

Chandler's Kokopelli Winery expands to Surprise

by **Luci Scott** - Jul. 5, 2008 05:21 PM
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Chandler-based Kokopelli Winery is expanding and opening a Kokopelli Winery & Bistro in Surprise.

It is the company's first location beyond its site at 35 W. Boston in downtown Chandler.

If the final permits are issued, the Surprise restaurant will open at 5 p.m. July 15 at 14719 W. Grand Ave., just 1 1/2 miles west of Bell Road. It is near Rheems Road and about a mile from Loop 303.

"We have been underrepresented on the west side for a long time, so we looked at the vibrancy of the community and felt it would be a great place to put our second Arizona restaurant and winery," said Dennis Minchella, who owns the new restaurant with investors.

His restaurant will provide catering and also deliver to the Hampton Inn next door.

The new 5,175-square-foot facility is bigger than the Chandler restaurant, and will house a production winery and bar, offering wines in tasters, by the glass or by the bottle.

Beginning July 17, it will be open seven days a week, offering an atmosphere for either dining or snacking on assorted cheeses, dried fruit or chocolate.

The new Kokopelli Winery & Bistro will offer the same full menu for lunch and dinner as the spot in Chandler: appetizers, homemade soups, specialty salads, panini sandwiches, pastas, and daily pork, chicken and seafood

entrees. The Surprise location will offer a more extensive dinner menu that will include steaks and Kobe beef burgers, as well as a beer selection.

Live jazz and blues will be featured from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Beginning in August, a Sunday brunch will be offered from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The grapes are grown in the Sonoita valley near Willcox in the family vineyard run by Dennis' parents, Donald and Carol Minchella and his sister Denise Pizzuli.

Kokopelli offers 24 wine varieties, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Meritage, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Imperial Kir sparkling wine. Kokopelli's Arizona wines have won more than 65 medals to date.

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