



VEGAN AND GLUTEN-FREE CHOCOLATE DONUTS

PHOTO BY ALEX MOON

# Celestial Vibe

**SUNDIAL** WILL FEATURE GLUTEN-FREE VEGETARIAN BREAKFASTS AND LUNCH By Amy Schneider

**A**lex Moon has worked in the restaurant industry for 20 years, but it only recently occurred to her that she could open up her own place. “It’s a relatively new idea for me,” she says.

Moon, who currently works at Belly Taqueria, launched a Kickstarter in February to raise funds to open Sundial Café and Bakery. The gluten-free, vegetarian breakfast and lunch spot doesn’t have a home location yet, but it does have \$12,000 of Kickstarter-raised money to back it up. Moon hopes to open sometime between July and October, depending on when she finds a space to set up shop.

Until then, Moon regularly posts food porn of her own making to Sundial’s Facebook page: For National Donut Day, she featured her gluten-free, vegan chocolate chip-banana-strawberry donuts. Other future dishes include blueberry coffeecake crumb muffins, Spanish-style baked eggs with goat cheese and cilantro and incredibly sweet, sorbet-like coconut mango balls.

Moon says she grew up in New Mexico and Southern California, and she learned to love food from her grandmother, who was her primary caregiver. “She made breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week,” Moon says. “She was always in the kitchen, and I was always interested in what she was doing.”

While working at Morning Glory Café, Moon says, the vegetarian fare inspired her. “Morning Glory Café was probably the most positive environment that I’ve ever worked in,” she says. “There’s just something magical that happens when you feed people really good food and they



SOUTHWEST SALAD

get excited about what you’re doing.”

Moon says she is an on-and-off vegetarian, and she’s been gluten-free ever since she removed gluten from her diet as part of a cleanse. Six weeks into the cleanse, she says, “I got a dose of gluten by accident, and within 20 minutes I was really, really sick.”

She’s been completely off gluten ever since, she says, and it’s helped diminish her joint pain. Moon says she’s excited to serve healthy food and organic produce at her restaurant.

She’s hoping to land her restaurant somewhere in downtown Eugene, south Eugene or the Whiteaker neighborhood, she says, adding that those locations seem most accommodating to a vegetarian restaurant. She’s looking for a place that can seat 50, ideally with a patio area that can seat 20. “Even though our patio season is short, I want people to come outside in the summer,” she says.

Inside décor might feature air plants in hanging containers, she says, adding that the restaurant will have “somewhat of a celestial vibe.” Her partner thought of the name “sundial,” Moon says, and she thinks it’s appropriate, given her own celestial name.

Sundial Café’s menu will offer a range of breakfast foods, from egg dishes for savory fans to waffles and pancakes for fans of sweet dishes. Other future menu items include biscuits and gravy, Asian-style soups, breakfast cocktails, fresh-squeezed juices and smoothies.

Moon says both Josh Alderson of Morning Glory Café and Brendan Mahaney of Belly have advised and supported her in her endeavor to open her own restaurant, and some close friends of hers have stepped up to help out.

For now, Moon can’t start until she finds a place, but she says she’s excited for that moment to come, and she’s appreciative of all the donors on Kickstarter who helped fund her dream. “I think this town is really ready for a restaurant like this, focused on all gluten-free products,” Moon says. “I was so happy that people came through for me.” ■

*Check out Sundial Café and Bakery’s Facebook page for updates.*