

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“WE WANT TO PUT OUR HEARTS INTO EVERYTHING WE MAKE.”**



Photo courtesy of Honeys Fried Chicken Palace

**Malcolm Bedell's take-out fried chicken restaurant, seen here near the completion of construction, is a personal statement - casual, clever and showing a touch of class.**

GRATON, CA, 2025-March-31 -- Malcolm Bedell wanted his fried chicken takeout place to be different from everything else nearby in coastal Maine. Instead of putting fish nets on the walls and hanging buoys from the ceiling, he painted three walls red, put a giant chicken mural on the fourth wall, and crowned his creation with a whimsical, decorative ceiling from Ceilume. It worked.

### **“You Dream Big”**

Bedell spent 15 years in graphic design and marketing before he decided to escape the desk and do something else. It turned out to be a sandwich shop that he christened Ancho Honey, in his home town of Thomaston, Maine. It opened in July 2019 and quickly caught on, gaining a loyal following for its distinctive menu at popular prices. But Bedell noticed

something interesting - they do more business on Sundays than any other day of the week. What makes Sundays so special? That's the day they make fried chicken sandwiches.

He wondered if they should create a second place that just served chicken. Thus, Honey's Fried Chicken Palace was born ([www.gethoneys.com](http://www.gethoneys.com)). "The joke in that is clear," says Bedell, "when you see the space. It could not be further from a palace." The new location, about 15 miles from the first one, was a former Chinese restaurant that was left in what Bedell describes as "disgraceful condition." It had to be completely overhauled. He adds, "You dream big and you reach for the stars."

He started renovations in Oct. 2023, performing about 80% of the work himself. "I did everything that didn't have the risk of killing me," he recalls.

### **"The Design Was What First Caught Me"**

Bedell's chosen design aesthetic was practical and insightful. "At the end of the day, it's a take-out fried chicken restaurant," he explains, "so it's not going to be too serious, or it shouldn't be. It's not going to be stuffy. We painted almost the entire interior red, because we tend to get a lot of our publicity through Instagram and social media. If you photograph anything in a red room, it automatically looks better. We knew we would instantly be improving everyone's photos of the food, so that was key."

"Then we added some rustic elements, but without putting big murals of tractors on the wall. I did put giant chickens on the wall, though. The largest one doesn't have a head, it's been cropped out of frame, so it becomes an abstraction of feathers. When you don't have a ton of money for design, making one really bold color choice or one really bold graphic does a lot of the heavy lifting for your design work."

The ceiling was the only element from the old restaurant that he hadn't cleaned out, because he didn't think he could afford to replace it. "I assumed I'd have to live with the ceiling that I had, and sort it out down the road, once cash flow evened out. It was pretty bad. Some of the tiles were stained, others were broken down the middle and sort of put back in place. And dirty. I can't overstate just how dirty. I never knew there were options except replacing your drop ceiling panels, which is expensive, and at the end of the day, you just have a ceiling that has no character, it just has super "dentist's office" vibes. I didn't think I'd be able to re-do the ceiling, until I found Ceilume tiles. I found them on social media. The design was what first caught me. And then, all the possibilities."

Ceilume makes three-dimensional decorative tiles engineered to fit conventional 2x2 and 2x4 suspension grids. The "possibilities" he saw were the 40 different patterns both traditional and contemporary, and 16 colors and finishes - a broad range of design options.

"I eventually went with a less embellished, lower profile tile," Bedell recounts. The field tile he chose, Circle Star, is a clean geometric design, which he paired with Southland for the borders. He installed the tiles himself. "I was sort of amazed at the abuse those Ceilume tiles could take. You can really beat them up, but you can also cut them with scissors. They're a great combination of light and easy to work with, super-easy to trim for our weird edge panels, and great-looking once they're installed." Bedell adds, "I genuinely, really love this product."

The four walls and the ceiling comprise all the major design elements, with the addition of some low pony walls to define traffic flow through the space. By April, 2024, he had a chicken restaurant.

### "People Notice Those Little Details"

The first day, there was a line of 40 people waiting for the doors to open. In the first weeks, they were selling 300% of their original target, and had to scramble to staff up and increase storage. Offering fried chicken sandwiches like *The Pterodactyl* – described as “50/50 teriyaki/buffalo bath, slaw, bacon fat roasted pineapple, chopped peanuts, Chinese hot mustard aioli” – the optimistically named Honey’s Fried Chicken Palace took off.

“One thing that sets us apart,” suggests Bedell, “is that we’re doing really approachable stuff that everyone’s familiar with, but we’re doing it in a very chef-y way. It would have been easy sell frozen chicken tenders, but we weren’t interested in that. We want to put our hearts into everything we make. We’re making everything from scratch. We’re starting with raw chicken, it’s breaded by hand. All our sauces are hand-made. All quality stuff. And people notice that. I think in the restaurant business, it’s easy to convince yourself that people don’t notice those little details, but they really do, and it really matters.”

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### About Ceilume

Ceilume is the leading manufacturer of thermoformed ceiling and wall tiles and panels. The company’s roots go back to the pioneers of modular ceilings, when “Mid-Century was Modern.” The family-owned business is located in California’s wine country and occupies a historic apple-packing warehouse. With an eye on the future, Ceilume’s research and development continues to improve interior finish systems to meet changing environmental, performance, and aesthetic needs. For more information, see [ceilume.com/pro](http://ceilume.com/pro).

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### High Resolution Images

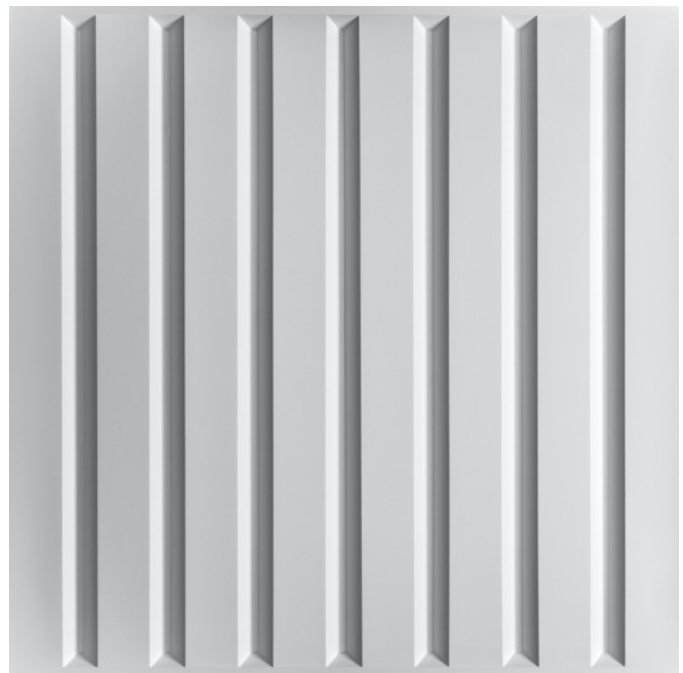
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Photo courtesy of Honeys Fried Chicken Palace

**"It didn't occur to me that I could make a drop ceiling look like that, and without spending a ton of money, until I found Ceilume tiles."**



Photos courtesy of Ceilume

**Ceilume's Circle Star pattern (left), the field tile used in Honey's, and Southland (right) the border tile, are two of 40 decorative styles available, designed to drop into standard 1" nominal suspension grids.**





Photo courtesy of Honeys Fried Chicken Palace

**These non-absorbent and fully washable ceiling tiles are approved for use in food preparation and food service areas.**



Photo courtesy of Honeys Fried Chicken Palace

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