

Their move: Queen & Rook, game cafe, coming to South Street

by Michael Klein, Updated: June 17, 2019

Edward Garcia was at a bachelor party at an ax-throwing venue in Montreal several years ago when he and his friends struck up a conversation with the owners, who were fans of Dungeons & Dragons, the board game. After the ax games, they steered the revelers down the street to [Randolph's](#), a bar and cafe where folks can play a collection of board games.

"It was something I hadn't felt before," Garcia said. "Everyone was laughing, having a good time, and everybody was focused on each other. We sat down, they showed us a couple of games, and we played games that we knew. We ended up staying two or three hours."

Garcia, who works in finance for the Philadelphia Commerce Department, said he couldn't stop thinking about the idea of setting one up in Philadelphia.

Late this summer, he and his partner, Jeannie Wong, backed by a group of investors, plan to do just that — opening Queen & Rook Game Cafe in the site formerly occupied for decades by Hikaru

restaurant at 607 S. Second St., just off South Street, in the Queen Village neighborhood. Joe Scarpone of MPN Retail brokered the deal.

Game cafes, which balance a family-friendliness with a late-night grown-up scene, seem to be a good match for residential neighborhoods — witness the recent openings of Thirsty Dice in Francisville and Basement Board Game Cafe in Roxborough.

Queen & Rook will have a library of more than 1,000 new and vintage board games overseen by workers known as gamekeepers, a retail section, a food menu, and a full liquor license. As part of the family-friendly vibe, kids under 12 can play for free and there will be a kids' menu. (The couple has kids ages 9 and 6.)

Queen and Rook will also have a reservable private room for corporate events, parties, community meetings, and gaming groups.

Wong, who works in project management for nonprofits and has been a vegetarian for 25 years, will oversee the food, which will have a healthier approach. In addition to the usual nachos, mozzarella sticks, and fries, the cafe will serve vegan sliders, a vegan cheese plate, salads, and gluten-free options.

They're going for daily operation — 11 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday.



MICHAEL KLEIN / STAFF



Posted: June 17, 2019 - 9:25 AM

Michael Klein | [@phillyinsider](#) | mklein@inquirer.com