

DINING

New 'social darts' Flight Club opening in Chicago — first U.S. location

By LOUISA CHU

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A rendering of "social darts club" Flight Club, a London-based bar and restaurant with an interactive, activity-driven experience coming to the Loop early next year. (Flight Club)

If ax-throwing seems a little much but you've been yearning for a rec-room-esque alternative to table tennis, a so-called "social darts" club will open its first U.S. location in the Loop early next year.

Flight Club, the London-based partner to AceBounce, the pingpong bar and restaurant on Clark Street near Wacker Drive, plans to open a 9,000-square-foot, two-story flagship next door to its sister concept. Food and drink will also be overseen by chef Rick Gresh and beverage director Peter Vestinos, respectively.

The club will serve lunch and dinner with separate menus on each floor. Few food and drink details are available, but according to a press release, the ground floor will feature a raw bar, salads and flatbreads. The second floor will offer "dips" and "handhelds." Craft cocktails will emphasize fragrant botanical drinks.

The exterior design appears sleek and modern, but interiors will be "1900s English fairground"-themed, with a large mural backdrop, vintage patio stools, string lighting, trees and modern elements.

Flight Club claims to employ "exclusive social dart technology," taking the traditional game, with real darts and boards, and adding multiplayer technology — four different experiences will be offered. The club calls each play area an "oche" (rhymes with "hockey"), which may be confusing as that's also the word in darts for the throw line. There will be 14 semi-private "oches" spread over both floors, with space for 20 players each.

AceBounce opened in Chicago last summer. Flight Club launched in London in September 2015, and since then, according to the company, "over 150,000 people have tried their hand, 17 million darts have been thrown."

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