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Up](#)[NONPROFITS](#)[MISSING PETS](#)[MULTIMEDIA](#)[Photo of the  
Day](#)[Pictures in the  
News](#)[ARTS](#)[MOVIES](#)[Times](#)[Reviews](#)[OUTDOORS](#)[SPORTS](#)[Paul Yarbrough](#)[NEWS](#)[RELEASES](#)[COLUMNISTS](#)[Leslie Dinaberg  
& Zak](#)[Klobucher](#)[Capt. David  
Bacon](#)[Paul Burri](#)[Bill Cirone](#)[Russell Collins](#)[Hal Conklin &  
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Local News » Arch Rock Fish Bringing 'Neighborhood Joint' to Santa Barbara

## Arch Rock Fish Bringing 'Neighborhood Joint' to Santa Barbara

Owners of the new Anacapa Street eatery are throwing a benefit block party on Aug. 22



Scott Leibfried, Arch Rock Fish restaurant partner and executive chef, cooks black mussels with beer during Tuesday's media tour of the new restaurant at 608 Anacapa St. in downtown Santa Barbara. (Ray Estrada / Noozhawk photo)

By Ray Estrada, Noozhawk Business Columnist | Published on 08.10.2010

One of Santa Barbara's newest businesses is pushing for an August grand opening, but it's faced with limitations left behind by a fondue parlor.

Partners in Arch Rock Fish met with South Coast media Tuesday to show the progress on converting what used to be the Melting Pot at 608 Anacapa St. in downtown Santa Barbara into "a neighborhood joint" American seafood restaurant.

"We started the process just 4½ months ago," said Scott Leibfried, restaurant partner and executive chef. "But we didn't want to be restaurant owners; we want to be a part of the community."



Leibfried may be known to some TV-watching gourmands from Fox's *Hell's Kitchen*, on which he's sous chef to Gordon Ramsay. He also has worked at the Beverly Hills Four Seasons Hotel.

Other partners in Arch Rock Fish include 2002 UCSB graduate and General Manager Jaime Kostechko and Jeremiah

Higgins, who grew up in Santa Barbara.

The defunct Melting Post fondue parlor lasted less than a year with only a partial kitchen. The Arch Rock Fish partners had their work cut out for them in building a full kitchen in a three-story, mixed-use building one block from State Street, where there are already many restaurants.

To promote their enterprise, the restaurant owners are staging an Aug. 22 block party at the site to raise funds for the Santa Barbara Police Activities League, which serves 1,600 youngsters each year. A \$10 donation will be requested at the door.

Pete Jordano, dean of South Coast restaurant supply purveyors, attended Tuesday's event and praised the entrepreneurs for their goal to open such an enterprise in the face of a still shaky economy. Jordano likened their spirit to the founders of Rusty's Pizza parlors and The Habit hamburger stands, both enterprises that have prospered on the coast.

South Coast restaurants have been hit hard by the economy since 2008. Several former restaurant spots on State Street, such as Left at Albuquerque at Ortega Street, closed late last year and still sit empty. Last month, an out-of-town investor bought the Left at Albuquerque building, but a tenant has not been found.

More restaurant openings are planned for this year, including a Chipotle Mexican restaurant at 270 Storke Road in Goleta, Free & Easy at 336 Milpas St. in Santa Barbara, Mel's Lounge at 209 W. Carrillo St., and Savoy Café and Deli at 24 W. Figueroa St., in what used to be Cantwell's. Savoy occupied the Cantwell's location and now is back under that name.

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