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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Reo Varnado, the long-time Portland chef and barbecue lover, is reopening his Reo's Ribs restaurant in the Hollywood district, moving into the iconic old Hollywood Burger Bar at the intersection of Northeast 42nd Avenue and Sandy Boulevard.

Barbecue Never Tasted Sweeter

Local chef re-opens at iconic location

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Reo Varnado, uncle of hip-hop legend Snoop Dogg and long-time Portland chef and barbecue lover, has reopened the doors to his popular rib shack at an iconic new location in northeast Portland.

Formerly home to the Hollywood Burger Bar for over 61 years, Varnado and his business partner Myra Girod, have announced plans to make the historic North-

east 42nd and Sandy site the new home for Reo's Ribs.

Varnado said the building's unique architecture and beloved location called out to him to focus on the future and not the past as he makes a fourth move to position his business as a staple in Portland's restaurant scene.

With an end-of-October opening date, there's not much time to spare.

While he has glowing praise for his barbecue favorites and sides, he has no plans of leaving burgers off the new menu at the historic burger bar

"We're going to have grits, eggs, bacon,

ham, and Mississippi sausage, omelettes, hash browns, hushpuppies, greens, yams, sweet potato, okra, banana pudding cakes, and peach cobbler," Varnado said. "I'm taking them back all the way to the root, with gumbo of course, but we're going to have the best smoked or grilled burgers you ever had, too."

Reo's critically acclaimed ribs have pleased more than just Snoop Dogg, who Varnado occasionally cooks and caters for privately.

In 2005, food writers Michael and Jane Stern wrote up Reo's in Gourmet Magazine, and foodies have long reviewed the

Reo's barbecue sauce as being more sweet than spicy, and despite the struggle for a permanent location, loyal customers say online they're eager for the new restaurant to open up.

"I know we gone make new friends here," said Varnado. "And I want people to come and know we're giving our best to the neighborhood."

Varnado shared that over the past decade that he and his business partner have struggled to find the perfect restaurant site in the Portland metro area.

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