

DINING

New restaurant with tapas, pizza, meatballs, empanadas opens in distillery with cigar bar



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A new restaurant that includes a distillery and cigar bar has finally opened after about a year of delays.

21st Amendment Distillery opened on 13th Avenue in downtown Vero Beach, in the building that formerly housed the Ironside Press. The name is a nod to the 21st Amendment that repealed Prohibition.

The restaurant's menu features shareable food and tapas-like items that people can eat while having a conversation, such as a charcuterie board (\$14-\$24), meatballs (\$19), empanadas (\$13) and homemade pimento cheese dip (\$8).

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The pizzas (\$13) have been the most popular menu item. All-natural, preservative-free tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese means there's no oil floating on top.

"Our pizzas are good," said owner Jeff Palleschi. "It's like a real Italian pizza."

Another menu highlight is the bologna sliders (\$12), which are a nod to the 1920s. The two sliders are made with fried bologna, American cheese, kettle chips, hot mustard and mayonnaise.

"Bologna was big back then," Palleschi said. "We were knocking on the door of the Depression."

Palleschi had expected to open late last year, but pushed that to this April or May, then pushed it again to this Sept. 4. It took almost a year for Indian River County to issue the

building permit he requested in May 2022.

It's the second distillery to open in Indian River County, but it's the only one of the two to offer food, especially a full menu. Indian River Distillery opened in March on the northeast corner of Aviation Boulevard and Airport Drive, west of the Vero Beach Regional Airport, in a building that also houses Flat Dog Diner, which is set to close this month.

The restaurant has been successful so far, with food sales making up nearly a quarter of all sales, Palleschi said. The menu will change as the restaurant becomes more established — starting simple, but getting more complex.

“Things are going to evolve,” he said. “For right now, our theory is simple, fresh ingredients that people can share.”

The chef is his nephew, E.J. Palleschi, who was supposed to be the distiller, but a family emergency forced him to miss too much training.

Palleschi, who moved to Vero Beach about 13 years ago, said he hopes his distillery will spark more activity in downtown Vero Beach, the way Sailfish Brewing Co. did in downtown Fort Pierce.

21st Amendment Distillery

Address: 2055 13th Ave., Vero Beach

Hours: 4-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 4-11 p.m. Friday; noon to 11 p.m. Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday

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