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Restaurants Add to 57th Street's Buzz

Amid Attention to Luxury Condos, Restaurants and Hotels Open in Area

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By KAYA LATERMAN

Feb. 27, 2014 10:55 p.m. ET



Quality Italian restaurant Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal

Not all the buzz about West 57th Street is about mega towers and eye-popping price tags on luxury condominiums; there is also chatter about 13-inch-wide chicken parmigiana dishes and fried pickles.

IF YOU'RE SHOPPING FOR A HOME IN THE WEST 57TH STREET AREA.

\$1.75 million 100 W. 57th St., No. 2020 This is a 10-story building with a mix of residential and office space.	\$2.995 million 100 Central Park South, No. 2208 This is a 10-story building with a mix of residential and office space.	\$5.5 million 140 W. 57th St., No. 2208 This is a 10-story building with a mix of residential and office space.
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Over the past few months, several new restaurants—all with a Downtown vibe but with some Uptown sophistication—have arrived on or near the corner of 57th Street and Sixth Avenue, providing area residents

and office workers new destinations for wine and dining, something they haven't seen in a long time.

"It's nice to see that 'cool' can come to Midtown," said Michael Stillman, one of the owners of Quality Italian, an Italian-American steakhouse. The restaurant, which opened last summer, occupies a large second-floor space on the northeast corner of 57th and Sixth.

The weekday lunch and dinner crowds have largely been made up of 20-to-40-year-old professionals who work at hedge funds and financial institutions near by. They also have included those who work in media, music and fashion, according to Mr. Stillman.

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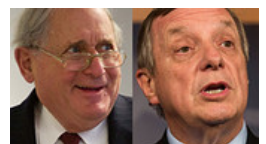
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West 57th Street *Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal*

"What's surprised me the most is how successful our Sunday nights have been," he said, noting sizable crowds of area residents, some no doubt attracted by the restaurant's pizza-size chicken parm for two. "I thought it would take at least a year to establish, but it exploded from the start."

Eamon Rockey, general manager at Betony, a restaurant on 57th between Fifth and Sixth where chef Bryce Shuman's fried pickles and other modern American dishes have won critical note, agrees with the local reception from residents.

"Honestly, it was pretty intimidating to open up a restaurant here," Mr. Rockey said, a very different scene from his previous job at restaurant Aska in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

"I was uncertain who would come in, but I was surprised to see so many residents, many who are already regulars."

Joining Quality Italian and Betony are several restaurants that are inside the area's buzzed-about hotels.



The Quin hotel, which opened in November after a renovation of the former Buckingham Hotel building. *Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal*



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The Wayfarer restaurant, whose space is on two floors inside the Quin. *Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal*

The Buckingham Hotel, which was designed in 1929 by architect Emery Roth and was once home to many famous artists like painter Georgia O'Keeffe, went through a complete overhaul and opened as the Quin last November.

The luxury hotel, where guests can dial Bergdorf Goodman at a touch of a button from their rooms, boasts a unique arts program, which includes salons with the hotel's own artist-in-residence.

Curated by DK Johnston, a founding partner of the Arts Fund, a venture-capital fund that invests in music, art and film projects, rotating artists will be invited to live and work free at the hotel, but are asked to leave behind some of their creations.

"We want the artists to be part of the DNA of the hotel," explained Holly Breuche, the Quin's general manager. "Eventually, our goal is to have our walls filled with original works of art."

Underneath the 15-foot video art wall in the Quin's lobby is a door to the Wayfarer, another new entry in the area's dining scene.

Boasting high street visibility with soaring corner windows between two levels, Lisle Richards, a partner in the space, said he hopes the restaurant can "fill the need for an all day brasserie" in the neighborhood.



West 57th Street *Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal*

"I was aware that the neighborhood was changing, but it really turned out to be one of the untapped crossroads of New York," said Mr. Richards.

"There's a very clear movement in the dining scene where the previous stigma of Downtown versus Uptown is changing," and the address of the place doesn't matter so much anymore, he said.

"New Yorkers work hard. People just want to feel comfortable when they're dining," Mr. Richards said.

Also new to the area is Kingside, an American brasserie inside the Viceroy New York hotel on 57th between Sixth and Seventh. Sometime this summer, a new restaurant headed by chef Sam Hazen will open up in the Park Hyatt, as well as a ground-floor restaurant in the 1 Hotel Central Park in mid-September.



Mr. Hazen will bring his much talked-about wine cellar from his previous restaurant Veritas to his new space in the Park Hyatt, which will be situated on the third floor of the hotel, according to Walter Brindell, the hotel's general manager.

The hotel, on the bottom half of the One57 luxury development and scheduled to open this summer, will have numerous bells and whistles, including a music program for guests that will be curated by Carnegie Hall, Mr.

Brindell said.

"I love this location, with all the history, arts and music," Mr. Brindell noted. "But when I used to walk the 57th Street corridor to and from work in the early 1980s, I would often think how plain-vanilla the street looked. Now it's on fire."

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