

THE STRAITS TIMES

Four new F&B outlets in Beach Road



An artist's rendering of South Beach Quarter. The two-storey building was an armoury in colonial days. PHOTO: MASSIVE COLLECTIVE

🕒 PUBLISHED JUL 17, 2015, 5:00 AM SGT

Historic armoury building, part of the new South Beach development, will house a restaurant, a cocktail bar, a gastrobar and a nightclub

Melissa Kok Nightlife Correspondent

Home-grown lifestyle group Massive Collective is set to open four new food and beverage places in a historic building in Beach Road in September.

The prominent nightlife operator will be opening Vatos Urban Tacos, a popular Korean-Mexican restaurant brand originating from South Korea; a cocktail bar named Vanity; a gastropub named The Armoury and a new boutique nightclub. They will be housed in a 13,000 sq ft, two-storey conserved building called South Beach Quarter.

The building was an armoury in colonial days. South Beach Quarter is part of a bigger mixed commercial and residential development called South Beach, a joint venture between City Developments Limited and IOI Group.

The development is made up of four historic buildings in Beach Road, with two new towers featuring offices, luxury residences, a designer hotel, retail spaces and an exclusive membership club.

Speaking to Life about the new development, Massive Collective director Phillip Poon, 37, says the group had been exploring opportunities to open a new nightclub and cocktail bar "for quite a while".

Massive operates nightclub Bang Bang at Pan Pacific Singapore hotel and Empire club lounge at 50 Raffles Place. In March, the group parted ways with another nightlife operator, LifeBrandz. Massive had acted as a consultant for Lifebrandz's outlets in Clarke Quay since 2013.

However, their "working relationship" ended in March, when LifeBrandz was forced to close down all its food and beverage outlets, including nightspots Fenix Room and Aquanova, after a series of business failures and not being able to pay staff their wages.

Mr Poon calls the partnership "a unique situation" which allowed Massive to develop its portfolio and experience as operators, with the successful opening of boutique club Fenix Room.

He says: "We had a clear expansion plan at that point in time and had tabled an offer to continue to grow LifeBrandz.

"However, we were not able to come to a clear decision and when the opportunity to develop South Beach Quarter came about, we decided to embark on that chapter instead."

He declines to say how much has been invested in South Beach Quarter. He says talks to bring the Vatos brand to Singapore began about a year ago, adding that the group visited Seoul and "were impressed with what we experienced".

The Singapore Vatos outpost will be a partnership between Massive Collective and the founders of the taco chain.

Vatos Urban Tacos is influenced by Mexican street tacos in Los Angeles and home-cooked Korean meals, offering dishes such as kimchi fries or tacos with galbi (Korean grilled meat).

Mr Poon says gastropub The Armoury is intended to serve the office crowd in the area, offering items such as breakfast rolls and sandwiches, burgers, alcoholic milkshakes and craft beer.

Heading cocktail bar Vanity will be American bartender Ricky Paiva, who was formerly head barman at Regent Singapore's Manhattan bar.

Mr Poon says he is unable to reveal details about Vanity, but says the bartender will offer "a multi-sensory cocktail experience" in an intimate setting.

While he remains tight-lipped about the concept of the new nightclub, clubgoers here have been dubbing the place the "new Filter", referring to the now defunct members-only nightspot at the Gallery Hotel.

Opened in 2010, Filter was one of the hottest nightspots in town and made Massive Collective famous for pioneering the VIP bottle culture in Singapore, where patrons spent thousands of dollars a night on champagne and premium spirits with VIP table service.

The club, a collaboration between Massive Collective and Emerald Hill Group, closed in 2013 when Massive decided to pursue other ventures.

Keeping the club exclusive, Life understands that the new nightspot at South Beach Quarter's launch will be mentioned only by word-of-mouth and social mobile application Snapchat to the group's client database.

Acknowledging that South Beach Quarter also marks the first time Massive will be launching F&B concepts on its own - the previous ventures were all in collaboration with other operators.

Mr Poon says: "When we started, we decided to collaborate with key partners as we wanted to focus on our key strengths, which was in marketing and promoting to an exclusive and well-travelled customer database.

"Recently, we have made key strides in developing our back-end operations and we feel that the time now is right to embark on our own."