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Sousa to take on Station Street hot dogs

Pittsburgh Business Times by Tim Schooley, Reporter

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Tim Schooley
Reporter - *Pittsburgh Business Times*
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Now that he's fully established [Salt of the Earth](#) in Garfield into one of the city's best restaurants, [Kevin Sousa](#) is already to move on his third new restaurant the East End while his second slow cooks into place as well.

As he works to open his [Union Pig & Chicken](#) barbecue restaurant on Highland Avenue near Broad Street, Sousa has also leased the Station Street Hot Dog restaurant in East Liberty behind Target, expecting to bring his high-quality approach to the American culinary basic, the hot dog.

Expect a similar approach to the hot dog that can be found in the tacos at Yo Rita's on East Carson Street, said Sousa, of the South Side restaurant he consults with that features tacos with such nontraditional ingredients as swordfish, duck breast and crispy eggplant.

A basic hot dog will always be a given there as well, he added, noting that a good hot dog is a staple part of his own diet.

"Every place I go, every time I travel, I eat a hot dog somewhere," said Sousa.

He expects to open in the next month or so, operating out of a fully established restaurant that was only fully renovated a few years ago by the property's owners, Bob and Ruth Tortorete.

Sousa is working with minority partners that include his brother [Tom Sousa](#) and [Jason Fanelli](#), who works as a designer and web designer for his other restaurants.

Look for not only a high-quality natural beef hot dog sourced from Michigan at the new Station Street Hot Dog, a business that dates back to the early 20th century, but also Asian-style hot dogs with kim chi, vegetarian dogs, and a high-end chili cheese dog made with smoked brisket from Union Pig and Chicken and cheese from Arsenal curds, made in Lawrenceville.

Expecting to establish a liquor license for the new place as well as offer soft-serve ice cream, Sousa was persuaded to move forward with another new place so quickly because he fell in love with the space and the restaurant was fully operational and ready to go.

"I was introduced to the space through a friend and I fell in love with it and I felt it would be a waste to not take advantage of the opportunity," he said.

Representing the owners of the restaurant property, [Terri Sokoloff](#), a principal of Ross-based **Specialty Group**, a restaurant services firm, said the restaurant offers ample space and could provide Sousa the opportunity to use the kitchen there as a production facility as well as operate a restaurant there.

She said the leasing of the space to Sousa represented a happy ending for the Tortorettes, who went to significant expense to renovate the restaurant and struggled to succeed in it in a difficult economy before Target had opened.

"He really, appreciated what the Tortorettes had attempted to do. He really got it," she said of Sousa. "He's a very creative talent in the city and I think he's going to put his signature on it."

Tim Schooley covers retail, real estate, small business, hospitality and media. Contact him at tschooley@bizjournals.com or (412) 208-3826.