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Food & Lifestyle

Kokoro owners plan fourth Handies Douzo handroll sushi location in Uptown (PHOTOS)



Handies Douzo owners Daniel Lee (left) and Patrick Pham
MICHAEL ANTHONY/COURTESY DUCKSTACHE HOSPITALITY



By [Jeff Jeffrey](#) – Senior reporter, Houston Business Journal
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Story Highlights

- Duckstache Hospitality will open a Handies Douzo location at Central Park Post Oak in late 2026.
- The Houston-based restaurant group has grown to seven concepts and 12 locations since its 2019 launch.
- Central Park Post Oak's expansion will add more than 150,000 square feet of mixed-use restaurant and retail space.

Duckstache Hospitality, the Houston-based restaurant group known for such Japanese concepts as Kokoro, Aiko, Himari, [Doko and Bar Doko](#), is preparing to open a new location of its popular hand roll concept – and it's chosen one of Uptown's most ambitious developments.

Duckstache will open a Handies Douzo location in in the Central Park Post Oak development, which is in the midst of a major overhaul to bring new restaurants and retail to the area. [Houston-based Midway broke ground on the expansion last year.](#)

Handies Douzo will occupy a 1,658-square-foot space at 2000 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 130.

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Touted as Houston's first handroll-focused sushi bar, Handies Douzo emphasizes premium ingredients, a curated and streamlined menu and an interactive counter experience that highlights the artistry of handroll-making.

Slated for a late 2026 opening, Handies Douzo is expected to be the first dining concept to open within the Central Park Post Oak development.

The new Handies Douzo location will be the company's fourth, adding to outposts in the Heights at 737 Cogdell St., in Montrose at 4005 Montrose Blvd. and in Spring Branch at 9936 Westview Drive.

The new location will have a counter-style layout with 26 seats, where guests can enjoy Handies Douzo's signature hand rolls, sashimi, crudos and seasonal fish selections such as masu, maguro, hotate and kani.

Designed in collaboration with Houston-based Gin Design Group, the Post Oak location will feature a sculptural wrap-style chef counter as the focal point, complemented by a palette of inky tones, matte black finishes and dark terrazzo, along with a reimagined canopy and new lighting.

Unlike its existing locations in primarily residential neighborhoods, this marks Handies Douzo's first outpost positioned within a commercial, mixed-use environment.

"We're really intentional about the neighborhoods we choose and where we think Handies Douzo will feel like a natural fit," Daniel Lee, chef and co-owner of Duckstache Hospitality, said in a statement. "Houston diners know what they like, and Uptown is such a vibrant, fast-growing area. Central Park Post Oak felt like the right match for our handroll experience and the way people in Houston live, work, and dine."

Midway Executive Vice President Clayton Freels said Handies Douzo represents the kind of thoughtful, chef-driven hospitality the company wants for Central Park Post Oak.

“Patrick, Daniel, and the Duckstache team have built a loyal following across Houston, and we are thrilled to help them extend that experience to Uptown in a way that feels authentic to both the brand and the neighborhood,” Freels said in a statement.

Duckstache Hospitality is the brainchild of Lee and fellow co-owner Patrick Pham, who started the company in 2019 after previously working at Uchi.

Since its launch, Duckstache Hospitality has grown from a single 20-seat sushi counter to seven concepts and 12 locations across Houston and Dubai.

The first Kokoro Handroll Bar opened [in Bravery Hall at 409 Travis St. downtown in 2019](#). On the menu at Kokoro, which means “heart” in Japanese, is sushi made with king salmon, lean tuna, fatty tuna, scallops, eel and yellowtail; yakitori, or skewered chicken; and sides such as rice cooked in chicken fat.

In 2024, Duckstache Hospitality filed paperwork with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation [outlining plans for a Kokoro location in Rice University’s Ion District](#). But that planned location has not opened.

In early 2025, [Duckstache Hospitality opened Doko at 3737 Cogdell St. in the Hanover Parkview multifamily tower across from Bar Doko, which opened in late 2024](#). Doko focuses on sushi and yakitori, a type of grilled skewers.

Central Park Post Oak’s expansion plans

Elsewhere in the Central Park Post Oak campus, Midway is in the midst of a redevelopment that will add two new jewel-box retail buildings.

The Henry, a Phoenix-based neighborhood restaurant concept, [has already leased 7,175 square feet in one of those buildings](#) and is planning a build-out that is expected to cost at least \$3 million.

The campus currently offers 1.2 million square feet of office space and 90,000 square feet of retail space. The development sits on 17 acres near the intersection of Post Oak Boulevard and Ambassador Way.

Midway Executive Vice President Clayton Freels has said the company's plan is to add more than 150,000 square feet of mixed-use restaurant and retail space. The expansion is being completed through a partnership between Midway and Phoenix-based 3Edgewood.

In addition to the two new retail buildings, which will turn the existing lawn surrounding the office towers into a central green space, the project includes new on-street parking and renovated parking garages.

The expansion is scheduled to be completed next year but already has resulted in a number of companies signing on to join the complex as tenants.

In January, Scottsdale-based Hi Noon Hospitality announced [it will open a location of its seafood-focused Buck & Rider concept](#) in the development, marking the company's Texas debut. The restaurant, which also will have a patio, will be moving into a 9,263-square-foot jewel-box space on the expanded ground floor of Central Park Two at 1980 Post Oak Blvd.

Buck & Rider is known for flying in fresh seafood from around the world daily, sourcing directly from fishers to serve just-caught fish and shellfish. Those offerings are complemented by a proprietary reserve beef selection, signature cocktails, and an extensive wine and beer program.

Additionally, Central Park Post Oak [will add the new-to-Texas Italian-inspired steakhouse Sparrow Italia by the Noble 33 hospitality group](#), which leased a 6,700-square-foot space in the complex last year.

In November, Midway announced that Renewa, a firm that focuses on renewable energy investments, and Terra Energy Partners, a privately held oil and gas

exploration and production company, signed on to lease 13,051 square feet and 7,652 square feet, respectively, in Central Park Two.

Those leases were confirmed just weeks after the Houston Business Journal announced it would move into a 4,326-square-foot space in Central Park Two this year.

The transactions follow previously announced lease signings with Spain-based banking giant Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA (NYSE: BBVA), which recently moved into a 20,000-square-foot space in Central Park Two, and Texas Dow Employees Credit Union, which leased eight floors in Central Park One, at 2000 Post Oak Blvd.

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