

Feature Section

Focus : Hospitality
Yonkers flambe revolution
Restaurants beat a path to the waterfront
 BY JOHN GOLDEN



The bustle of construction and spreading buzz about Yonkers as a city hospitable to new business enterprise apparently has whetted the appetites of restaurant owners to locate there.

"It's booming," Peter Klein, a director of the Yonkers Downtown/Waterfront Business Improvement District (BID) and vice president of Fidelco Realty Corp., a partner in the private development team of Struere Fidelco Cappelli, said of the city's emerging restaurant market. "Zuppa started a trend and the most recent entrant is Peter Kelly," the well-regarded Hudson Valley restaurateur. "There are a handful of fast-food restaurants that opened, capitalizing on this opportunity."

Klein said an August presentation of the business opportunities available in downtown Yonkers, hosted by BID officials and developers, drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 140 persons that included commercial real estate brokers, potential restaurant operators and city officials. They met at Zuppa Restaurant and Lounge, the Italian-cuisine eatery that Rob Leggio, principal in Bianca Realty, opened in 2003 in the historic Gazette Building at 59-61 Main St.

David Landes, president of Royal Properties Inc., agreed with Klein that the success of Zuppa and the opening this year of Kelly's X2O Xaviars on the Hudson has other restaurant owners looking to follow them to Yonkers.

Especially since Kelly chose to renovate a Yonkers waterfront pier as the site of his fifth restaurant in the region, "We've been contacted by a variety of restaurant individuals that have existing establishments," said Landes. "People are saying that if he can go down and do it and Zuppas's is doing very well, they want to be part of it."



Landes said he expects two or three restaurateurs to sign leases for downtown Yonkers locations by late September. "It's coming and it's coming very fast," he said.

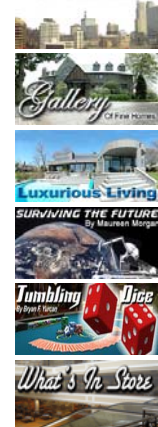
The interested prospects include Greek and Asian fusion eateries and a steak house and wine bar. "Then there's the old standbys, too," he said. "We were approached by IHOP," the California-based franchise restaurant chain.

Blogs Section

2007 BOOK OF BUSINESS
 LISTS, FACTS & PEOPLE
Now Online
 Order your lists today!

Blog Section

Deals&DEEDS



Google™
 Search
 Web
 WestchesterCBJ.com
 FairfieldCBJ.com
 HudsonValleyBusinessNews.com

Feature Section

Ask Andi :

[What do I do to hire a good person?](#)

Fly on the Wall

Profits & Passions : [Paul Giotopoulos](#)

Retail Report : [By L.J. Butterfield](#)

[Fashion shoot: daring designs in focus at Neiman's](#)

ViewPoints

GuestView : [Pat Foye & Dan Gundersen](#)

[Efforts under way to return New York as the Empire State](#)

OurView : [Relatively speaking](#)

Focus Section : [Hospitality](#)

Credits, Clients & Awards

[Newsmakers](#)

[Public Notices](#)

[Real Estate Update](#)

[Westchester Archive](#)



Restaurant Space
 Search 1000's of restaurants for sale and/or lease nationwide.
www.LoopNet.com/Restaurants

Restaurant Directory
 Thousands of Popular Restaurants. Find Your Local Restaurant!
www.usdirectory.com

Live Real Estate Advice
 Corporate Real Estate Solutions Office, Industrial, Flex, & Retail.
www.corporate-america.com

Restaurants
 Local Restaurants In Your Area! Search by Category/Name
www.AreaGuides.net

Commercial Classifieds
 Buy, sell, or rent commercial property nationwide.
realestate.nytimes.com

Landes's Bronxville company handles commercial leasing at 66 Main St. in Yonkers, a 10-story, 170-unit apartment loft building with 25,000 square feet of retail space due to be completed this fall; Metro 92, a former trolley barn at 92 Main St. with 7,500 square feet of retail space, and the refurbished Metro-North railroad station, where 2,500 square feet of retail space could be leased by "a restaurant or breakfast guy," Landes said, as the MTA has done with its Mount Kisco station.

Landes said retail rents are "north of \$30 a square foot" in the reviving downtown. "Years ago, you couldn't even come close to that," he said. "The market has increased because of all that new construction, all that new development happening."

The Yonkers water taxi to Manhattan, launched this year, has added to the downtown allure for some restaurant owners "thinking they can grab a few commuters" for a dining stop, Landes said.



With the recent examples of Xaviar's and the adjacent Pier View for restaurant owners considering Yonkers, "The momentum is definitely behind them," said Kevin McCarthy, a broker from CB Richard Ellis who works with restaurateurs in Westchester and Fairfield, Conn., counties.

Seeing the housing developments already completed and under construction downtown, "They definitely are sold on the residential part" of their potential customer base, he said.

But given the current low office occupancy in downtown Yonkers, McCarthy said restaurant owners are asking, "Where am I going to be able to feed my business from lunchtime to happy hour?"

They question, he said, whether "large office space is going to be occupied that they can piggyback" during daytime hours to carry them to the evening return of commuters.

The focus for Yonkers restaurant promoters is an area of about 20 square blocks that stretches "from the water to City Hall" on South Broadway, Klein said. Lying within a state Empire Zone, new businesses there qualify for various tax credits and employment incentives.

Klein said restaurateurs have been invited to locate in "the new spaces being built in the coming months," which include Main Street Lofts, Metro 92 and Hudson Park North, a \$110 million residential and retail project on the waterfront expected to be completed in December 2008, "and the smaller rehab spaces throughout the downtown are looking at restaurant tenants."

"Brokers are telling me lots of leases are being looked at" by restaurant owners, Klein said. "All of this is ahead of our River Park Center project, which will have nearly 100,000 square feet of restaurant space."



River Park Center is an approximately 1-million-square-foot, \$850 million mixed-use development, including a 6,500-seat minor-league baseball park, that SFC has proposed to build in the downtown Getty Square section. Klein said the complex of hotel, residential, office and retail space on a full city block could accommodate 10 to 20 large national restaurant chains and "a handful of local restaurants."

"We're hopeful these early entrants" in the city's restaurant market "will pave the way for our project in the future," said Klein.

For restaurateurs, "Financially, the opportunity is today to capitalize on rents," he said.

"It will escalate in the future."

At the August information meeting promoting the downtown's commercial potential, Mayor Philip A. Amicone reportedly extended his guarantee to restaurateurs that the city will be their "partner" in Yonkers. That support and cooperation is essential, Klein said.

"The key to the success in downtown is business working with City Hall," he said. "The mayor stresses the importance of being helpful without being obstructionist."

E. Charles "Chuck" Hunt, executive vice president of the New York State Restaurant Association and government lobbyist for restaurateurs in New York City, who attended the August meeting, said the cooperative attitude of Yonkers officials sharply contrasts with that in the five boroughs, where officials "are more interested in raising money from restaurants by taxing, fining and regulating them."



Hunt, who owned the former Oliver's restaurant in White Plains for 20 years, said he knows one aspiring entrepreneur who hopes to open his first restaurant in Yonkers. "It's very refreshing to find a municipality that's interested in finding businesses that will help them rejuvenate their downtown," he said.

If you enjoyed this story.. why not Subscribe **TODAY!** [Click here to subscribe online](#)



Call Marcia (914) 694-3600 x3021

Reader Comments

Please send us your comments!

Add Your Comments

TalkBack & let us know what YOU think.

If you have something to add to this discussion topic, we'd like to know.

To send a comment:

1. Enter your full name
2. Enter your email address
3. Post your comment and click 'Submit'

Full Name:

Email Address:

Example: johndoe@aol.com

Comments:

Post your comment here

(WestfairInc reserves the right to edit any text for broadcast)

Submit

[Subscribe](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Reader Services](#)

[Business Web](#)

[Contact Us](#)



© Copyright 2007 Westfair Business Publications

3 Gannett Drive, White Plains, NY 10604
Tel: (914) 694-3600 + Fax: (914) 694-3699

