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Kimchi-stuffed dates and more modern Korean small plates coming to Gaji downtown



Whole allium-stuffed loup de mer with a glazed skin of Red Boat fish sauce caramel and pineapple fish sauce. (Cathy Chaplin / For The

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By Cathy Chaplin

Modern Korean restaurant Gaji is set to open downtown this month

JUNE 4, 2014, 10:30 AM

aji, serving contemporary Korean cuisine, is the latest restaurant to join downtown's bustling 7th Street dining corridor that includes Bottega Louie, SugarFish and Mo-Chica, among others. A small plates-focused dinner menu is set to launch by the end of June, with brunch, "express service" lunch and late-night offerings following soon after. Gaji, which means "tree branch" in Korean, is "an ode to nature, a respite from the

concrete jungle that surrounds it," explains chef Minh Phan, formerly of Hollywood's Beachwood Café and the pop-up Mignardises at the Farmer's Kitchen. An eye toward balance and calm is reflected throughout the restaurant, from the ambience

to service to the menu. The 1,500-square-foot, 60-seat space was designed by owner Linda Shin using a palette of natural hues, clean lines and modern materials. Patio seating will be added later this summer.

Expect bright, surprising combinations of flavors, such as dates stuffed with kimchi.

Chef Phan's "old soul, new food" ethos brings an inspired take on Asian comfort food.

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"We put a modern, fun spin on kimchi," Phan says. Bautista Family honey dates are stuffed with kimchi "made by a grandma in Orange County" and paired with house-made apple-mustard, fresh grated Granny Smiths topped with kimchi vinaigrette and wild mustard flowers.



Additional small plates include furikake-molasses cornbread served with togarashi creme fraiche butter and duck rillettes with a ginger-satsuma marmalade. Generously portioned "big plates" include rice ravioli filled with beef cheeks in a pho broth, as well as a whole allium-stuffed loup de mer with a glazed skin of Red Boat fish sauce caramel.

Gaji, 523 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, (213) 243-0780.



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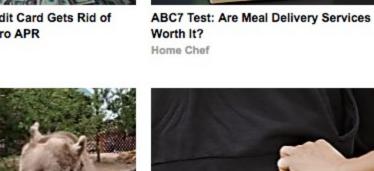


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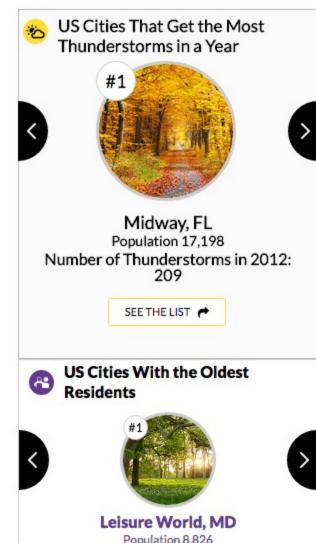
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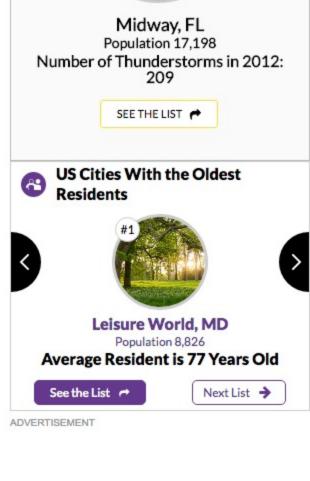
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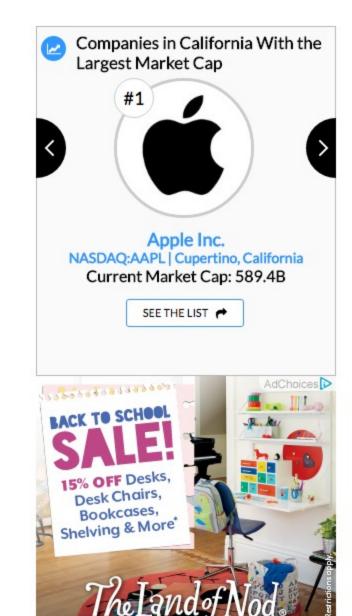
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By Michael Schaub

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