

Familiar Name Takes Over Chicago's First Cider Bar in North Center

The ex-owner of Bohemian House will open Cobblestone either Thursday or Friday

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When the Northman, the city's first bar dedicated to hard cider, [closed earlier this month](#), co-owner Aaron Zacharias said cider fans would be happy with the new owners of the business. It turns out that former owner of [Bohemian House](#), Dr. Markus Chwajol, is taking over the North Center spot. Chwajol will rechristen the space as [Cobblestone](#), and open the restaurant as early as Thursday night, but most likely on Friday.

"We want a wonderful, friendly, and exciting, vibrant community restaurant where people know they can meet and receive a great meal," Chwajol said. "They can bring their children in as well."

Chwajol, a neurosurgeon, has been looking for a space for Cobblestone for about a year. He's excited to open in North Center, a neighborhood that he feels is more community oriented compared to Bohemian House's River North touristy surroundings. BoHo was an acclaimed restaurant that brought Central European cuisine with an American twist into the spotlight in River North. It lasted four years [before closing in October 2018](#); the space is now [Flora Fauna](#).

"I think the location, the building, the actual space and what was done so far is even more conducive to creating this kind of vibe compared to Bohemian House," Chwajol said.

The ciders will stay, as Chwajol said he'll keep much of the Northman's former staff, including its cider director. He wants cider fans to feel welcome, to know Cobblestone is still their bar. Cobblestone is a chance to expand the cider fanbase by introducing the beverage to fans of the elevated Czech, German, Hungarian, and Austrian cuisine that Bohemian House served. In addition to the ciders, Cobblestone will add more beer from local and specialty European brewers.

The new food menu won't launch until the summer. Eventually, expect 20 to 30 new menu items. Many of the Northman's favorites, like the fish and chips, will remain at least in the interim. Chwajol will announce Cobblestone's chef when the new menu is ready.

Chwajol plans incremental changes for the space. He wants to make the exteriors feel more like Old World Europe. He custom-ordered a three-faced clock with bells [from a designer in South Carolina](#). After the large clock arrives in six to eight weeks, workers will hang the piece above the main doors. Chwajol said the Cobblestone's corner space is ripe with possibilities, and he wants to give the exteriors an "almost Medieval"

feel. Staff are also building new sidewalk and rear patio spaces. The layout of dining area, which seats 86, will remain the same.

Bohemian House helped launch [Bellemore](#) chef Jimmy Papadopoulos's career. He earned [Eater Chicago's Chef of the Year in 2015](#) before moving on to West Loop. The comparisons are inevitable, and Chwajol acknowledges there will be some similarities with the menu, but he hopes Cobblestone will carve out its own identity.

"I am very happy to be back — as you know, hospitality is my passion," he said.

Cobblestone, 4337 N. Lincoln Avenue, scheduled to open Thursday or Friday night; will be open from 5 p.m. to midnight on weekdays; 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. on weekends.