

## San Francisco Chronicle

### Cafe Des Amis opening as economy warms up

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Ladies and gentlemen, the signage for **Cafe Des Amis** (2000 Union St.) has been erected, the facade has been painted, and the stoves are at the ready.

More than four years in the making, the French-inspired brasserie at Union and Buchanan will finally become a reality in the next few weeks. For **Bacchus Management** - the restaurant group also behind **Spruce** and the **Village Pub**, among others - it's the end of a long road that's involved all kinds of curveballs, from the economy to Americans With Disabilities Act regulations to fire damage discoveries.

But, in retrospect, the delays might have been blessings in disguise.

"Had we opened when we were supposed to, in the second quarter of 2007, we would have been hit by the economy," says chef-partner **Gordon Drysdale**. "But now we're arriving right when things are picking up,"

The staff includes former **Florio** chef **Ed Carew** as executive chef, who will be backed up by former **Conduit** exec **Justin Deering** and former **Quince** sous **Jared Sippel**.

With Carew leading the way, the kitchen is pulling out the full French playbook, celebrating both high and low French cuisine. The menu will be long - upward of 40 items - with something for everyone, from seldom-seen roulade de tête de veau and snail ragout to brasserie staples French onion soup and roast chicken.

On the beverage side, Bacchus' **Andrew Green** and former **A16** sommelier **Skye LaTorre** have created a lengthy list of lesser-known French wines and the full range of beer styles, including sour beers. Naturally, the cocktail list will focus on pastis.

And let's not forget the waitstaff, with a few seasoned vets from the ill-fated **Postrio**. It's a move that, when it comes to the feel of the restaurant, might be the most telling.

"I'm excited at the possibility of a restaurant that fills the loss of Postrio," Drysdale muses. "I think we can do that."