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Hotel, restaurant scene thriving in Worcester (Video)

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By Discover Central Massachusetts
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Major hotel and restaurant growth in Worcester is supporting the push to accommodate more group meetings and conventions as well as increasing demand by visitors and employees.

In the past two years alone, 55 new restaurants have received permits to operate in the city, feeding the eclectic tastes of a millennial workforce, burgeoning college population of 40,000 students, and thriving downtown commercial and retail district centered by the nearly-complete \$470 million CitySquare project.

New hotels are popping up as the result of this progress, driven by an overall 75 percent occupancy rate sitting well above the national average of 67.1 percent of year-to-date averages for the U.S, according to Smith Travel Research. The arrivals of the AC Hotel by Marriott and Homewood Suites by Hilton added more density within the last year, bringing the city's hotel stock from seven to nine facilities, and total number of rooms from 745 to more than 1,000.

For newer restaurants to the scene, it's all about catering to the needs of their clients and being equipped to handle future growth.

Basil n' Spice Restaurant, which opened in 2015 at 299 Shrewsbury St. in Worcester, is getting great customer reviews and that only fuels more optimism for owner Bator Lachmann heading into 2018. Currently employing three full-time and five part-time staffers, the Thai restaurant's vision has always been one of homecoming. "We present an elevated Thai dining experience that speaks to the higher expectations that the growth in the city brings," Lachmann said. "We offer an enhanced appreciation to the classic Thai cuisine that people know:"

Basil n' Spice feels ready to handle any influx of new customers or conventions,



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offering private room functions and catering services for a small office party or much larger wedding reception at Mechanics Hall with custom menus.

Opening in 2016 at 281 Main St., [Deadhorse Hill Restaurant](#) with a staff of 25 is already carving out plans for another restaurant titled “Sim Jang” set to open in early 2018. Chef and owner Jared Forman said, “We want to grow with the city and in the direction it needs to go in.” The cafe, which specializes in Southern fried chicken thighs and spaetzli, can currently handle parties as large as 24 for a sit-down dinner or 40 for a standing event with the option to buy out the space for a day or evening.

“Worcester is affordable and has a large and diverse population in and around it,” Forman said about his excitement for the city’s future. “We were especially excited to get in during the start of a new movement and becoming part of the fabric of the city.”

With a growing downtown business-centric population, heads and beds are of critical importance to the city’s continued and long-term development.

As one of Worcester’s newest hotels in 2017, [Homewood Suites by Hilton](#) opened in June with a \$21 million six-story, 118-room, all-suites hotel specializing in extended stays located in Washington Square across the rotary from Union Station. First Bristol Corporation President James J. Karam said the hotel now has about 35 full- and part-time workers, offering patrons a salt water swimming pool, fitness center, and smaller and larger accommodations. Karam ruled out a large convention space or full-service restaurant opting instead for small meeting spaces to handle 75 people. Karam adds that the hotel is perfect for longer term stays, offering full services including grocery delivery, dry cleaning, direct MBTA commuter rail, and breakfast. And bookings for those rooms are filling up fast.

“Everybody is talking about Worcester,” said Karam. “This city knows what it wants.”

[Learn more about Worcester](#) from Discover Central Massachusetts.

Discover Central Massachusetts markets Central Massachusetts as a competitive destination for travel and tourism, conventions, meetings, and events. Worcester, which is located in the center of the region, is the state’s second-largest city, and the second-largest city in New England.

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