



Palate Pleasers: Changes to the Café in Wake Forest Biotech Place Add Variety

An age-old mantra of business is that the customer is always right. That includes when the customer wants something new.

In 2017, Food and Nutrition Services of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center conducted a research study and customer survey of all the people who work in Wake Forest Innovation Quarter about what they would like in a café.

And the people spoke.

"We had a really good response from the survey," says Joanne Kelly, who is the Food Service Director for Wake Forest Baptist. "What we primarily heard is that people wanted variety and wellness items from the café."

And the people were heard.

What resulted is Chef's Palette, a re-imagined café located on the ground floor of Wake Forest Biotech Place, replacing Brioche Dorée.

"There's a wide variety of people who work in the Innovation Quarter," Kelly says. "From students to scientists, plus people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, and that requires variety in flavors and food types."

The Café (Formerly Known as Brioche Dorée)

Ever since Wake Forest Biotech Place opened in the Innovation Quarter, the Food Service Department of Wake Forest Baptist ran a café on its ground floor. For four years, that café was a franchise location of the French bakery café brand Brioche Dorée.

As a franchisee, there were limitations to the Brioche Dorée café. The menu was fixed and the business model was designed more for places like airports, targeting customers who were just passing through.

"Our café needs to support people who work here every day and eat at the café regularly," says Kelly. "And people wanted more variety."

Introducing Chef's Palette

To meet the needs of the workforce in the Innovation Quarter, the Food Service Department came up with a brand featuring a wide-ranging menu that could be managed in-house and cater to the variety that customers were craving.

In November, the re-vamped café reopened as Chef's Palette, a unique restaurant that offers a menu with a theme that changes each month. And choices, lots of choices.

"Everything is made fresh," says Kelly. "You can get better quality food choices at competitive prices."



At Chef's Palette, a weekly salad or sandwich option is always available for those who like standard fare, but the variety comes from a rotating set of meal concepts or themes. One month, customers can enjoy the "Burrito" concept, featuring build-your-own Mexican bowls, salads or wraps with a variety of fixings. Then there's "Marinara," where customers choose their own meats, vegetables and sauces for made-to-order pastas.

Other concepts that Chef's Palette will rotate through include Asian fare, burgers, BBQ and hand-crafted sandwiches.

The Chef's Palette café also features vegetarian and gluten-free choices, a wider range of grab-and-go items for customers who need a quick bite and healthier options for those tracking what they eat. And, of course, everything is made fresh to order.

As feedback comes in from customers, items will be changed and added. Parts of the menu are already being altered.

"We're also working on developing options like combo meals and pick-two options," says Kelly. "Those changes are on the horizon."

Feeling Fresh

Without brand restrictions, Chef's Palette can offer greater variety in the menu, as well as the ability to change, which keeps the menu fresh.

After all, that's what the people want.

**Chef's Palette is a concept
created in partnership with**
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