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Monsoon hits Babylon

15 m ago By Erica Marcus



It's another bank job for the Bohlsen Restaurant Group. A few towns west of its flagship [Tellers Chophouse](#), which is located in a stately former First National Bank of Islip, brothers Michael and Kurt Bohlsen have renovated the former Bank of Babylon to house their newest venture. Monsoon Asian Kitchen and Lounge opens tonight.

The building looks fiscally conservative from the outside, but the 9,500-square-foot interior has been transformed into a swanky two-level eatery that can accommodate 200 diners.

Michael Wilson, a veteran of two other Bohlsen properties, [Verace](#) in Islip and [Prime](#) in Huntington, runs the kitchen at Monsoon. He and the group's corporate, chef Cornelius Gallagher, have created a menu that pays tribute to four Asian cuisines — Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Vietnamese. The 50-item lineup is concise, but manages to cover the Pacific waterfront with sushi (the inevitable Monsoon roll, \$19, features lobster, spicy tuna, avocado and jalapeño), dim sum, cold appetizers (e.g. Vietnamese summer rolls, \$9), hot appetizers (skirt steak yakitori, \$8), noodles and rice (pad Thai, \$12) and mains ranging from miso-glazed black cod (\$24) to the Vietnamese classic shaking beef (\$29).

Wilson and Gallagher have also turned their attention to such Chinese American classics as chow mein and General Tso's chicken with the goal of elevating it. "We're going with stuff that's recognizable," Wilson said, "but we want to make it the best you've ever had. The General Tso's chicken we make with thigh meat that's dredged in potato starch before being fried. For our pork

fried rice, we braise pork shoulder, pull it into shreds, and stir-fry it with jasmine rice.”

Monsoon’s wine list, curated by Bohlsen beverage boss Paolo Villela, offers about 100 wines, including six on tap, seven by the glass and 11 half bottles. Also on offer: signature cocktails, beer and eight sakes.

For now, Monsoon is open for dinner 7 days a week, but lunch and a dim-sum brunch are in the offing.

[Monsoon Asian Kitchen and Lounge](#) is at 48 Deer Park Ave., Babylon, 631-587-4400.

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