



And like that, Red Arrow's new outdoor porch is ready for the return of restaurant dining

Tuesday, May 19, 2020 Carol Robidoux



A new outdoor porch big enough for six socially-distanced picnic tables decked out in Red Arrow checkerboard style. Photo/Carol Robidoux

MANCHESTER, NH — There's something brewing at the Red Arrow Diner on Lowell Street besides coffee.

A new outdoor seating area that stretches the length of the diner is ready for customers, says Jayme Lemay, General Manager.

Now you can eat your Smokey Pig Breakfast Bowl with a mug of bacon while enjoying the sunshine and fresh air.

"At first we were a little skeptical about it, but once we saw it, it's pretty amazing," Lemay said. "He really did a great job."

He is a reference to Brian Lawrence, brother of Carol Lawrence, the woman behind the city's most iconic eatery. The wood structure supports a sloping green vinyl topper, which appears to snap on. There are four tables under the enclosed area and two more out in the sunshine.

"It's almost ready," Lemay said. "We're going to have a fence around it here, and umbrellas are on the way for these two tables."



A fence will be set up where the parking lot meets the asphalt, enclosing the outdoor dining area, including the two picnic tables that are not under the awning. Photo/Carol Robidoux

Diners wishing to sit and eat rather than grab and go can enter the diner and place their order, and let servers know they're sticking around. Food will be served on the porch.

The picnic tables should provide about the same space – if not more – than the existing indoor tables, which is a win for eateries like the Red Arrow, where counter seating is the most popular option. During the state's Stay Home 2.0 order indoor dining has been off-limits, but there was a return to outdoor dining on May 18. Restaurants are looking forward to the next phase which should include indoor dining at a reduced capacity.

The new rules of engagement – or lack thereof – has encouraged restaurant owners like Lawrence to get creative with use of available space.

“It went up like magic,” said a man named Charlie who was admiring the construction from across the street. He said he watched it go up.

“It took like two days. And look how nice and straight it is,” he said. “This is going to be nice.”

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