

Fourth Taste & Sounds of Soul set for downtown

By Tasha Pope
Sentinel-Voice

The Fremont Street Experience is the host site for Las Vegas's Fourth Annual Taste & Sounds of Soul celebration the weekend of February 24 through 26.

This outdoor food festival is held in honor of Black History Month in conjunction with the fourth anniversary of Fitzgeralds Hotel Casino owner Don Barden, the first African-American to own a major gaming property in Las Vegas.

"You can't have a celebration of Black History Month without celebrating our food," said event creator Kimberly Bailey Tureaud of Culturally Diverse Advertising/Media Relations LLC.

The event is staged throughout the multiple-blocks-long, open-space walking and sitting area under the light display canopy attraction downtown where Fitzgeralds is located at 301 Fremont Street at Third Street.

Organizers say the event has grown and will showcase



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over 30 vendors from Las Vegas and Los Angeles who will sell flavorful and interesting food dishes, primarily soul food and traditional Southern-style cuisine.

"Soul food is the only type of food [that offers] ribs, gumbo, catfish, chicken..." Bailey Tureaud explained.

Taste & Sounds of Soul admission is free to the public. This year, the event has been extended to three days from two. It runs from Friday, 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 6:00 p.m.

Gospel and R&B music will be performed by local

artists, and many celebrities are expected to make guest appearances, including, Loretta Devine, and Frankie Beverly and Maze, according to Bailey Tureaud.

"It will be more exciting ...more people, [the event will be] a bigger celebration," Bailey Tureaud said.

New this year will be Los Angeles's Roscoe's House Chicken & Waffles serving their famous signature fried chicken and waffles.

Last year's two-day event drew around 20 food vendors and about 14,000 people attended.

For more information, call 615-8216.

M&M soul food returns

By Tasha Pope
Sentinel-Voice

Known for juicy yet crispy fried chicken and melt in your mouth peach cobbler, M&M soul food is back open here in Las Vegas.

Now revamped and positioned closer to downtown, M&M has resurfaced as more of a Southern-style café than a formal restaurant and is designed to handle a large take-out service. The new location is 3923 W. Charleston Blvd. in the Westgate Shopping Center at Valley View

"Traditionally, most of our facilities in California are this [café] style. It gives it the home feel of what this soul food thing is all about. [The café is] a lot more relaxing and comfortable for the people," owner Tim Gilmore explained. He said there is a long counter with a swivel stools, booths and simple, clean conversational décor.

The restaurant franchise, which originated in Mississippi, began with M&M's namesake Mary Elizabeth Stewart in 1968 when she sold soul food plates to people in her community. She was known as Mississippi Mary. M&M was opened in Los Angeles in 1985 by the family.

There are five restaurants — four in California and one in Las Vegas. Gilmore is now the sole owner of the Las Vegas franchise and has plans to continue his expansion process in the near future.

He said he plans to open franchises in "Arizona, [Washington], D.C., Atlanta," and adds "Mississippi" to the list, where

there is no M&M currently.

M&M's original corporate founder Ventress "Venni Mac" McCallum, brother of Mississippi Mary (Stewart) and Gilmore's partner at the local restaurant's former location on South Jones near Harmon, was shot and killed April 2004 outside McCallum's Ladera Heights home.

His legacy lives on through Gilmore's persistence to make the vision they once shared come to fruition.

"It [the expansion of the M&M's franchise] was something [McCallum] and I discussed and something we wanted to happen — and I'm on a quest to do that, to complete it for him," Gilmore said.

"Soul food restaurants are becoming extinct. [I'm] continuing the [original M&M family] legacy that's been going on for the last 40 years," Gilmore said.

He said he'd like to open one more location in Las Vegas, possibly in a Black-owned casino.

Gilmore has made some changes locally. The café now opens at 7 a.m., seven days a week, and breakfast is served daily.

"We've always had breakfast in California," Gilmore said. "We make corn cakes now, opposed to corn muffins," he added.

He said the pancake-shaped flapjacks are made fresh for each order. Other additions include healthier choices like veggie plates, turkey bacon and turkey links in addition to traditional breakfast meats.

If you would like more information about M&M call (702) 453-7685.

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