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The new Kema by Kenaki offers playful Japanese



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Shrimp summer rolls stand out at Hello Vietnam!

A HIDDEN INDIAN GEM / COMINGS & GOINGS / A KILLER CROQUE MONSIEUR

DINING

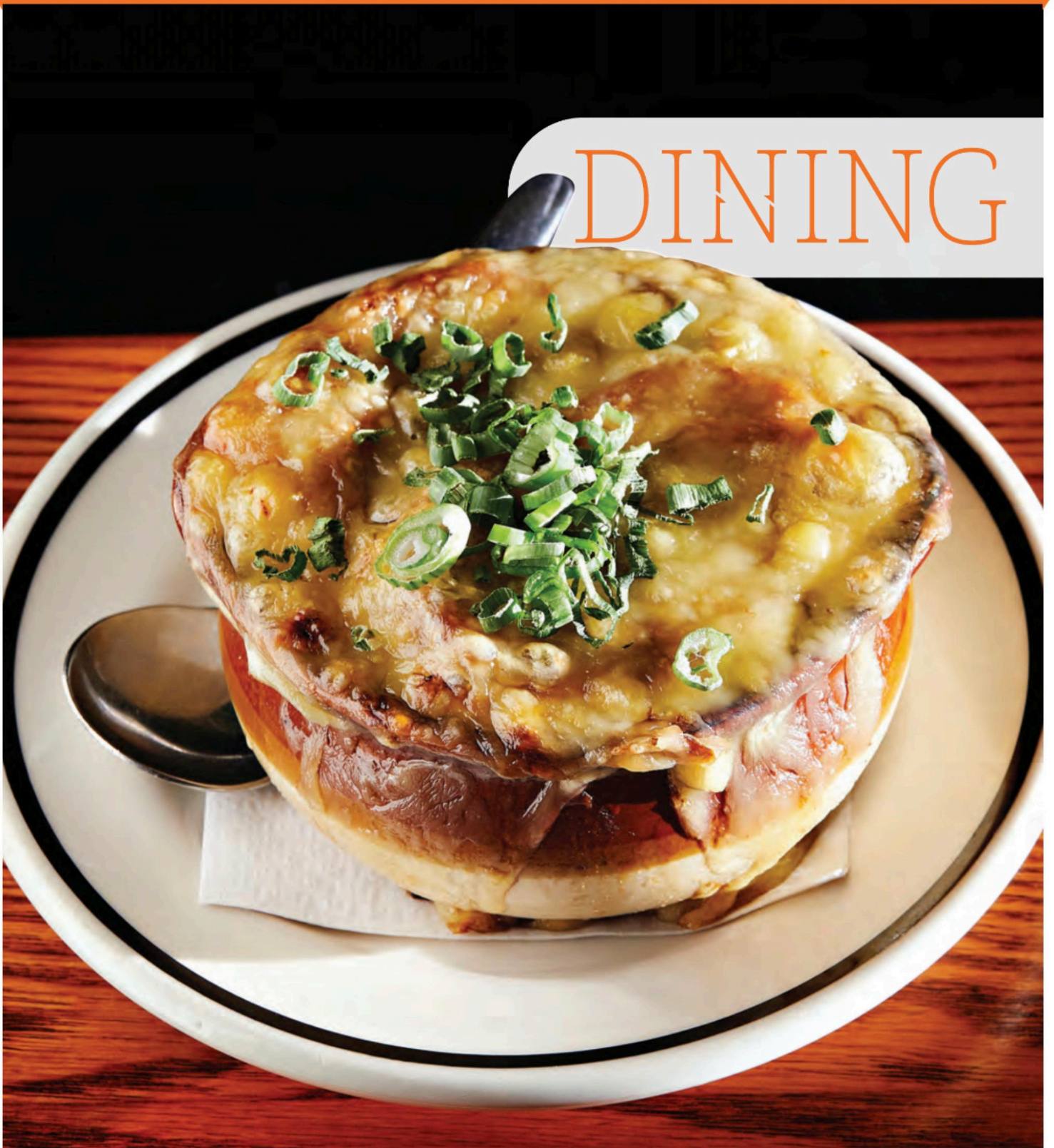


PHOTO BY CHAQUILLE DANIEL; BRENDAN MCCABE

The onion soup gratinée, finished with sherry and Gruyere, is a true standout at Laperaux in Germantown. [PAGE 78](#)

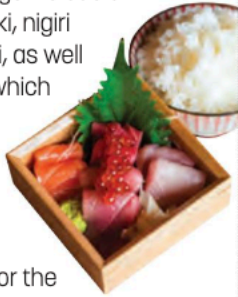
DINING SMALL BITES

BY JACQUELINE MENDELSON



Ken and Aki Ballogdajan, the brother-and-sister duo behind Kenaki Sushi Counter in Gaithersburg and Ako by Kenaki in Capitol Hill, opened a third eatery in Cabin John Village in July. **Kema by Kenaki** is an elevated fast-casual concept: Order at the counter, and you'll be served at your table. The playful Japanese menu features such warm and cold dishes as pork belly buns with hoisin-ginger barbecue sauce, and a crisp arugula, orange and watermelon radish salad laced with a yuzu-shoyu vinaigrette. Sushi, however, is the main event. Daily offerings include an array of maki, nigiri and sashimi, as well

hand rolls, which quickly become a local favorite. Try the Chunky Spicy Tuna or the Deep Sea, a sublime blend of miso-marinated Chilean sea bass tempura, roasted pineapple, gari, red onion, cilantro and cucumber. Bringing the kids? They'll go gaga over the strawberry and banana parfait, which includes such unexpected touches as Nutella mousse, toasted meringue and cornflakes.



📍 11325 Seven Locks Road (Cabin John Village), Suite 115, Potomac, kemasushi.com



Papri chaat at Guru Groceries and Chaat House

Let's Have a Chaat

Chances are high you've driven past **Guru Groceries and Chaat House** on Old Georgetown Road, but don't let its nondescript exterior fool you—inside lies one of Bethesda's hidden gems. Opened in July 2019 by the husband-and-wife team of Deepak and Madhu Khemka, this grocery/snack shop hybrid is a go-to for stocking up on Indian pantry staples, frozen Indian cuisine and freshly made chaat. Look for imported spices and Indian mangoes, as well as specialty items such as curry leaf trees and fresh mithai come Diwali. Locals are particularly fond of frozen meals, including chicken tikka masala and saag paneer, to heat up at home. Although Chaat House has been closed for sit-down service since the arrival of the pandemic, freshly made fare such as mango lassis, vegetable samosas and lentil fritters are available to go. The Khemkas offer catering as well.

📍 7817 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, facebook.com/gurugroceries



01 **Wiseguy Pizza** opened its fifth regional location at the Westfield Wheaton mall in September.

02 **Zuma** opened in Bethesda in September, featuring an Asian-Latin fusion concept by chef Mitsuhsisa Nishio.

03 **Sushi Damo** closed its doors in Rockville Town Square in October.

04 **Mackie's Barbecue Co.**, a family-owned and -operated business with locations in Frederick and Gaithersburg, expanded to Olney in October.

Pinch of Wisdom

"Whether you're grilling or pan searing, it's essential to let your meat rest to allow the juices to redistribute before slicing. This will prevent your meat from drying out or becoming chewy. A good rule of thumb is to allow the meat to rest for half the time you cooked it."

—COLIN MCCLIMANS, CHEF AND CO-OWNER OF OPAL IN CHEVY CHASE, D.C., AND ELENA JAMES IN CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY CHAQUILLE DANIEL; GURU GROCERIES; GETTY; STAR CHEFS