



An All-Day Cafe With an Intimate Cocktail Bar in Back Is Opening at Star Metals

The team behind Brush Sushi open Lucky Star on Howell Mill this winter, a casual cafe and bar serving draft cocktails in the front, with an intimate bar pouring drinks all evening in back

by [Beth McKibben](#) May 31, 2023, 5:00pm EDT



Rendering of the Star Metals complex on Howell Mill Road. *Allen Morris Company*

[Momonoki](#) and [Brush Sushi](#) owners chef Jason Liang and John Chen are opening a bar at Star Metals this winter [offering cocktails and cocktail omakases](#), pastries and coffee, and an all-day menu to include Taiwanese fried chicken sandwiches.

Located beside sushi restaurant [Hayakawa](#) at Star Metals, [Lucky Star](#) will be divided into two distinct spaces — an all-day cafe and bar in the front, with an evening cocktail spot pouring drinks in back.

The front portion of Lucky Star will open in the morning for coffee and pastries from baker [ChingYao Wang](#), reminiscent of Liang and Chen's Midtown coffee shop [Momo Cafe](#). It then transitions around 11 a.m. to serving Taiwanese fried chicken sandwiches and street snacks, like deep-fried sweet potato fries with palm seasoning. Look for draft cocktails, a tight list of beer and wine, and a regular happy hour.

The back bar at Lucky Star is meant to be an intimate experience and reservation-only, where people can order everything from Southern takes on cocktails like the New York sour and a shiso gin and tonic to culinary-inspired drinks such as a tomato martini and a mapo tofu cocktail similar to a Ramos Gin Fizz mixed with peppercorn syrup and soy milk. The bar will also offer a nightly cocktail omakase service with food pairings from Liang.

Liang and Chen tapped Atlanta bartender and [Giving Kitchen](#) systems and impact manager Kirk Gibson to oversee the bar program at Lucky Star. Regulars to [the Pinewood](#) in Decatur, [Cardinal](#) at the Beacon in Grant Park, and his Candler Park speakeasy pop-ups with [Eat Me Speak Me](#) are likely familiar with Gibson's cocktail prowess. Gibson recently added certified sommelier to his titles.

“We've been toying with the cocktail omakase idea, as it was something I did with Jeff Banks and Bradford Tolleson at Brush. It allowed us to play with flavors and portions,” Gibson says. “I want the bartenders here to flex that creative muscle and have fun with the drinks. It's what I always loved about the [cocktail] omakase at Brush and looked forward to doing with the cocktails at the Eat Me Speak Me pop-ups.”

Liang says the all-day food menu will be available at both the front and back bars at Lucky Star. This includes three Taiwanese fried chicken sandwich flavors and other Taiwanese-style street snacks. However, the back bar could see some type of caviar service added to the food menu.

“West Midtown was our very first choice for Brush before opening in Decatur, but there wasn't any space available back then,” Liang says of opening at Star Metals. “We've been following what's happening in the area for a while, and this opportunity to do more than just Momo Cafe showed up. That's when we pitched the idea [for Lucky Star] to Kirk to help us create something different than just another coffee shop.”

Lucky Star joins [Sweetgreen](#), [Wagamama](#), [Hayakawa](#), [Prevail Coffee](#), and [Flight Club](#) already open at Star Metals. [Rooftop bar and lounge Patina](#), from the team behind [the Painted Pin](#) and the Painted Duck, should open by the end of 2023, and a location of seafood restaurant [Fishmonger](#) opens soon in the former La Fonda building next door to Star Metals. Fishmonger is temporarily taking over the space for two years ahead of its eventual move to the newest phase of Star Metals. The property on which

the building currently resides is set to become an apartment tower called Stella at Star Metals at the corner of 11th Street and Howell Mill Road.

The next year is shaping up to be very busy for Liang and Chen in terms of restaurant openings. In 2022, the partners [closed Brush Sushi in Decatur](#) and replaced it with the laidback neighborhood sushi restaurant [Cuddlefish](#). A second location of [Cuddlefish](#) opens next year at the emerging High Street development in Dunwoody.

As for Brush Sushi, Liang and Chen are [reopening the restaurant](#) later this summer at [Buckhead Village](#). Taking over the former [American Cut space](#), Brush Sushi at Buckhead Village will feature an upscale, modern design befitting the luxury dining and retail district, complete with large wooden panels with intricate carvings of hinoki (a Japanese cypress tree) and a private room seating 17 people offering omakase tastings from Liang. The Buckhead location will also serve a variety of grilled dishes cooked over Binchotan charcoal, as well as some of the most popular a la carte dishes from Brush in Decatur.



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