

Restaurateur Stephen Starr Snaps Up Dining Space at Fotografiska

He plans to open a 115-seat restaurant in the Flatiron District in September

By Charles Passy – April 25, 2019



Stephen Starr, the Philadelphia- and New York-based restaurateur who has gained a following for such Manhattan dining spots as Morimoto, Buddakan, Upland and Le Coucou, is quickly expanding his empire in the Big Apple.

In the Flatiron District, Mr. Starr plans to open what he described as a “grand cafe” in the European tradition. The 115-seat restaurant will be part of Fotografiska, a six-story photography exhibition space that is slated to launch in September.

As previously announced, Mr. Starr will also operate Pastis, the trendsetting Meatpacking District brasserie that is being relaunched next month in a new location in the neighborhood. Mr. Starr is working in partnership with veteran New York restaurateur Keith McNally, who opened the original Pastis in 1999 and ran it until it closed in 2014.

Mr. Starr’s two new projects speak to his growing ambitions and his skill at developing and refining concepts that speak to the city’s stylish and social-minded dining sensibility, say restaurant-industry professionals.

“He creates exciting environments that make people want to gather,” said Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant consultant.

Mr. Starr, who was named the country’s outstanding restaurateur at the 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards, said his inspiration often comes from locations he chooses for his establishments.

In the case of the still-to-be-named restaurant at Fotografiska, which will open in tandem with the exhibition space, he said he was inspired by the large windows and “beautiful” woodwork. Such details spoke to a certain stately European character, he said. ●