

Mets' Cohen enlists former state budget director for casino plan

TABLE HOPPING

# Stacks replacing Wired in Colonie, and HoJo's goes sushi

Also, Colonie-based Hinny Hard Cider wins festival awards, and The Tailored Tea is for sale



Steve Barnes

July 31, 2023 | Updated: Aug. 1, 2023 7:02 a.m.

Gift this article



1 of 9

The cafe space in a Pioneer Bank building on Albany-Shaker Road in Colonie that has been home since 2017 to Wired Coffee & Bagel will be taken over in late summer or early fall by the area's fourth location of Stacks Espresso Bar. Wired will close on Aug. 12.

Jim Margalus / Times Union

Show More

In the latest roundup of food and restaurant news:

**Stacks Espresso Bar**, which only last week held the grand opening for its third location, on Third Street in downtown Troy, has already signed a lease for another and hopes to open by early September.

It is taking over the **Wired Coffee & Bagel** space on the back side of the Pioneer Bank building at 652 Albany-Shaker Road in Colonie, near Wolf Road.

The final day of business for Wired, which opened in 2017, will be Saturday, Aug. 12, said owner Matt Michele. The Wired in the Roosevelt building in Saratoga Spa State Park, owned by Michele's brother, remains open.

Michele said closing the cafe would give him time to focus on roasting and wholesaling Wired's coffee, though he said he is open to the possibility of another Wired in a different location.

As for Stacks, "It doesn't make good business sense to open two cafes within a couple of months of each other — it really doesn't — but the opportunity was too good," said Sue Dunckel, CEO and executive chef of Stacks. She said the company does its banking with Pioneer, and when the bank approached Stacks about using the Albany-Shaker Road location as its first suburban cafe, "It was perfect for how we're trying to grow the company," said Dunckel, who merged her Troy-based bakery, Sweet Sue's, with Stacks in 2021 and became CEO last year.

Among the enticements was the kitchen in the Wired space, which comes fully equipped, including with appliance service to be paid for by Pioneer before Stacks opens, Dunckel said. It will also be the largest and most professionally outfitted Stacks kitchen so far, especially compared with the original on Albany's Lark Street and the satellite on Broadway in downtown Albany. The Stacks that opened last week is at 13 Third St., home for almost 20 years until last fall to *Spill'n the Beans Coffeehouse & Bistro*.

A liquor license is being applied for in Troy, Dunckel said, and, depending on how that is received by customers, the coffee-and-cocktail approach may be expanded to Colonie as well.

Projected hours for the Albany Shaker Road Stacks are 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. Dunckel said that the lease doesn't begin until Sept. 1, and although she hopes the turnaround could be quick, the opening may not be until closer to mid-September.

Through Aug. 12, Wired will be open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekends.

Also, the iconically orange-roofed building on Canada Street in Lake George Village, which was home for nearly 70 years to what became the last remaining **Howard Johnson's restaurant** in the nation before closing in March 2022, is being taken over by **Sushi Wa**, an all-you-can-eat sushi and hibachi restaurant founded in Fort Edward in December 2021.

An employee said Monday that an opening by the end of August is projected, depending on permits and other paperwork. The menu will be the same as in Fort Edward, the employee said.

Next, **Hinny Hard Seltzer**, a company based on Wolf Road in Colonie that has quietly been growing since the release of its first product at the beginning of this year, won three awards at Seltzerland, a hard-seltzer festival in Brooklyn that is one of nine such promotions held nationally. The more than 1,500 attendees voted Hinny's as Best Hard Seltzer, Overall Favorite and Best On-Site Experience, according to Seltzerland's awards page.

Hinny's six flavors, available in beverage centers, convenience stores and restaurants across New York, include blueberry-mint, black cherry, bourbon, cranberry, pink grapefruit and grape. Their alcohol content is 5.2 percent ABV, slightly higher than most national brands, which are 4.5 percent to 5 percent. Retail prices for Hinny Hard Seltzer seem to run \$18 to \$21 for a 12-pack of 12-ounce cans.

Hinny's majority owner, with three partners, is Tim Nickels, a former U.S. Army captain and retired New York City police officer who more recently was a partner in the Menands-based wine distributor DNT Express.

Nickels said the company's mascot, which looks like donkey in red high-top sneakers, is a hinny, the offspring of a male horse and female donkey. (The more common mule is the product of a male donkey and a mare.) Nickels said, as a veteran, he liked the idea of using the Army's mule mascot, which he discovered is trademarked, but the hinny offered similarly amusing and eye-catching illustrative opportunities that could be themed, including with a basketball, hockey stick and jersey and holiday wreath, all focused on the animal's hindquarters.

The mascot's name is Clyde, after the Finger Lakes village where DNT Express has a warehouse and Nickels has a home. The number on Clyde's sneakers, 99, is Nickels' house number in Clyde, he said.

Finally, **The Tailored Tea**, open in Latham since 2012, is for sale. Owner Jared Bafaro, who was the restaurant's chef until buying it from founder Annie Misir in 2015, said on Facebook that he wants to sell because of health problems. He writes, "Will entertain any reasonable offer," adding, "We have parties booked through the rest of the year and people asking about next year as well." The note mentions that Bafaro's recipes will be included in the sale.

Located at 1010 Troy Schenectady Road, The Tailored Tea is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday, closed Monday and Tuesday.

## Sign up for the Table Hopping newsletter

Get a taste of the Capital Region delivered to your inbox each week.

Enter your email


By signing up, you agree to our Terms of Use and acknowledge that your information will be used as described in our Privacy Policy.



Written By Steve Barnes

Reach Steve on

Steve Barnes has worked at the Times Union since 1996, served as arts editor for six years, and since 2005 has been a senior writer. He generally covers restaurants, food and the arts, and is the Times Union's restaurant columnist and theater critic. Steve was also a journalism instructor at the University at Albany for 12 years. You can reach him at [sbarnes@timesunion.com](mailto:sbarnes@timesunion.com) or 518-454-5489.



**TABLE HOPPING**  
Eat, drink and be candid with Times Union Senior Writer Steve Barnes. Want even more? Sign up for the Table Hopping newsletter. »

### MOST POPULAR

1. Ortiz brothers suspended for riding infractions
2. Rensselaer County's priciest restaurant opens this week
3. Albany middle school counselor and youth sports worker arrested
4. Central Ave. Ocean State Job Lot to close next week
5. Castle-like home goes up for sale in Ballston Lake for \$1.9 million