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Lauren Halligan / Reporter / Saratogian Business

## Made to Order: Spa City chef's new kitchen in shipping container

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. >> Chef Julia Sanzen was thrilled Thursday when her custom kitchen arrived from Canada.

The kitchen, inside a steel shipping container, traveled hundreds of miles by tractor trailer before being installed in its new permanent home at 35 Maple Ave. in downtown Saratoga Springs.

PHOTOS: FARMERS HARDWARE IN SARATOGA SPRINGS

This kitchen will be the heart of new eatery Farmers Hardware, a fast-casual breakfast and brunch spot to be opened in mid-June by cofounders Sanzen and Tyler Russell.

The Maple Avenue location, a large three-story brick building most recently used as a bike shop and a garden store, doesn't have a kitchen or the capacity to house one, Sanzen said. "So we literally thought outside the box by building a custom, commercial kitchen inside of a steel shipping container."

This one-of-a-kind kitchen was manufactured by Venture Food Trucks in Ontario.

Once it was delivered on Thursday, a crane lifted and placed the structure adjacent to the north side of the building, outside on the property.

When the restaurant opens next month, Sanzen will be spending a lot of time inside the shipping container, cooking for her customers.

The best part of having a shipping container built specifically for Farmers Hardware, "It's totally customized to my needs," Sanzen said.

A Spa City native, Sanzen lived in New York City for the last decade, during which she cooked alongside celebrity chefs Rocco DiSpirito and Jean-Georges Vongerichten in New York City.

Upon her return upstate, Sanzen noticed how the local restaurant scene has grown, but after analyzing it, Sanzen and Russell decided that breakfast and brunch spots were highly needed — especially one with sensible prices and lots of seating.

At Farmers Hardware, Sanzen's first restaurant, she hopes to bring a fresh and innovative culinary style back to her hometown of Saratoga Springs.

"The menu really is classic, traditional dishes, with my own creative, unique twists," she said.

Her menu will include both healthy and indulgent high quality dishes, from acai bowls to stuffed french toast, along with a variety of market sides. "It's a really good balance," Sanzen said.

Meals will range in price from about \$10 to \$14.

With quick counter service, the idea is that customers won't have to wait long for fine-casual breakfast, lunch or beverages.

The brunch hall concept is modeled after the open and airy American food halls like Boston's Quincy Market or Union Market in Washington D.C.

Farmers Hardware, originally built in 1925 as a warehouse to the Broadway store of the same name, will have the ability to accommodate more than 100 diners comfortably at large communal tables on its three floors and in the sunny courtyard.

Much of the furniture and industrial decor are made by Russell, a Lake George native who owns and operates a reclaimed lumber business called StoriedBoards.

The founders hope to attract all types of guests — including students, residents, visitors and people who work in the area — in a lively community gathering setting.

When it opens, Farmers Hardware's hours will be 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

Once established, Farmers Hardware will add a happy hour with specialty drinks and a limited menu.

In addition to daily brunch, Farmers Hardware will have a third-floor special event space available that can seat about 40 people. Sanzen envisions, parties, showers and corporate events in this location.



**The kitchen of Farmers Hardware being put in place by a crane.**

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