

Times-Herald NEWS

Out of the ashes, Vallejo's Rubio's reopens with new look



Rubio's in Vallejo has now re-opened after a fire damaged the restaurant in April with a new look and new name, **Rubio's Coastal Grill**. Chris Riley — VALLEJO Times-Herald

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To paraphrase many great thinkers throughout history who have noted that problems often hide opportunities, the management of Vallejo's Rubio's restaurant, turned an apparent arson fire into a chance to update the place, general manager Jordan Cohen said.

Badly damaged by a fire in April that appeared to have been intentionally set, the Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill on Plaza Drive reopened Thursday as Rubio's Coastal Grill, Cohen said.

"There's been a complete remodel of the dining room," Cohen said. "It's really nice; major improvements. They took the opportunity to roll out the Rubio's Coastal Grill brand, which focuses on seafood."

New signs reflect the change, he said.

"There are several with the new branding in Southern California, but Vallejo is the first in Northern California," Cohen said. "The company made the decision to take the opportunity to make the change here, is my understanding."

Last year, Rubio's Carmel Mountain Ranch location became the first to be remodeled and renamed Rubio's Coastal Grill, according to a San Diego-area news website.

Carlsbad-based Rubio's Restaurants Inc. plans to redesign and re-brand 60 of its California restaurants as Rubio's Coastal Grill.

Besides the first wave of remodels begun this year and others still expected to happen by year's end, more updates are planned for next year, company officials are saying. There are also plans to open seven new locations by the end of 2015, the story says.

A Vallejo Police Department spokesman said there didn't immediately appear to be any new developments in the investigation into the April fire.

Immediately after the blaze, which was kept in check by the restaurant's sprinkler system, company officials thought the eatery would be closed for a week or two. The re-branding and remodel is what increased the down time, Cohen said.

The store hours and menu remain unchanged, he said.

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