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Breaking News

Friday, March 14**9:25 AM****Boulud's bold B.C. plans**

FIONA MORROW

From Friday's Globe and Mail

VANCOUVER — Expect major menu changes - but no \$150 burgers - after celebrity chef Daniel Boulud puts his stamp on Lumière and Feenie's this spring.

Visiting Vancouver this week, he said in an interview with The Globe and Mail that he plans on making significant changes to Lumière's menu, including adding a prix fixe and more à la carte items.

In a coup that's been the talk of the city, a new partnership was announced last week between Mr. Boulud and David and Manjy Sidoo, owners of Lumière and Feenie's restaurants. French-born Mr. Boulud now owns six renowned restaurants in the United States, including Daniel, his flagship fine-dining restaurant in New York. This spring, he will be opening a seventh restaurant in Beijing.

Feenie's will close next week before being relaunched as DB Bistro Moderne Vancouver, and Lumière will close for remodelling in May but keep its name.

Both restaurants are expected to reopen in late July. The Lumière tasting bar - which was renovated at great expense only last year - will be removed and the extra space will be taken over by the bistro.

In the city to talk to staff and media, Mr. Boulud admitted that he had not initially planned to come to Vancouver. "I was convinced to come here by David Sidoo's commitment to excellence in Lumière and also his interest in maintaining a casual restaurant of quality."

Although the chef had not spent time in Vancouver before, he had sent members of his management team around the city's restaurants to report back before he made the decision to invest. He thinks the changeover to DB Bistro - which will be run by one of DB Bistro Moderne's New York chefs - should be fairly straightforward: "We have the model already," Mr. Boulud explained. "It is just a question of adapting that to Vancouver."

As for the infamous \$150 (U.S.) burger featured on DB Bistro Moderne's New York menu, "everyone got it wrong," he said. "The burger costs \$30 and you can opt for 10 grams or 20 grams of black truffles when they are in season."

Will Vancouverites get the option of trying it? "We will do it by special request, but I am not going to put it on the menu, no."

At Lumière, he said, expect major menu changes. "It's too special-occasion," he said of the current carte. "I think the idea of having only a tasting menu is wonderful, but I'm not sure it is right for Vancouver. More à la carte, a short prix fixe, maybe a four-course, five with cheese - and then a tasting menu ... I think that works better."

Mr. Boulud will be working closely with Lumière's current executive chef, Dale Mackay, who was already in New York for a week learning about operations and will spend more extensive time there while renovations are completed. Specific dishes are yet to be discussed, "but the ingredients are majestic here," Mr. Boulud said. "I am not worried at all about supply."

He will send staff from his restaurants that make up the Dinex Group to help with the relaunch, but Mr. Mackay will remain in charge of the kitchen. Nevertheless, Mr. Mackay's leash may be short.

"I have full intention of keeping Dale as executive chef if he fulfills his job to our expectations," Mr. Boulud

said. "It's up to him to work with me. It's not up to me to work with him."

How much time Mr. Boulud will spend in Vancouver is unclear. "There is no obligation on my part," he said. "But at the Dinex Group, there is always a management person available. I have enough responsible bodies to send them constantly into my restaurants to report back."

Four of his top chefs are currently in Vancouver preparing a lavish lunch for local media today.

Can we expect Mr. Boulud to man the stoves at Lumière at all? "Well, I'll be here, for sure," he insisted. "And yes, I might be cooking. ..."

"But if you depend on me for cooking, the business is in trouble. If you depend on me for management, then I think you can feel comfortable things are being done the right way."

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