had to sit with this for a while.”

During the weeks of quarantine, the vision slowly began to come together again.

Her team now included Shane Orndorf, former chef at Shy Bear Brewing Company in Lewistown, Tory Glossner, formerly of RE Farm Café, Karen Caswell Sapia, formerly of Zola and Carnegie House, and Jess Glick who transitioned from consultant to beverage manager. They would do everything and anything that needed to be done to get back on track.

“And now, we’re ready,” said Grove.

Regular weekly hours will be Thursday through Sunday with online ordering and curbside pickup scheduled between 4pm and 7pm. Their menu will change on a weekly basis as chefs Orndorf and Glossner establish relationships with local farmers.

The opening week menu features North African-inspired dishes, including a harissa rubbed pork from Spring Mills-based Soggy Fleece Farm and an Urfa chili pasta from Fasta Pasta. Part of the ongoing mission at Pine Grove Hall is to source more than 90 percent of their ingredients within a 50-mile radius.

“Supporting our local farmers is a priority,” says Grove.

Tentatively, the plan is to have dine-in capability by reservation by mid-July, explained Grove, who added that the dine-in option will initially operate at 50 percent capacity for the health and safety of both team members and guests.

Live music will start as soon as possible, including the option to stream shows via a newly installed high-definition multi-camera video system.

Visit www.pinegrovehall.com for menu and ordering information and to sign up for the weekly flyer. Email is info@pinegrovehall.com and phone is 814.954.5419.

You can also follow PGH on Facebook and Instagram @pinegrovehall.

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Pine Grove Hall Team

Liz Grove, owner
Shane Orndorf, chef of operations
Tory Glossner, chef de cuisine
Karen Caswell Sapia, front of house manager
Jess Glick, beverage manager
Steve Christensen, engineer & sound
Chris Younken, film & livestreaming

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