

allen west

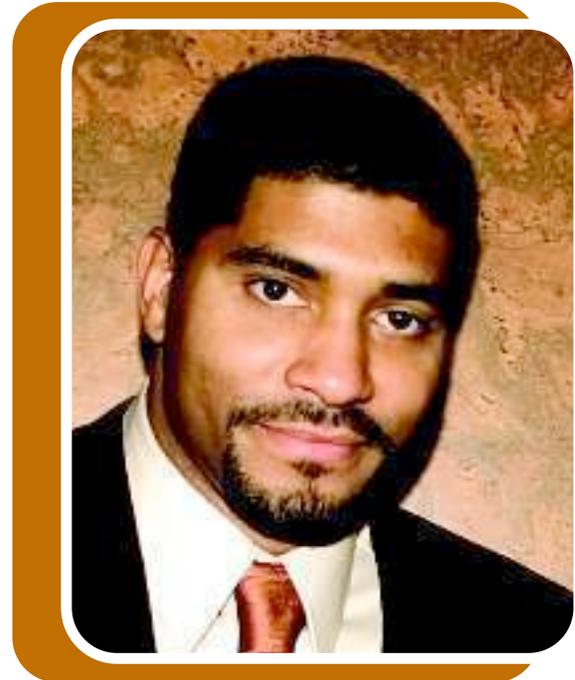
Not many people can count Sean Puffy Combs as a client. However, Allen West has been a premier force in the hospitality and entertainment industry for over a decade. Having owned, managed, consulted and promoted some of New York's most vibrant restaurants and nightclubs, Allen has successfully established himself as a hospitality and entertainment guru. When asked "what's your recipe for success?" Allen laughs, "vision and hard work. Lots of hard work".

Having started his career as the youngest Captain ever to work at the Four Seasons Biltmore in Santa Barbara, California, Allen learned many of his four-star service techniques early. To secure the business fundamentals, Allen earned a BA in Business Management from St. Francis College in Brooklyn, New York.

The most important thing for a successful black male to strive for is to help another young black male succeed. Too often we turn our backs on those that could benefit from our support.

Seeking to make his own way, Allen turned obstacles into attributes. Despite being 23 years old and having relatively little experience, Allen along with his business partner, was able to raise \$200,000 to open his first restaurant, *Kwanzaa*, in New York City. After two incredibly successful years as a restaurant owner, Allen sought a new challenge. After selling his interest in *Kwanzaa*, Allen launched a consulting practice, Nationwide Restaurant Resources, a full-service hospitality consulting firm specializing in restaurants and nightclubs coast to coast. "My goal was to develop a hospitality organization designed to empower and create opportunities for young black professionals" he acknowledges.

Allen's first account was Central Park's Boathouse Café which was named one of the 'Top 10' outdoor cafés in the country during Allen's consulting contract. Allen's professional brand and track record equates to seven figure earnings for many of his clients which include



Justin's Restaurant and the Red Eye Grill which is the 7th highest grossing restaurant in the country.

Allen is currently the owner and operator of the Harlem Grill, New York's newest hotspot. "It's my goal to help create more critical mass in Harlem's burgeoning nightlife scene. I want to put on display that we can do it, just as well, if not better than they can!" exclaims this self-assured entrepreneur.

Admitting that he is driven by hard work ethics, this passionate family man confides, "work is rewarding. However, I'm most proud of the relationship I have with my fiancé and my son."

On Black Male Empowerment

"Navigating our health care system can be frustrating and confusing. Often, as patients, we are reluctant to ask probing questions for fear of appearing ignorant. However, it is imperative that you ask questions to gain understanding and clarity. Additionally, select a physician that you feel comfortable with, one that understands your challenges and thoroughly explains treatment options. Most importantly take your healthcare seriously and get regular physicals!" **UIM**

NEWS *Release*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Spencer Casseus, 212.962.3791 ext. 208
spcasseus@yahoo.com



ALLEN WEST TO BE HONORED AT THE NETWORK JOURNAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CEREMONY

TOP "40-Under-Forty" Selected by Black Business Magazine As The Nation's Finest Young Achievers

New York, NY, May 26, 2004 – *The Network Journal* (TNJ), a New York City-based magazine that focuses on African-American professionals and small business news has completed selections for its year 2004 top achievers who will be honored at the seventh annual "**40-Under-Forty**" Awards Ceremony. Included among the honorees is **Allen West, Owner, Harlem Grill** located in New York. The semi-formal event will be held on Thursday, June 17th at Columbia University located at 2920 Broadway (between 114th and 115th streets) in New York City from 6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

The recognition event is a one of a kind in the area and profiles 40 individuals, all under the age of 40, who have achieved significant levels of success and made substantial contributions in their careers and their communities. The 40 achievers will also be profiled in the special June issue of the magazine.

The official list of honorees represents an influential roster of African American entrepreneurs and business persons from around the country and includes **Dr. Lishan Aklog**, Associate Chief, Cardiac Surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center; **Dr. Catrise L. Austin**, Owner of VIP Smiles; **Kenneth W. Austin**, Executive Director at The Association of Black Foundation Executives; **Sylvia C. Vass**, Vice President Platinum and Centurion Product Management at American Express Company; **Rhahime A. Bell**, Managing Director & Co-Head of Tax-Exempt Derivatives Group at UBS Paine Webber; **Roslyn M. Brock**, Director, System Fund Development at Bon Secours Health System; **Jodi Brockington**, Director of Corporate Relations and Fund Development at The New York Urban League; **Kevin Carr**, Director of Player Development at FleetBoston

Launched in 1993, *The Network Journal* is published 10 times a year by The Network Journal Communications, Inc. headquartered in New York City. The magazine reaches more than 65,000 readers each month, providing empowering news and information primarily for Black professionals, corporate decision makers and entrepreneurs. The magazine's signature issues are the annual list of 25 Influential Black Women in Business (March), 40-Under-Forty Black Achievers (June) and the Entrepreneurs Resource Guide, a stand-alone publication.

Financial; **Todd Corley**, Manager, Diversity at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide; **Keith Dawkins**, VP and General Manager at Nicktoons; **Kyle T. Hagler**, Account Executive at IMG Models; **Ian Hardman**, Chief Executive Officer at Davin Wheel Inc.; Byron Harmon, Executive Producer at WCBS-2 New York; **Terri L. Hines**, Senior Manager, Public Affairs at Nissan North America, Inc.; **Teresa Kay-Aba Kennedy**, President of Power Living Enterprises; Jayson Jackson, Senior Vice-President and General Manager of Urban Music at Virgin Records; **Dr. Daniel Laroche**, President of Advanced Eyecare of New York; **Anthony Maddox**, Vice President of Bad Boy Films; **Vaughn L. McKoy**, Director, NJ Division of Criminal Justice; **Ritta McLaughlin**, Author/VP, Public Finance at Bear, Stearns & Co; **Walter Mosley III**, Legal Counsel to State Assembly Clarence Norman Jr.; **C. Anthony Mulrain**, Partner at Greenberg & Traurig LLP; Erin O. Patton, President/CEO of The Mastermind Group; **Keith C. Perrin**, Vice President of FB Entertainment and FUBU the Collection; **Aisha Thomas Petit**, Diversity Manager at JP Morgan Chase; **Kimatni D. Rawlins**, CEO/President/Publisher of Automotive Rhythms LLC; **Keshia L. Richmond**, President and Founder of Richmond Technology Solutions, Inc.; **June E. Scarlett**, Director of Clinical Strategies at Beth Israel Medical Center; **Helen C. Shelton**, Executive Vice President at Ruder Finn Arts & Communications Counselors; **Tony Shellman**, Co-founder of Enyce Clothing Company; **Max L. Siegel**, President of Verity Records/VP, Jive Records Urban A&R; **Robert Tolbert**, Sourcing and Procurement Manager at Time Warner Inc.; **Kerry Y. Tucker**, Executive Vice President at SBLI Mutual Life Insurance; **Allen West, Owner of The Harlem Grill Restaurant**; **Pamela M. Wheeler**, Director of Operations at WNBA Players Association; **Marc Williams** National Brand Director at Champs Sports; **Phillana Williams**, VP of Urban Marketing at Arista Records.

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MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

September 27, 2005

Mr. Allen West
Owner
Harlem Grill
2247 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10027

Dear Allen: ✓

Thank you so much for all of your work on behalf of my campaign in the last week. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your standing by me and joining African Americans for Bloomberg. Your public vote of confidence means so much for my re-election and I am truly flattered to have your support. I also can't thank you enough for opening your doors to us at The Harlem Grill. You have gone above and beyond and I am extremely appreciative.

You are the greatest!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael R. Bloomberg".

Michael R. Bloomberg

MRB:cl

CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

BUSINESS LIVES

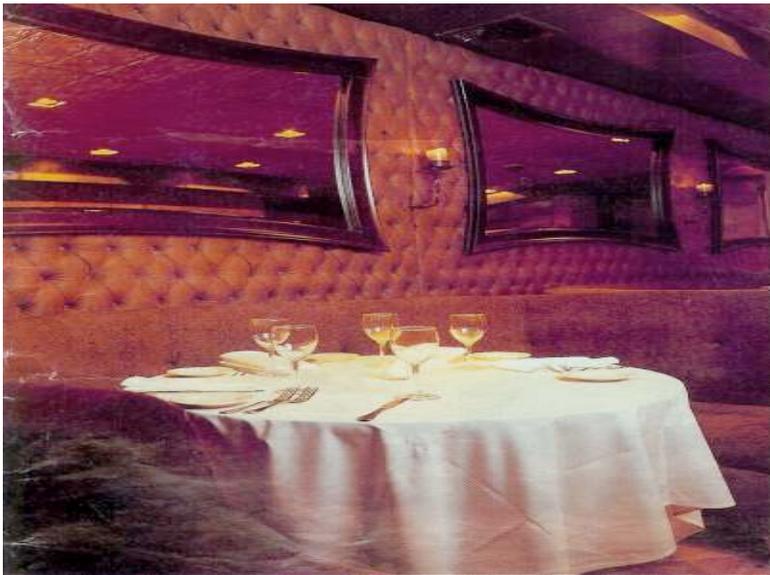
TABLE TALK

Harlem Grill taps local history

by **Bob Lape**

published August 1, 2005

**Serves neighborhood dishes
along with new American;
belted songs add to sound**



A MIXTURE OF OLD AND NEW: At the tin-ceilinged Harlem Grill, the chef strives for dishes that are timeless and flavorful. Diners can get chicken and waffles on weekends.

A delicious addition to the new spirit of Harlem is the new Harlem Grill.

Owner/operator Allen West and chef Tyson Jordan have transformed the former Wells' Chicken & Waffle eatery into a handsome, sophisticated restaurant, lounge and supper club.

There is some controversy about who invented chicken and waffles. The Pennsylvania Dutch may have a case, but it was Joe Wells who popularized the dish while feeding music moguls for 60 years. Nat King Cole had his wedding reception there, Sammy Davis, Jr. was a regular, and many Cotton Club and Minton's stars spent wee hours with waffles at Wells.

Chef/partner Jordan and Mr. West pay homage to local lore with chicken and waffles on weekend menus. But the rest of the fare is inventive new American with a Southern drawl. Mr. West and chef Jordan began 20 year-plus careers in the hospitality business in their midteens. Mr. West, former owner of Kwanzaa in SoHo, has consulted for leading restaurants in New York. Chef Jordan's resume includes stints at Atlantic City casino hotels, Philadelphia's esteemed Striped Bass, and Manhattan's Redeye Grill.



Harlem Grill

2247-49 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. (Seventh Ave.)
(212) 491-0493



Cuisine: New American/Southern

Wines: 60 choices, sommelier

Dress: No code

Noise Level: High Mon.-Tues., moderate otherwise

Price Range: 19-\$26

Wine Markup: 45%-210%

Credit Cards: All major

Reservations: Recommended

Hours: Mon.-Sat., 6-11:30 p.m.

****= Outstanding

***= Excellent

**= Very good

*= Good

At Harlem Grill, the chef strives for dishes that are timeless and flavorful, punching up intensity with reductions and infusions. This means starters (\$7 to \$16) such as merlot-braised, fall-off-the-bone short rib over creamy grits studded with wild mushrooms. Crispy rock shrimp play happily off apricot-curry sauce. Spicy tuna wontons are paired with delicate enoki mushrooms. Fresh and colorful salads and soups reflect seasonal produce and the chef's desire to showcase the best ingredients simply and memorably.

Tersely described entrees may seem basic, as in "fish & grits," but the dish is a blend of savory snapper or sea bass with salmon and manila clams. The underlying grits hold nibbles of shrimp as well. I'm keen on clay-pot snapper, slow-cooked with other seafood, and taking on a smoky, spicy edge from chunks of andouille sausage in the pot. A wasabi crust lends zip to a tuna steak reposing amid a swirl of Asian vegetables.

Other entrees of note: a tender and juicy herb-roasted chicken, hearty flank steak served with caramelized-onion mashed potatoes, a 10-ounce Harlem Grill burger, and a significantly oversized grilled pork chop done up with mashed sweet potatoes.

The well-dressed uptown clientele co-mingled with a few hip-hoppers also find sweet potatoes in their cheesecake, and a mixed, macerated berry approach to strawberry shortcake. The shortcake itself is lemon. The star of the sweet show, however, is bourbon butter pecan profiterole, a puff pastry filled with homemade bourbon butter pecan gelato and drizzled with warm chocolate sauce.

Designer Carlos Jimenez created and constructed most of the restaurant's interior and furnishings, from tin ceilings and leather-pleated walls to amber lights and antique mirrors. Harlem Grill seats up to 100 patrons, who are cosseted by an engaging and attractive staff. In Frank West, no relation to Allen, it has one of Harlem's very few sommeliers, overseeing a well-priced list of global goodies.

And if you think the hostess is a knockout, wait till you hear her sing! New Orleans-born blues singer Acantha (Lang) performs Monday evenings with a five-piece band. There is no cover charge for the added pleasure. Let admiration know some bounds. Her fiancée is the owner, Allen West, an athletic 6-foot-5.

There are other musical entertainments on Tuesdays, when celebs make unscheduled drop-ins--even without chicken and waffles--and a gospel brunch is in the works.

ZAGAT SURVEY®

2006

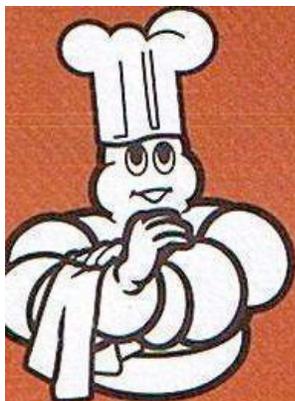
New York City Restaurants

Harlem Grill



2247 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. (bet. 132nd & 133rd st.),
212-491-0493

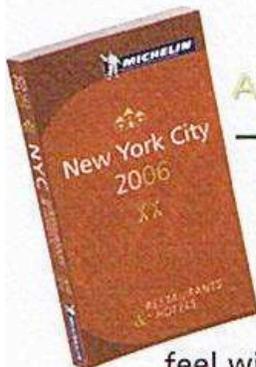
A “terrific addition” to Harlem, replacing the famed jazz club/eatery Well’s, this “classy” destination serves a seafood-heavy slate of Southern-New American fare, and early visitors are saying “it’s all good”; N.B. a gospel brunch is in the works.



Michelin® Guide 2006

Recommends:

Harlem Grill



American



Opened at the beginning of 2005, Harlem Grill occupies the former Wells Club, which over the years hosted luminaries like Billie Holiday. In its new incarnation, the restaurant re-creates a supper-club feel with its dim lighting, cool bar, and regular schedule of musical entertainment. Keep going past the bar into the dining room, where an air of sophistication holds sway. The cuisine here successfully combines traditional Southern ingredients with contemporary style (think succulent short ribs served aside creamy grits), and the kitchen demonstrates a light touch that makes Harlem Grill a worthy dining destination, rather than merely an adjunct to a hip music club.



AS SEEN IN

NEW YORK POST

Saturday, April 23, 2005



UPTOWN play

THE New York Jets, who need minority support for their West Side stadium, will be in Harlem today throwing an NFL draft-day bash for fans at the Harlem Grill Supper Club. The Jets have held draft-day parties before, but downtown. The trip north with **Joe Namath** (above) and **Freeman Mcneal** to the hip hot spot—which recently hosted **Alicia Keys** and **Stevie Wonder**—is a result of the growing minority support for the jobs-producing stadium, which is also backed by **Rep. Charles Rangel** and the **Rev. Al Sharpton**.

AS SEEN IN

NEW YORK POST

Thursday, December 22, 2005



Roger partied on strike night

WHILE countless ordinary New Yorkers were trudging home from work in the bitter cold Tuesday night due to the transit strike, Transport Workers Union boss **Roger Toussaint** and his chaos-causing labor cronies were living the high life at an upscale uptown eatery.

Toussaint and his comrades were in a jubilant mood at chichi Harlem Grill, an elegant supper club on Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard with gleaming candelabras, antique mirrors and live jazz.

A spywitness tells PAGE SIX's **Fernando Gil**: "[Toussaint and his party] were there for at least 2 ½ hours. People kept coming and going all night, but there must have been at least six people at their table at all times.

"They were drinking, eating and joking," the witness relates. "At one point, the owner or manager of the restaurant came over to make sure they'd been taken care of. I heard a man in their group say, 'Do you think they're all going to stay home tomorrow?' --- and people at the table laughed."

Our source reports that Toussaint, dressed smartly in a suit, chowed down on clay pot snapper. Others at his table devoured grilled salmon, rib-eye steaks and glasses of chardonnay. In an apparent sign of solidarity with the working man, they left a \$30 tip on the surprisingly modest \$152 check.

Had the trains been running, Toussaint and his cronies could have taken the 1,2,3 or C lines to Harlem Grill, but we suspect the large-living labor leader and his fellow revelers were driven to the feast in a comfortable, heated limo.

Toussaint's hard-working rep, **Ken Sunshine**, said the TWU boss got a "standing ovation" when he walked into the restaurant. "They'd just been on the picket line for two hours, and the reason the dinner took so long was that they were working. No one was making light of the strike," Sunshine claimed.

Harlem Grill is wearing it wells

BY PASCALE LE DRAOULEC
DAILY NEWS RESTAURANT CRITIC

When Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday felt like noshing after performing at the Cotton Club, they'd head for Wells', a restaurant and nightclub a little more uptown in Seventh Ave. Not only did Wells' serve blacks, but the kitchen made a mean plate of fried chicken and waffles, the perfect post-linner/prebreakfast supper-club snack.

Wells', named for its owner, Joseph T. Wells, operated nearly continually from 1938, when it opened with three booths and five stools, until 2000. It lay fallow until last fall, when Harlem-born restaurateur Allen West, 36, assumed the lease.

West, who started working in restaurants at 15, had long wanted to open a restaurant in Harlem's "fertile ground." The opportunity to rekindle a local landmark was icing, he says. His aim in creating Harlem Grill was to "bring a little bit of downtown uptown, without bastardizing the beautiful history of Wells'."

Downtown is reflected in a menu that is new American with just a soupcon of soul—as in crispy rock shrimp with a tangy apricot curry sauce, or the tender short rib lounging on a sweaty bed of grits with crisped shallot ringlets and wild mushrooms.

You can tell the moment you step into the brown-vinyl backlit bar that this restaurant marches to its own beat. In a separate, cozy lounge with low-slung chairs, designer-wear blends with athletic-wear over cocktails named "Coltrane." In the main dining room the walls are upholstered in pin-cushion leather and most tables look to the stage, an integral part of the Harlem Grill experience.

On Mondays, expect to hear real barnyard blues. Tuesdays are when people in the music business "unplug," with recording artists—some as well known as Chanté Moore or Bobby Valentino—coming to stretch their lungs unfettered.

The great thing about this place is that you never know who is going to saunter onstage. One Tuesday night, R&B singer Jacci McGhee brought down the house with her



TASTE OF HISTORY: Harlem Grill brings new life, and sounds, to local landmark.

searingly personal repertoire. By the time the evening was over, she'd brought most of her musical family on stage—from her ex, who sang so meltingly, we thought we were witnessing a reconciliation, to her nephew, "Scotch," who rapped, ever so gently, making converts at every table.

Scotch works behind the bar at Harlem Grill most nights, but performs on Thursdays—and every other chance he gets. Typical of supper clubs, the dining room feels incredibly intimate during performances, slightly off-kilter when the stage is empty. The music definitely enriches your meal.

That's not to say certain dishes don't stand out on this burgers-to-bisque menu. The asparagus and wild mushroom salad, with its lemon-y dressing, shiitake caps and fruity enoki mushrooms is divine. The last thing I

expected in this windowless lounge was a dish this light and bright, but chef Tyson Jordan (formerly of Red Eye Grill) makes a concerted effort to bring lots of fresh ingredients to a neighborhood that takes pride in fried.

Among main courses, the wasabi-crust-ed tuna over a chorus of Asian vegetables was quite good, though the kitchen might consider slicing it. (It's hard enough to eat and listen to live music at the same time). Also tasty are the five jumbo shrimp served grilled atop zucchini and potato, smothered with coarse tomatoes, onions and garlic. Though slightly gristly, the pork chop (big as one of Jimi Hendrix's hands) was perfectly cooked and served on sweet potato mash. But the fish and grits, with sauteed snapper, clams and shrimp, tasted soapy.

Waiters raved about the chef's signature clay-pot snapper, and yet, to my chagrin, the dish was oddly unavailable on every visit. If Harlem Grill aspires to its predecessor's longevity, it's going to have to iron out such inconsistencies (most nights there is no cover

charge, but one night the music costs \$10).

Service is earnest and sweet but not always professional. When McGhee was performing a particularly soulful tune, a determined busboy insisted on handing her a cocktail—even though her eyes were closed and her hands were gripping the microphone. And chipped martini glasses don't belong in a place promising panache.

Soon, Harlem Grill will start serving Wells' famous fried chicken and waffles on Fridays and Saturdays, from midnight to 3 a.m. But even without the dish, I think Mr. Wells, who once said he wanted his restaurant "to change with the neighborhood," would have liked what they've done to the place.

Ditto for the Duke.

E-mail: pledraoulec@nydailynews.com

★ ★ 1/2

HARLEM GRILL

2247 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. (Seventh Ave. between 132nd and 133rd Sts.) (212) 491-0493. Open Mon.-Sat. for dinner. Weekend brunch. Dinner starters: \$7-\$18; entrees: \$14-\$26. All credit cards. Reservations suggested.

★★★★ EXTRAORDINARY
★★★ EXCELLENT
★★ GOOD
★ FAIR
no stars DON'T BOTHER



December 10, 1998

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Alan West was retained by Ohm as a consultant to advise on the opening of Ohm's restaurant. While working with us, Mr. West provided a wealth of experience and operational information which was of great value to Ohm.

In addition to handling all of the basic administrative aspects of starting a restaurant including menu design and compilation of a wine list, Mr. West contributed greatly to the success of Ohm's start-up by interviewing, training and managing a first rate staff of hostesses, waiters, runners and bussers. Mr. West's presence on the floor during operations was at once commanding and smooth and guests would regularly complement his performance.

Not insignificantly, Mr. West was instrumental in developing a strong "A" list dinner clientele which played an important part in Ohm's powerful success in the media.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Mr. West as a restaurant manager and am available to discuss his performance should you wish any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles G. Cecil'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charles G. Cecil
Owner

As Seen In



06/29/98

PUFF DADDY PLANS BUCKHEAD EATERY

Shade Elam Staff Writer

Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, one of the world's most famous hip-hop heroes, rappers and producers, plans to open a restaurant in Buckhead in a partnership with La Face Records founder Antonio "L.A." Reid.

Combs, who opened a restaurant called Justin's in New York last year, signed a long-term lease for the former Coco Pazzo location at 2200 Peachtree Road. Like the New York location, the Atlanta restaurant will be named Justin's after his 3-year-old son.

Justin's will serve upscale Caribbean food with a Southern influence and scheduled to open in September after minor renovations.

It will be open for lunch and dinner, and turn into a "celebrity lounge" at night, said Allen West, the Managing Consultant at Justin's in New York who will also help open the Atlanta restaurant.

'Atlanta was the first choice for a second location because 26-year-old Combs owns a house here, and his business management company, V. Brown & Co., has an office here' West said. The hip-hop impresario looked only in Buckhead, and settled on the former Coco Pazzo location because of its ample parking and good visibility, he said. Steve Josovitz of The Shumacher Group represented the seller in the deal.

"There's a big entertainment market here," West said. "It's a diversified city with the hottest growth factor of any city in the country right now."

GROWTH IN MARKET

Although his relationship with La Face, V. Brown's office and his house -- just down the street from Evander Holyfield's in Fayette County -- make Atlanta a favorable location, the city itself is becoming known in music circles as a center for hip-hop and rhythm and blues.

During the past eight years, since La Face opened, other hot producers have joined the ranks in the city. Others include Dallas Austin of Rowdy Records, Jermaine Dupri of So So Def Recordings and Rico Wade of the Organized Noize production group.

In addition, Atlanta attracts middle and upper class black residents. The city has some of the best black colleges in the country and a number of radio stations aimed at black audiences.

West says, 'the diverse market, combined with southern hospitality, will make Justin's a success.'

VISITS FROM OWNER

"Justin's Atlanta location will merge sophistication and energy that the New York market demands with the warmth and hospitality of the South," West said. He said it would be an upscale restaurant, not a hip-hop café.

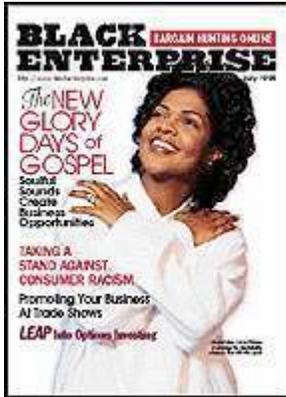
West has more than 10 years of experience with restaurants in New York.

Combs' team would not comment on the price of the lease or the sales at the New York restaurant. West said, however, that the restaurant has exceeded expectations during its first year.

Combs, who frequents the New York restaurant, will likely visit the Atlanta location often, according to West. Recently he has cut down on the number of visits to the New York restaurant because of the mobs of people that want to talk with him.

"Because of his celebrity status, [Justin's] will probably pull business from all over," Josovitz said.

As Seen In Black Enterprise



7/98

BLACK-OWNED CELEBRITY RESTAURANTS ARE OPENING IN CITIES NATIONWIDE

MARCELLE WILLIAMS FOWLER

A growing number of African American celebrities, working closely with restaurant industry veterans, are adding "restaurateur" to their credentials and creating some of the hottest dining spots for business travelers, tourists, local residents and fellow celebrities nationwide. Whether you're in the mood for down-home soul food, classic Cajun or nouvelle international cuisine, a star-powered dining experience is just minutes away. In New York City alone, six celebrity-owned restaurants have opened up since January 1997.

Development in major cities and the creation of national chains are on the horizon for some celebrity ventures hoping to cash in on the lucrative black market. "Restaurateurs and celebrities are looking at the success of restaurants that target the middle and upper-middle-class African American demographic," says Scott Mills, senior vice president of business development for BET Holdings, the parent company of Black Entertainment Television.

While some celebrities prefer to be silent partners or to simply lend their famous names, others are fulfilling lifelong ambitions.

"Celebrities are finding that restaurants enable them to synergize many aspects of their lifestyle, from entertaining large numbers of people and enjoying fine dining

to conducting important business meetings and making substantial financial investments," says Allen West, a restaurant industry consultant currently working on Justin's in New York City.

Wherever you plan to go on business, chances are that you won't be far from one of these pallet-pleasing establishments. Take a few moments to pinpoint the following eateries, listed below, on your summer itinerary.

NEW YORK CITY

Justin Take one look at the baby grand piano and extensive wine list, and you'll sense the alter ego of Bad Boy Entertainment CEO Puffy Combs at Justin's (31 W. 21st St.; 212352-0599). Specializing in a lighter, more health-conscious approach to Southern and Caribbean foods, Justin's offers delicacies such as lobster pan roast and down-home laves like smothered pork chops, catfish and grits, and red velvet cake covered with raspberry sauce. Prices for main courses range from \$16 to \$25.

As Seen In

NATION'S *Restaurant News*

01/12/98

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STARS SHINE WITH NYC EATERIES

Author: Milford Prewitt

NEW YORK -- A galaxy of popular black performers are sprinkling Manhattan with midscale restaurants, a few of them emerging as major see-and-be-seen roosts for night owls.

African-American megastars Laurence Fishburne, Denzel Washington and Wesley Snipes, rhythm-and-blues legends Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, better known as Ashford and Simpson, hip-hop concert producer, rapper and dancer Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, and television and movie actor Malik Yoba range from mere investors to studiously active owners in five new restaurants.

At the same time, basketball legend Julius "Dr. J" Irving and the New York Knicks' Charles Oakley are co-partners in one of the start-ups.

In all cases the celebrities have teamed up with seasoned industry veterans and chefs to derive from foodservice as much ego gratification and financial success as they do on the big screen or in concert tours, their operating partners said.

THE VENTURES INCLUDE:

MOOMBA

Financial backers are Fishburne and the award-winning director Oliver Stone.

LITTLE JEZEBEL

An Upper West Side offspring of the popular New Orleans-style Jezebel restaurant in Times Square, that brings together Snipes and Washington, along with Oakley and Dr. J. Also backing the deal is Ed Lewis, the publisher and chief executive of Essence magazine.

SUGAR BAR

Ashford and Simpson's foray, the restaurant, also on the Upper West Side, is the singing couple's second time in 10 years running a restaurant.

THE SOUL CAFÉ

The 42nd Street Afro-centric restaurant that harbors dreams of global expansion This is where Malik Yoba, of "New York Undercover" fame and, more recently, the movie "Cop Land," is a silent partner.

JUSTIN'S

A new midscale soul food and Caribbean restaurant in the Chelsea neighborhood, owned by Combs. The 26-year-old music mogul who is perhaps better known as the head of Bad Boy Entertainment -- producers of such groups and singers as Boyz II Men, Mariah Carey and the late Notorious B.I.G.

- named Allen West, a veteran of the TAM Restaurant group and the former owner of SoHo's Kwanzaa Restaurant to run Justin's.

But Allen West, the Managing Consultant at Justin's, said Combs -- the 26-year-old head of Bad Boy Entertainment whom The New York Times recently placed among 1997's 10 most influential artists in pop music -- is involved heavily in the 86-seat restaurant.

West said Combs had a hand in almost every aspect of the restaurant and contributed several ideas to the menu. A key concern of Combs, West said, was that the restaurant not be seen as a hip-hop cafe where blaring music drowns out conversation. Instead, the dining room is smooth and relaxing, in earth tones, and features on many nights a jazz pianists, who one night gave up his ivories to Stevie Wonder. At a check average of about \$40, the restaurant has a dress code forbidding jeans and sneakers.

"Puffy has a very hands-on approach," West said. "He has an amazing eye for detail, from the waiter's outfits to the floral arrangements to the lighting of the room. It's tight from the first frame to the last, and that is the way he runs his business."

However, Combs' oversight does not mean that West's creativity is stifled. He currently is developing a wine list with Chef Marvin James that focuses on an African-American palate, based on his belief that blacks favor sweeter wines and heartier reds, which better complement soul and Caribbean food.

At the same time West and Marketing Director Kimberly Porter are gearing up to produce a weekly series of Gospel brunches, featuring church choirs from around the city.

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As Seen In

ESSENCE

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HOW WE DID IT

Lisa Gallimore and Allen West: entrepreneurs with a new eatery!

With 13 years of restaurant experience under her belt, Lisa Gallimore, 26 (who got her first job at 13 at McDonald's), joined forces with



a restaurant coworker, model-actor Allen West, 25, to open Kwanzaa at 19 Cleveland Place in SoHo in New York City. The main floor, which seats 100, also showcases the artwork of Black artists; downstairs is a forum for live music. The cozy spot has already attracted Wesley Snipes, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis.

Here's how they say they did it: **GETTING STARTED** "Last June we found this place and fell in love with it. The day we looked at it, the owners of the previous restaurant were tagging the fixtures for an auction. We didn't have any money. Walking down the street, we ran into a chef from our last employer, Time Cafe, and told her about our dilemma. Right on the spot, she cut us a check for \$5,000 to secure the fixtures!" **OVERCOMING OBSTACLES** "We scraped togeth-

er the money for rent and security from friends and relatives. The day before we were to put the money into escrow for the landlord of the building, someone slipped

an envelope under my door containing a statement of foreclosure. We didn't know that the SoHo building was in receivership—and that the bank had appointed a managing agent while the landlord was being repossessed. We would have lost our money. Instead, we were in a fantastic position to negotiate the rent and snag a ten-year lease." **CUTTING MORE CORNERS** "All the contractors we saw gave us bids of \$150,000. Jamaican-born Brian Goodin, an interior and textile designer, was so excited by the prospect of constructing an African-designed space that he deferred the payments." **WHAT THEY'RE MOST PROUD OF** "By opening our own restaurant, we show other young Black people that it is possible to have your own business—with style!"

NATIONS Restaurant News

WHATS HOT IN

NEW YORK, Part II

Harley Davidson Cafe

1370 Sixth Ave., (212) 245-6000. Seats: 400
Cuisine: gourmet road food. Specialties: Jay's
crunchy shrimp; New York sirloin; grilled
vegetable sandwich. Entrée price range: \$7.50-
\$19.95. Owner: Marc Packer. Chef: Jay Lippin.

Kwanza

19 Cleveland Place, (212) 941-6095. Seats: 100
and 60 in cabaret parlor. Cuisine: international
soul food from the Caribbean, Brazil, American
South and Africa. Specialties: braised ox tail
served with coconut rice and gonga peas,
plantains; Guinness Stout ice cream. Entrée price
range: \$9.95-\$15.95. Owner: Lisa Gallimore and
Allen West. Executive chef: John Cabbell.

Mad.51

660 Madison Ave., (212) 833-2200. Seats: 170
including cafe. Cuisine: Italian. Specialties: red-
beet pappardelle with lobster and chanterelle
mushrooms; oseo busco with roasted tomatoes,
runner beans and pearl onions. Entrée price range:
\$16-\$19. Owner: Pino Luongo. Chef de cuisine:
John Schenk; executive chef: Marta Pulini.

Markham

69 Fifth Ave., (212) 647-9391. Seats: 155
including cafe. Cuisine: American. Specialties:
mushroom and ham hock ravioli; butterscotch
crème brûlée. Entrée price range: \$9.50-\$23.50.
Owners: Ansell Hawkins, Beat Hellstern and
Clark Wolf. Chef: Mark Spangenthal.

Orbit

46 Bedford St., (212) 463-8717. Seats: 44
Cuisine: regional American with Latin
influences. Specialties: smoked salmon with blue
corn blini and dill cream, achiate stewed chicken
with yellow rice. Entrée price range: \$10.95-
\$15.95. Owner: Minnie Rivera and Steve Passaro.
Chef: Marvin Woods.

Compiled by Theresa Housud Feb 1994

POST WEEKEND Plus

Harvest spirit makes for an uplifting meal

By LIZ LOGAN

TRYING to get a cab on my way to Kwanzaa, I did an unintentional half-gainer into a pile of slush. Then I left my hat in a cab (that makes the third one this winter). At this point I was cursing my choice of city and profession.

Dinner at Kwanzaa was completely mollifying. The new restaurant, which opened on New Year's Eve, takes its name from the Swahili name (meaning "first fruits of the harvest") for the holiday, which starts on Dec. 26, created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in this country 25 years ago. Although Kwanzaa was full on the Tuesday night I was there, none of the attitude that the constant restaurant-goer expects from a new, happening restaurant was in evidence.

In fact, the vibe here is warm, and so is the look. Apricot walls, light wood floors, low ceilings, low-key jazz and flattering lighting set off art and fabric from different parts of Africa. The cowrie shell, a symbol of fertility that only became a form of currency after Africa was colonized, serves as the restaurant's logo. My favorite element of decor is the black napkins, which are a witty touch in this international soul food restaurant, as it bills itself.

In this instance, that translates to a predom by Caribbean

KWANZAA

★ ★ ★

19 Cleveland Place, near the intersection of Spring and Lafayette streets. (212) 941-6095. Ratings are based on food, service and ambiance.

★ ★ ★ (worth travel from another borough)
★ ★ ★ (worth travel from another neighborhood)
★ ★ (worth crossing the street)
★ (OK if you're walking by)
no stars (run in the opposite direction)

menu with American Southern and Brazilian touches. Upon my arrival, not only was I cold, wet, hatless and cranky, but I also was dangerously hungry — and socially dangerous for anyone eating with me. (Think about Elaine in the legendary "Seinfeld" episode about waiting for a table at a Chinese restaurant, and you'll get the basic idea.)

All of which is why I ordered something to start without waiting for my colleague to arrive. My soup made me considerably more inclined to hold up my end of the social contract, even if the red beans and andouille sausage had no rice to keep them company.

Not that I keep score or anything, but it is rare that two people do equally well in a restaurant. In other words, one usually orders the menu's greatest hits and the other gets the equivalent of unsuccessful novelty numbers. This time, however, it all came out even.

My colleague got the tizer: perfectly crisp cakes, which made me usual no-crab-cake person of too many soggy versions at other restaurants. Jamaican meat patties were nothing special.

But I got the great chicken, which was I tasted since childhood. Louisiana grandmothers make it on Sundays. anything was wrong with other entree, kingfish. It's just that it turned out what its orderer had in

As for side dishes (with each entree, which fails to mention), I had with my macaroni and black-eyed peas. I forgot the collard greens, rice and peas that we go with the kingfish, no complaints.

We did equally well. Mango ice cream has a swirling texture that recently made item especially sweet potato cheese sounded a little weird, completely successful, textured variation.

Service was concerned what overwhelmed house, which I suspect get fuller.