



THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008

## PD Food Columnist LOVES the Detroit Shoreway!

*Plain Dealer Columnist, Joe Crea, would "Lay odds that we're not only watching the emergence of the city's next dining and nightlife corridor, but also possibly the coolest "new" neighborhood in town."*

Joe Crea - Plain Dealer Columnist

To the casual observer, urban neighborhoods seem to just sort of exist. The same goes for restaurant districts.

Cleveland's Murray Hill neighborhood, better known as Little Italy, has been a flourishing immigrant community, and an eventual dining destination, since the early decades of the 20th century. Children of the 1950s and 1960s were central to the evolution and rise of countercultural Coventry Village in Cleveland Heights, though its life as a bustling business district preceded, by generations, their arrival.



Latter-day Clevelanders have watched the Tremont neighborhood grow from a blue-collar enclave on the fringes of once-mighty steel mills into a fairly tony warren of vintage houses and smart new town homes, trendy shops and some of Northeast Ohio's finest eateries.

It's exciting to see another food-friendly destination emerge. Witness the evolution of the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood, and especially the Gordon Square Arts District, on Cleveland's near West Side. Though I'm not a betting man, I'd lay odds that we're not only watching the emergence of the city's next dining and nightlife corridor, but also possibly the coolest "new" neighborhood in town.

Arguably, the potential dining and entertainment area is broader than the actual Gordon Square district, which runs along Detroit Avenue from West 58th Street to West 73rd Street. To the east is The Harp, a longstanding favorite for dining and nightlife. The recently reopened the Brothers Lounge, to the west near the intersection of West 117th Street and Detroit, provides another cornerstone, with food, an upscale wine bar and live blues, jazz and rock performances most nights of the week.

Cleveland City Councilman Matt Zone's Ward 17 largely encompasses the area. In the past year, he said, 12 new businesses have opened

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up in the Gordon Square district. During a drive through the streets that make up Zone's lifelong home, he pointed out many of the Detroit-Shoreway's longstanding eateries.



For years, diners have flocked to a handful of restaurants that have made their homes in the area. Probably the most notable are Minh Anh, the popular Vietnamese spot; Rincon Criollo, with its Latin and Caribbean

flavors; Parkview Nite Club, known for live entertainment and good Sunday brunches; and the City Grill, a neighborhood joint that's home to inexpensive burgers and solid, straightforward breakfasts. There is also Happy Dog, especially popular for its polka-and-pierogi Friday nights.

Now, a variety of higher-polish places are posting new marquees, or relabeling them, mostly to applause.

A little over a year ago, the next generation began to arrive in the form of Gypsy Beans & Baking Company, a spacious storefront at West 65th Street and Detroit that's become neighborhood central for the immediate community and commuters alike. Crazy Mac's Café recently debuted, as did Latitude 41 N; the competitors anchor a corner of West 58th Street and Detroit. Meanwhile Reddstone, a rock spot and eatery, took over the original Snicker's location at West 76th Street in the Battery Park district.

The arrival of Stone Mad, a magnificent remodel that transformed a deteriorating structure into one of the area's greatest prides, preceded Gordon Square's latest gem: Luxe, the newly opened second restaurant for one of Cleveland's premier chefs, Marlin Kaplan. Another restaurant, Toast, tentatively is slated to open within the year. Food-and-wine pairings will be its emphasis, Zone said.

You could engage in an endless chicken-or-egg debate over what has generated the phoenixlike rise of this once-teetering neighborhood. Renters and potential homeowners seeking a diverse, mixed-income community close to downtown find the area convenient - and more affordable than nearby Tremont or Ohio City. Props must also be given to the role that the arts play.

The relative success of the Cleveland Public Theatre, the recent dedication of the old Capitol Theatre and plans for the Near West Theatre's new 300-seat educational complex all are playing a hand in drawing attention, and entertainment dollars, to the area.

Could an influx of neighborhood and regional dining dollars have been far behind? Zone said that several years of planning have begun to bear fruit.

"We knew what we wanted to create, and in order to achieve it, we had to move slow to attract the right kind of retail that complemented the theaters that would be in the arts district," he said.

In part, he explained, that meant moderating the number of liquor licenses in the area. As we drove through his ward, Zone recalled the contentious battle years earlier, when his mother, former Cleveland Councilwoman Mary Zone, helped eliminate bars in the area.

▶ 2007 (12)

▼ 2008 (47)

▶ October (6)

▶ September (7)

▶ August (7)

▶ July (4)

▶ June (7)

▼ May (5)

New Home Sales Rise -  
Cleveland Ranked 3rd  
Among 2...

PD Food Columnist LOVES the  
Detroit Shoreway!

Independent Movie Theatre to  
Open Spring of 2009

Detroit Shoreway Adds Two  
New Restaurants!

Residential Row Welcomes:  
Phoenix Coffee

▶ April (4)

▶ March (3)

▶ February (4)

"Within just a few blocks alone, there were 13 bars on the south side of Detroit Avenue," Zone said. "You could see the effects on the neighborhood. My mother was a figurehead in the battle, but several community leaders banded together to dry up the neighborhood.

"I haven't been willy-nilly about allowing in new licenses," Zone said, acknowledging the impact liquor, beer and wine sales can have, particularly in upscale restaurants. Luxe, Reddstone, Krazy Mac's and Stone Mad all hold full licenses. "I've been pretty thoughtful about who I've supported in getting liquor licenses," Zone added.

Next up, the councilman said, is new "cityscaping" through Gordon Square to update the district's overall look, and a pair of expanded lighted, ground-level parking areas. Meanwhile, many of the incoming restaurateurs are emphasizing their own secure, free parking, some of it including valet service, to help ensure guest safety.

"It's really exciting being here," said Niki Gilotti, owner of Gypsy Bean. "With all the restaurant and retail openings in the neighborhood, people living and working here don't feel that they need to go out to the suburbs anymore. There's really something to come down for."

POSTED BY SCOTT PHILLIPS JR. AT 1:58 PM

LABELS: BROTHERS, DETROIT SHOREWAY, LATITUDE 41, LUXE, REDDSTONE, STONE MAD

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