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Going up in Blue Smoke

Howard Johnson to house new restaurant; plans for hotel

By Sonia Fernandez, Staff Reporter

Blue Smoke will be sweeping through Greenwich as Union Square Hospitality Group prepares to open its first restaurant outside New York City.

Named after its predecessor on 27th Street and Park Avenue, Blue Smoke Chophouse will move into the space that was occupied by the Howard Johnson in Riverside, along with a new hotel operated by the same group that operates the Delamar Greenwich Harbor hotel.

"It's an ideal opportunity to bring the restaurant to Greenwich," said David Swinghamer, partner and president of Union Square Hospitality Group.

He added that a large population of the group's diners are from Greenwich and throughout Fairfield County and had voiced the desire to see Blue Smoke Chophouse come to the area.

The restaurant will offer patrons a family ambiance during the early evening and a place for adults to enjoy cocktails and fine dining later. The bar will offer a variety of wines, beers and cocktails in hope of becoming a hot spot for people coming from throughout Fairfield and Westchester counties.

"We're excited because it's going to be the type of restaurant that fits into what we've done in Manhattan. ... It will be a 'best of class' level that offers great hospitality to the Greenwich area," Mr. Swinghamer said.

The Union Square Hospitality Group has enhanced the ambiance of the restaurant by focusing on wood-fired cooking. Not only will the meats be wood-smoked, but the grills and ovens will also be wood-fired.

The open kitchen will allow guests to see the goings-on behind the scenes of how the food is prepared with seasonal ingredients.

Mr. Swinghamer said the group was asked by the owners of the 1114 East Putnam Ave. property last year if they would entertain the idea of bringing their restaurant to Greenwich to accompany the new "green" design hotel.

Plans to renovate the Howard Johnson and the attached Tandoori restaurant were submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission on March 19, but have been dropped as both the hotel and restaurant are being gutted to make room for the new plans.

While the new hotel has yet to start the planning and zoning process, Mr. Swinghamer said he hopes the restaurant will be ready by next summer.

"We'd love to be able to benefit from the summer season," said Mr. Swinghamer, as the restaurant will offer outdoor seating.



The Howard Johnson will be renovated as the Delmar opens a new hotel at that location and Blue Smoke takes the place of Tandoori restaurant

■ sfernandez@greenwich-post.com