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Parker's Great British Institution's Pork Pie



By Tracey Drury – Senior Reporter, Buffalo Business First
Jun 14, 2024

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After months of teasing social media posts, it's official: Parker's Great British Institution is back in business with new owners and a new manufacturing site in Cheektowaga.

Co-owners Michelle Potter and Emma Reynolds will begin taking orders to ship direct to customers at month's end for the company's famous sausage rolls, pork pies and steak and ale pie, using the same recipes.

The next step will include a retail component, with a long-term goal of adding a fish-and-chips shop like the one previously available on South Park Avenue in Buffalo.

But first, Potter and Reynolds said, they need to make sure they get everything just right for the 25 products thousands of Parker's Great British Institution fans have been clamoring for ever since the company announced its return on social media earlier this year.

"We're working so hard to kept things as they were, because it was so successful. That's what people want and what people love," Potter said. "We purchased a business with a massive customer base. The previous owners worked really hard to keep awesome relationships with their customers. What we don't want to do is open the floodgates and have a ton of orders come in and not be able to manage them."



Michelle Potter and Emma Reynolds, new owners of Parker's Great British Institution

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That's why the partners have kept the new location - a 15,000-square-foot space leased space at 495 Aero Drive - a secret until now, to avoid having people knocking on the doors to buy the traditional English treats they've missed since the company closed its doors in late 2022.

Founded in 2009 as the English Pork Pie Co. by husband-wife team Damian and Vicky Parker, the [business rebranded](#) in 2015. The Parkers initially said they would move the business closer to Manhattan when they sold the South Park Avenue factory last year to

a Cleveland-based auto dealer, who [bought the seven-acre property](#) across from the Tesla plant for \$5.48 million.

Potter and Reynolds got to know the Parkers through an international women's social group that includes lots of British ex-pats living in the Buffalo area. They heard the Parkers might be interested in selling the business. Both were huge fans of the menu and knew others missed it too.

“We all live in East Aurora, our kids go to school together, and they were retiring,” Reynolds said. “We'd been to the pub and bought fish and chips and loved it. I wanted to do something like that when I came here and thought, it's a shame someone else is already doing it. As it turned out, right place, right time. We said, yep, let's do this, and here we are.”



Parker's Great British Institution's Melton Mowbray Pork Pies.

JOED VIERA

They borrowed \$300,000 from the Erie County Industrial Development Agency through their woman-owned Great British Pantry LLC to help fund business startup and renovations.

Though neither has a background in food production, they have been coached and trained during the process by the Parkers, as well as eight of the original staff members who have chosen to return to the company.

Reynolds brings a background in social media marketing and web development to the venture, while Potter ran a business offering private music lessons.

The majority of products on the 25-item menu will be made in-house, with a few items imported from Britain, including Bakewell tarts and English bacon. They are determined to make sure returning customers get what they remember.

“With the excitement building, people are definitely keen,” Reynolds said. “We want to keep everyone happy.”

The partners have also kept the name and branding and hope to do right by the company’s legacy.

“There was obviously a big bond with people and their customers,” Potter said. “We’ve also been really clear that nothing is changing, other than the people who own it.”

In other food and drink news:

- Stephen Development has opened a new commercial kitchen at 8580 Main St. in Clarence. The **Clarence Creative Kitchen** will serve as a full-serve, shared commercial kitchen providing commissary space for food prep businesses, caterers, bakers and food trucks.
- **Yolo Restaurant & Lounge** is shifting to a new concept at 5841 Transit Road in Amherst. After Yolo closes June 29, owners Justin and Robert Bingel will make menu changes, cocktail changes and complete some interior work before reopening in August as the rebranded Duke’s Tavern. The shift comes three years after the brothers completed [a renovation at the 13-year-old site](#). The pair also operate Two Nines on Wehrle Drive.

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