

## Mike Easton Is Closing His James Beard Award-Nominated Restaurant

The celebrated chef is shifting his focus to Walla Walla, where he'll open a pizzeria and serve as executive chef at the Abeja winery

by [Harry Cheadle](#) | Jun 27, 2024, 3:46pm PDT



Mike Easton. | Courtesy of the Kitchen at Abeja

Were you looking forward to trying out Bar Bacetto after the Waitsburg, Washington, restaurant nabbed a James Beard nomination for **Best New Restaurant** this year? Well, look forward to something else, because owner Mike Easton just announced that it's on "extended hiatus."

Easton has been a major name in the Washington culinary scene since the days of his beloved Pioneer Square pasta restaurant, Il Corvo, which **closed in 2020**. He sold his other Seattle restaurant, Il Nido, **two years later** as he and his wife moved east to Waitsburg, where they opened Bar Bacetto to widespread acclaim.

That acclaim, however, apparently didn't pay the bills — **Easton told the *Seattle Times*** that while Bar Bacetto was "a success in many, many ways... financial longevity is not necessarily one of them."

So just as Easton pivoted to Waitsburg a few years ago now he's pivoting to Walla Walla, a short drive away. This week he's opening Bacetto's Detroit Style, which will serve (duh) Detroit-style pizza and be managed on a day-to-day basis by his wife, Erin Easton, according to the *Times*.

What is Mike Easton going to be doing on a day-to-day basis? He's headed to the Abeja winery to be the executive chef at the Kitchen at Abeja, its fine dining restaurant, which probably just became one of the hottest tickets in **Walla Walla**.

"I fell in love with this property and the wines of Abeja on my first visit here 10 years ago," said Easton in a press release. "The chance to offer wine-centric, fine dining in a pastoral setting like this is an opportunity that comes along once in a lifetime." His menu will debut on August 1.