

A bestselling author's burger joint is the latest NC addition to the JoCo food hall

By Juli Leonard

Morgan Street Food Hall opens in Downtown Raleigh

The Morgan Street Food Hall is one of downtown Raleigh's most anticipated projects. The food hall opens with nearly 20 small food vendors and two bars. The Morgan Street Food Hall is one of downtown Raleigh's most anticipated projects. The food hall opens with nearly 20 small food vendors and two bars. By [Juli Leonard](#)

In a kind of delicious inevitability, if you're going to call yourself an interstate food hall, there must be a burger joint.

For that, the future Old North State Food Hall in Selma looked to a Rocky Mount favorite.

[Barley & Burger](#) will open its second location within the upcoming Johnston County food hall along Interstate 95, planning to come to life this year in the former JR's Cigars warehouse. The two-year-old burger shop is owned by husband and wife Brandon Clarke and Etaf Rum and partner Travis Ellis.

The Old North State Food Hall is owned by Selma developer AdVenture Development and will open this year with 10 new food vendors. The project will be managed by Double Barley Brewing owner Larry Lane.

"We were approached by Larry about joining the food hall and thought it would be a great representation of North Carolina," Rum said in a phone interview. "(With our burgers) we bring local flavors, simplicity and passion and thought it would be perfect right on the interstate."

Movie-themed hamburgers

Barley & Burger lends a movie theme to its burger menu: the Rocky Balboa is a burger classic with American cheese, lettuce, tomato, onions, pickles and a special sauce, the Ghostbuster gets some heat from ghost pepper cheese and fried jalapenos and the Marty McFly, Barley & Burger's take on the Carolina Burger, has chili, slaw, American cheese and mustard.

For its food hall location, co-owner Rum said the menu will be slightly abbreviated for the space, possibly six burger offerings instead of 10. They also hope to serve wings and hot dogs, as well as sides like waffle fries, onion rings and sweet potato fries.

Etaf Rum book cover_fitted.jpeg

"A Woman is No Man" is Etaf Rum's debut novel about three generations of Palestinian-American women living in Brooklyn. Harper Collins

Rum is an unconventional restaurateur in that burgers are just a side hustle. The Brooklyn-born Palestinian-American has found even more success in her day job as a writer, [with her debut novel, "A Woman is No Man,"](#) becoming a New York Times bestseller when published last year. She also runs the popular Instagram account [Books & Beans](#) and in October opened a coffeeshop/bookstore of the same name in the Rocky Mount Mill development.

"It was a lifelong dream of my husband's to have a burger restaurant," Rum said. "A coffee shop was my dream."

Now they have both, with a second Barley & Burger location on the way.

Barbecue, coffee and hamburgers

The burger joint joins Old North State's two previously announced vendors, the [Redneck BBQ Lab](#) and [Boulevard East](#), each a Johnston County business. With Rocky Mount's Barley & Burger, Lane has so far drawn on vendors near the food hall's site in Selma.

"Etaf, Travis Ellis and Brandon Clarke have created a special burger and equally special customer experience in their restaurant and we are thrilled to have them bring both as our hamburger vendor," Lane said in a news release. "Their passion for preparing high quality, simple and authentic food and great customer service is perfectly aligned with our vision for the food hall."

Lane said that interior work on the food hall will begin at the end of the month, with plans to open the food hall in late spring or early summer of 2020.



Johnston County's Redneck BBQ Lab will be the first tenant to sign on with the new Old North State Food Hall in Selma. Juli Leonard jlleonard@newsobserver.com



OLD NORTH STATE FOOD HALL
SELMA, N.C.

INTERIOR VIEW
AUGUST 07, 2019
PAGE 4



The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95. AdVenture Development



North Carolina author Etaf Rum. Angela Blankenship

Larry Lane, owner of Double Barley Brewing in Smithfield, will run the future Old North State Food Hall, opening next year in the former JR's Cigars outlet in Selma.

Larry Lane, owner of Double Barley Brewing in Smithfield, will run the future Old North State Food Hall, opening next year in the former JR's Cigars outlet in Selma. jdjackson@newsobserver.com Drew Jackson

Johnston County's Redneck BBQ Lab will be the first tenant to sign on with the new Old North State Food Hall in Selma.

Johnston County's Redneck BBQ Lab will be the first tenant to sign on with the new Old North State Food Hall in Selma. [Juli Leonard \[jleonard@newsobserver.com\]\(mailto:JuliLeonard@newsobserver.com\)](mailto:JuliLeonard@newsobserver.com)

The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95.

The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95. AdVenture Development



1 of 4

The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95. AdVenture Development



Drew Jackson writes about restaurants and dining for The News & Observer and The Herald-Sun, covering the food scene in the Triangle and North Carolina.