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Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Celeb Chef Abandons Plans, but Former Il Bastardo Space Might Host 'Southern Hospitality'

Added by **Scott Stiffler** on November 21, 2017.

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With Todd English no longer planning a food hall for the old Il Bastardo space, Southern Hospitality restaurant has designs on 191 Seventh Ave. Photo by Scott Stiffler.

BY WINNIE McCROY | Just months after Chelsea Now **reported** on celebrity Chef Todd English's intent to open up one of his famed food hall market concepts at 191 Seventh Ave. (near the corner of W. 21st St.), the bon vivant has quietly backed out of negotiations. But a new business has already submitted an application to operate in the location.

The huge spot was the former site of Il Bastardo restaurant, a hotbed of police and State Liquor Authority citations for a **history of drunk and disorderly conduct violations** that stemmed from their raucous weekend brunches.

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Chef English's Director of Restaurant Development, Flip Arbelaez, confided to Chelsea Now that they had planned to create their version of a neighborhood food hall with six food stalls and a florist, and felt the layout of the old Il Bastardo space was perfect. English and his team were initially very excited to find the space, which Arbelaez said was perfectly situated between Chelsea Market and the Penn Station corridor, so as not to compete with existing vendors.

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"But when we started going through the process and doing more research, we came to find out it rained on their parade, but they danced on it. Todd and I got together about this immediately and decided that to go forward we got the ball rolling; How Pr. 40 fight brought us Hudson River Park."

Apparently, Todd English and his team were not initially aware that Krenn St. From splintered piers to fancy park of today, we've come a long way. Keeping cool on the West Side, 1940s style

"We Fish, forests and fields coming to Tribeca pier" said Arbelaez. "It was an integrity move. We did not want any association with the Downtown Express is put our investor's money into play and lose it."

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Todd English likes Chelsea, but nixed plans to set up shop on Seventh Ave., wary of the shuttered Il Bastardo space's lingering association with its "previous operators." File photo via cheftoddenglish.com.

"We're looking for a different location and have investigated a few options Downtown, but it's unfortunate we have to walk away because of the relationship with the previous operators," he added. "Chelsea is one of those neighborhoods that you fall in love with, and it's been hard finding another spot like that."

Arbelaez said they have brokers out searching for new locations, but admitted that they would still be interested in 191 Seventh Ave. — if only the circumstances were different.

"If the lease were terminated and we had a second chance to go in front of the board without Kristin Sollenne involved, we would," said Arbelaez.

In the meantime, another business has submitted an application to the Community Board 4 (CB4) Business Licenses & Permits (BLP) Committee. On Tues., Nov. 14, SH 7th Ave. Restaurant LLC went before the BLP to operate a restaurant establishment with a liquor, wine, beer and cider license, as well as recorded music.

According to Save Chelsea's Paul Groncki (who is also serving as interim president of the Council of Chelsea Block Associations), the proposal is for a Memphis-style Southern Hospitality restaurant that opened their first location on the Upper East Side, and another in Hell's Kitchen. The restaurant (see southernhospitalitybbq.com) is the brainchild of co-owners Eytan Sugarman, Trace Ayala, and Justin Timberlake.

At the hearing, CB4's BLP Committee Co-Chair Frank Holozubiec reportedly delivered a list of stipulations for the applicant, including curtailing the late closing time, amplified music and the sidewalk café. The BLP voted 6 to 6 on this matter, with two abstentions.

Groncki noted that the community had been very vocal in insisting that "no one affiliated with Il Bastardo have any role in the next enterprise. If Il Bastardo continues to hold the lease, then we must insist that the landlord vacate that lease in its entirety."

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Last week, the shuttered Il Bastardo space on Seventh Ave. had signs in the windows announcing SH 7th Ave. Restaurant LLC's appearance before CB4's BLP Committee. Photo by Scott Stiffler.

Sollenne and her attorney had attempted to apply for a liquor license at the location, but her application was met with significant opposition from local block associations, community residents, and members of CB4. There is no indication as yet whether she will attempt to remain involved with the location.

Sugarman said he would go back to the landlord and attempt to work out a lease for half the space, to operate a smaller restaurant. Holozubiec thus advised Southern Hospitality to withdraw their application for the time being, and return to the Dec. BLP meeting with an updated application before bringing their proposal to the full board. That meeting will take place Tues., Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at YOTEL New York (4th floor Green Room; 570 10th Ave., at W. 42nd St.). For more info, visit nyc.gov/html/mancb4/html/calendar/calendarnew.shtml.

NOTE: This article is an expanded version of a web-only report posted Thurs., Nov. 16 on chelseanow.com ("*Todd English 'Integrity Move' Abandons Plans for Il Bastardo Space*").

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