

Can Can to Kick in Carytown

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In the heyday of the Moulin Rouge, Toulouse-Lautrec famously used to shout: “Life is beautiful; here comes the cancan.”

A coming-soon bistro promises to celebrate the energy and excitement of that dance, if not its

debauchery.

The way Chris Ripp sees it, a warm yellow glow and the inimitable smell of fresh pastries is decidedly Carytown. And what emanates from his new restaurant there will simultaneously stir senses and call people to commune, he says.

In the flair of 19th-century France, Can Can is scheduled to open sometime in late October or early November. The 140-seat brasserie will occupy the enormous 10,000-square-foot space at the east end of Cary Court, former home of Tiffany’s bridal shop.

Chef Ripp and his wife, Kathy, came up with the brasserie concept after spending time in Paris and in New York’s Soho and Village districts. Outfitted in authentic French style, the restaurant will serve a host of moderately priced entrees and feature nearly 150 affordable French wines and champagne, Ripp says, adding: “The presentation may be closer to Acacia but the prices more like Galaxy Diner.”

Three private dining rooms will be available and a full bakery and pastry kitchen will take up 1,800 square feet in the back of the space. The bar will seat 14, offer oysters at one end, champagne and martinis at the other — and stay open until 2 a.m.

Can Can is Ripp’s first restaurant venture on his own, he says, though he’s grown up in the business. His family owns Vie de France at the James Center, Havana ’59 and area Arby’s outlets. He downplays the connection: “This is not about the Ripp family, not about me as a chef,” he says. “It’s all about Richmond, all about Carytown and what the neighborhood needs.” — *Brandon Walters*



Letters to the editor may be sent to: letters@styleweekly.com