

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## In Midtown, a Changing of the Seasons

Four Seasons ponders pop-ups, while the restaurant moving into its Seagram Building space plans to ‘pay homage’

By CHARLES PASSY May 19, 2016



The lunch crowd at the Four Seasons on Thursday. ILLUSTRATION: MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Four Seasons is preparing to end its half-century run on East 52nd Street by mid-July, but co-owners Julian Niccolini and Alex von Bidder aren't done with the restaurant business just yet.

While they work on reopening a new Four Seasons nearby, Mr. Niccolini said that they are planning some modern initiatives, including Four Seasons pop-up events and even a Four Seasons food truck. The truck would serve the restaurant's signature crab cakes in Midtown, Mr. Niccolini said, and he might help man its mobile kitchen as he spreads the word about the new permanent location.

Meanwhile, Major Food Group, the restaurant company behind such downtown hot spots as Carbone, Parm and Sadelle's, has been developing its plans for the restaurant that will open at the Four Seasons' existing location in the Seagram Building.

Jeff Zalaznick, managing partner at Major Food Group, said the restaurant will be essentially two dining spots

in one: a contemporary seafood restaurant in what is now the landmark Pool Room and a retro-themed restaurant, with menu items inspired by Four Seasons classics from the past, in what is now the Grill Room.

Mr. Niccolini doesn't appreciate the effort, saying that Mr. Rosen, whom he said refused to renew his and Mr. von Bidder's lease at the Seagram Building, and the Major Food Group team is unfairly tapping his restaurant's legacy.

While Messrs. Niccolini and von Bidder have made their name serving Midtown professionals, they must now contend with the fact they will be without a home for a year, despite the food truck and pop-up ideas.

If anything, said Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant consultant, such brand-maintaining efforts could backfire if they turn off Four Seasons loyalists.

“Doing a pop-up or a food truck is contrary to the image they're trying to cultivate,” she said. ●