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From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

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## **New sandwich shop to take the former Union Pig & Chicken space in East Liberty**

Aug 20, 2018, 11:49am EDT **Updated: Aug 20, 2018, 3:47pm EDT**

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All things pork will remain an essential ingredient when a new restaurant opens at 220 N. Highland Ave. in the former Union Pig & Chicken space in East Liberty.

In September, a restaurant that bills itself as "Pittsburgh's First Pig House" will open.

It's called Porked, which launched with a small location in Lincoln Place last year as a sandwich shop that makes broad use of bacon and other forms of pork for menu items that include a BLT featuring a half pound of bacon, a bacon gyro and a "three little piggies" sandwich of bacon, ham and hot sausage.

Yet in an East End that continues to experience a profusion of new barbecue restaurants, owner [Natalie Bobak](#) is quick to

emphasize what Porked is not.

"We're not a barbecue place," said Bobak, emphasizing that Porked's menu isn't cornered into emphasizing any one style of cooking. "What happens is you have to pick a style or a way to cook all of the food."

"And we don't want that," she added, of the flexible approach that comes with Porked.

As she and her partner Tony Molnar work to adapt the restaurant space, which featured two barbecue restaurants before it, Bobak said the goal is to open the new East Liberty Porked in early September.

It's a bigger restaurant on which they hope to build upon the growing popularity of the original, a 12-seat restaurant in a quiet neighborhood that succeeded quickly enough to move into a new 2,200-square-foot operation with almost 50 seats.

Bobak said the restaurant quickly benefited from positive press and hopes to keep expanding Porked.



TIM SCHOOLEY

Porked owners Natalie Bobak and Tony Molnar at the new location on 220 N. Highland Ave. in East Liberty.

"Our thought was we wanted to be a community-based sandwich shop with really great food. But it ended up being a lot bigger than that really quickly," said Boback. "I think people in East Liberty will love it because it's different from what's over there now."

Terri Sokoloff, a principal of Specialty Group, who represented Porked in the deal, said the energy and cleanliness of the Lincoln Place Porked stood out to her and she expects it will be a good fit in bringing a specialized food offering to a growing East Liberty.

**Tim Schooley**

Reporter

*Pittsburgh Business Times*

