

South Market District adds fashion boutique to lineup at Paramount

By: Robin Shannon, Reporter December 3, 2014 0

Boutique clothing and jewelry store Stonefree is the latest addition to the retail offerings at the \$200 million South Market District residential and retail development in the Central Business District.

Stonefree, which will carry an eclectic mix of women's apparel, jewelry and accessories, as well as a curated selection of home goods, will be in the Paramount building at 611 O'Keefe Ave. The 1,500-square-foot shop will join restaurants Willa Jean Bakery, Ursa Major, Magasin Kitchen and Blaze Pizza, and fitness studio Barre3.

The neighboring Park building includes an Arhaus furniture store, a CVS pharmacy and New Orleans-based Hattie Sparks boutique.

The store is a new venture for Megan Koch, who moved to New Orleans after spending time working in the fashion industry in Los Angeles and Dallas. She explained that while in Texas, she made several trips to New Orleans to eventually get a feel for the community and what was lacking in the way of boutique retail.

"The boutique lifestyle here felt idyllic, and that was when the idea of owning my own store really started to take shape," Koch said. "Stonefree will first and foremost be a boutique, but I like to think that it will evolve into a sort of community hub at South Market, where people will pop in to shop and end up hanging out over a glass of wine and getting to know their neighbors."

Koch said the store's interior will be light and airy with whitewashed brick walls, oversized vintage furniture, unfinished concrete floors and leafy green plants from floor to ceiling. She said most of the interior design was done on her own.

Koch is currently interviewing contractors for the build out. Her shop is expected to open by mid-March.

"I considered other parts of town, but in the end I wanted to be in a more up and coming neighborhood and I felt South Market fit the bill," she said. "The surrounding developments have lots of transplants like me, and I can see the store fitting in well."

Megan McNeill, spokeswoman for South Market District developer the Domain Cos., said Stonefree would be the final retail shop added to the Park and Paramount buildings. The company is planning at least two more restaurants at the Paramount, and it expects to announce those tenants later this month.

Meanwhile, Domain has started preleasing retail space in the Beacon, a third mixed-use building that recently started construction. The \$40 million building will feature 126 apartments and 20,000 square feet of retail space.

The Paramount includes 200 apartments and 22,000 square feet of retail space. The Park has a 435-space parking garage with a 2,200 square-foot public plaza and more than 30,000 square feet of retail space.

In total, South Market District is expected to include 700 new apartments and 170,000 square feet of commercial space. Future phases of the project are still in development.

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Stonefree, a fashion boutique, will be the final retail tenant in the Paramount building, part of the \$200 million South Market District mixed used development in downtown New Orleans. (File photo)

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