



Photo: Kelli Uggali

New Owners Taste Success With a Trio of Local Restaurants

BY RENEE BRINCKS

Ken Donkersloot and Mona Calis own Coastal Roots Hospitality, which includes Rio Grill in Carmel, Montrieo Bistro in Monterey and Tarpys's Roadhouse on Highway 68.

As restaurants navigate an unpredictable year, Ken Donkersloot and Mona Calis are finding success with three Monterey Peninsula mainstays. The new owners of Coastal Roots Hospitality—a refocusing of the previous Downtown Dining brand—took over Rio Grill, Montrieo Bistro and Tarpys's Roadhouse in June.

Donkersloot, who comes from the corporate world, appreciates the chance to grow the brand and create behind-the-scenes operating efficiencies. Calis, who grew up working in her family's restaurant before building a hospitality career, embraces front-of-house operations in Monterey and Carmel.

"This opportunity lets us both work together and do what we enjoy," she says. "We're excited to be settled in this part of California."

While the focus on customer service and culinary excellence hasn't changed, the pair has been introducing new carry-out options, con-

necting team members to professional development opportunities, and scheduling more live music performances. New service offerings beyond the restaurants, like catering and event planning, are in the works for later this year. They also want to expand upon the restaurant group's established philanthropic record, supporting food drives, youth organizations and other Monterey County charities.

Coastal Roots is all about enhancing the overall experience for long-time customers and new guests alike.

"We have strong tourism support because travelers want to go where the locals go, and these restaurants are successful because they have tapped into what locals are looking for. We want to keep it that way," says Donkersloot.

For more restaurant information, please visit CoastalRootsHospitality.com.