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Eli and Oliver Zabar Plan a Lower East Side Dining Spot

'We're doing something appropriate for the neighborhood'

CHARLES PASSY – April 2, 2018



As a restaurateur and gourmet-market operator, Eli Zabar has built his reputation by focusing largely on Manhattan's Upper East Side, where he runs more than 10 establishments.

Now, after three decades, he is turning his attention elsewhere — specifically, the Lower East Side.

In partnership with his son Oliver, Eli Zabar is planning to open an all-day dining and drinking spot at 252 Broome St., a space formerly home to the Lucky Bee, a Thai restaurant.

Eli Zabar's businesses are separate from Zabar's, the gourmet market and smoked-fish specialist that has been a fixture on the Upper West Side for decades.

A particular challenge for Eli Zabar in establishing himself downtown may be pricing, said Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant consultant. On the Upper East Side, she said, Eli Zabar caters to a market that can afford to dine out or shop without questioning the cost so much. That isn't the case on the Lower East Side, she said.

"If he thinks he's going to sell a \$14 tuna-fish sandwich, that's not going to happen," said Ms. Spiegel.

Eli Zabar has branched out beyond the Upper East Side before. In 2012, he opened spaces within Grand Central Market, a gourmet-food complex at the Midtown rail terminal. ●