

WORSHIP SHU SOON

A new temple of hair to open at West Ave: Development shapes up with LA/NY worthy coup

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By Caroline Gallay

September 22nd, 2010 at 11:28 AM

CultureMap has found out that the latest new tenant at West Ave is [Azur Salon](#), the Shepherd Street staple salon of many a [well-coiffed](#) Houstonian.

Owners Nick Brines and Greg Decker revealed that they are opening a second, Shu Uemura–dedicated location called Azur West that will be one of just three of its kind in the United States. The salon has already received its Shu Uemura Temple Salon designation and will bring what now exists only at Bergdorfs in New York City and in Beverly Hills to Houston's own River Oaks.

"We'll be using [Art of Hair](#) products, and essentially living and breathing Shu," Brines tells CultureMap.

"It will be a luxury environment with very high expectations in the level of service and in the level of skill," says Brines, who is adding staff that he says is a mix of younger talent and more experienced long-time Azur stylists.

New accoutrements include a private treatment room and an in-house [INOA color bar](#), a new ammonia and odor–free color line from L'Oreal.

The salon has already began construction and is projected to open this Holiday season, with fingers crossed for Thanksgiving.

Rome Salon & Day Spa is already open in the development and the Schiller Del Grande restaurant group has [confirmed](#) its plans to open two new restaurants in the multi–use megacomplex. A new concept called Zaika from the owner of Indika and a second Houston–area Eddie V's will also be going into West Ave.

TAGS Azur Salon, Azur West, hair, River Oaks, Shu Uemura, West Ave

PEOPLE Greg Decker, Nick Brines



Courtesy of Azur West

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MICKEY ROSMARIN'S NEW HOME

Floral chandeliers, a full-service bar, a catering kitchen and party room are all part of the new Tootsies

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By Shelby Hodge

September 28th, 2010 at 4:35 PM

When Mickey Rosmarin unveils the new incarnation of [Tootsies in West Ave](#) in early 2011, it will be anything but a replica of his tired Highland Village store. Think chic, sophisticated and very social.

In a whirlwind hard-hat tour of the West Ave site Tuesday, the man who has been dressing Houston fashionistas for three decades revealed the signature components of his 35,000-square-foot fashion emporium. With plenty of room in which to play (the current store occupies only 15,000 square feet), Rosmarin is redefining what retail space is all about.

First, there is the 300-foot-long "runway," an open axis really, that extends the length of the store, ideal for Tootsies' popular and numerous designer fashion shows and special events.

At the opposite end of that design spectrum, the new store will boast an intimate party room, around 500 square feet of Brazilian marble-clad space that can be reserved for charity events and private gatherings. Think Ladies Who Lunch birthday parties. And if you have a party room, of course, you need a full catering kitchen. Voila, it's right there!

Playing to the social networking (we're not talking Twitter and Facebook) needs of his gregarious clientele, Rosmarin has included a full-service bar in the new Tootsies plans. Martinis with your Manolos? Cosmopolitans with your couture samples? Shoppers can make themselves at home in this slick space with banquette seating and bar tables and chairs. Even that unique retail amenity is not what impresses the owner most.

"This is the *piece de resistance*," Rosmarin said as he led visitors into another private room, this one reserved for special trunk shows and the presentation of ultra-luxury products. Sheer curtains allowing light in from Westheimer, low sofas and heavy carpeting will define what he describes as a "luxuriously moderne" decor reminiscent of the '40s and '50s.

That room is tucked in the north end of the expansive store, beyond the couture dress department and beyond the couture shoe department, to be



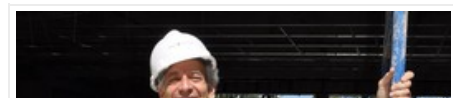
Photo by Shelby Hodge

Mickey Rosmarin gave tours of the hard-hat site of the new Tootsies, to open in West Ave in early 2011.



Photo by Shelby Hodge

Tootsies will be located at the northern end of the West Ave development.



differentiated from the regular shoe area.

"We're stepping up our shoe department with many more designer brands," he said.

All of this fancy stuff is to the left of the entrance – where the black American Express cardholders will feel right at home. To the right will be the down-to-earth fashions — dresses, blouses, T-shirts, the young designers collection and undergarments, a new Tootsies offering. Rosmarin explains that his "body shop" will offer "every single garment that pushes, pulls and expands and does whatever needs to be done."

Beyond the design elements as envisioned by Gensler architects, Rosmarin has several other features in his plans. For starters, don't expect your typical crystal chandeliers for the store foyer. Rather a massive overhead flower arrangement will welcome shoppers as will mannequins dressed in lavish collections of fresh flowers and greenery.

And if all goes well with permitting, there will be an outdoor terrace (another cool party space) overlooking Westheimer.

TACS > couture, designer fashion, Tootsies, West Ave
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Photo by Shelby Hodge
Even in a hard hat, Mickey Rosmarin is excited about his new store opening around Jan. 1.

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THE HIGH LIFE IN UPPER KIRBY

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By Sarah Rufca

September 28th, 2010 at 5:41 PM

It's been years since construction broke ground and over 18 months since the enormous [West Ave](#) complex rose at the corner of Kirby and Westheimer. And aside from the upper floor tenants and one amazing party, the retail component of the complex has sat empty for what feels like quite a long time.

But all of that is about to change. West Ave has its first tenant open for business — [Rome Salon and Day Spa](#) — plus several more announcing opening dates throughout the fall and through the new year. In addition, Beth Palka of West Ave retail leasing agent Page Partners says there will be seven to nine leases finalized within the next 30 days and that all the available spaces are in negotiations with potential tenants.

The first ground level space to open will be high-end seafood restaurant [Eddie V's](#), which is scheduled to debut October 18. On the corner of Kirby and Kipling, the Eddie V's space will have a similar aesthetic to the current location in CityCentre, with the bar more integrated into the restaurant space, set right off the entrance and the popular oyster bar. The 10,000-sq.-ft. space is broken up by a couple elevated private dining spaces and the main dining room features a great view into the open kitchen, with the possibility of a small patio dining space outside the front door.

Also on the first floor is [Ava Brasserie](#). A new concept by Schiller Del Grande, the restaurateurs behind RDG and The Grove.

Ava stretches along Kirby with a long, slender dining space, a large central bar area and a large patio planned along Kirby under umbrellas and awnings. The corner entrance to Ava Brasserie will also lead to a dynamic elevator to transport guests to the separate concept upstairs, Pizzeria Alto. Ava is set to open in December, with Alto debuting after the first of the year.

Anchoring the entirety of the building space that sits along Westheimer is the future location of [Tootsies](#). Owner Mickey Rosmarin says that after 29 years in Highland Village, [the new location](#) will have double the retail space at almost 30,000 square feet, which he is using to expand his offerings in contemporary fashion, jewelry, and shoes, as well as adding new, higher couture designers and potentially more in-store boutiques.

Rosmarin is also installing a catering kitchen and bar for more and better



Photo by Ralph Bivins

West Ave will soon be empty no longer



Photo by Shelby Hodge

The resident skyways at West Ave.



bridal, charity and society lunches and events.

Towards the interior of West Ave. will be Pondicheri, a new concept by Anita Jaisinghani. Pondicheri, originally called Zaika, is named for a town in southern India. Owner Jaisinghani says when she fell ill as a child, a healer from Pondicheri predicted she would recover, and her mother has ascribed her life to "the healer from Pondicheri" ever since. Pondicheri, she says, "won't be anything like Indika," her renowned restaurant featuring modern Indian fusion fare.

Instead it will focus on traditional family-style recipes from Delhi, Mumbai and Karachi, where Jaisinghani hails from. Breakfast and lunch will feature counter service, with dinner offering table service. There will be a large bakery concept inside focusing on breads and baked goods — including many that are vegan and gluten-free. Pondicheri will also have pre-packaged to-go entrees. The anticipated grand opening is in early December.

Next door is Dallas import Cru Wine Bar, opening in February 2011, which brings the popular wine bar chain into Houston — currently it's a popular destination in The Woodlands, offering flights of Wine Spectator-approved wines not normally served by the glass and a full menu of French-American bistro fare. The unnamed lounge by Jeff and Darren Van Delden, the brothers behind The Drake and Red Door, is scheduled to open in March, with views over Kirby and 5,000 square feet of upscale lounging.

Also upstairs two new tenants are making waves. Azur West (whose move into West Ave was first [reported](#) by CultureMap) is one of three brand new Shu Uemura flagship salons in the United States. It will bring exalted hair care treatments with a Japanese flair starting in November or December.

Just announced is bridal boutique Ivory by sisters Sharon and Ronit Levy, scheduled to open in December. Focused on modern, fashion-forward designs, Ivory will be the exclusive location for several bridal lines in Houston, including Stephen Yearick and [Alvina Valenta](#), as well as [Badgley Mischka](#), Liancarlo, Rivini, Anne Barge and YSA Makino. The sisters say they want to create a pampering, personalized bridal shopping experience, with flutes of champagne and 150-square-foot dressing rooms, with dresses ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

What West Ave shop are you looking forward to the most?

TAGS Ava Brasserie, Azur West, Cru Wine Bar, Eddie V's Prime Seafood, Ivory, Pizzeria Alto, Pondicheri, Tootsies, West Ave

PEOPLE Mickey Rosmarin



Photo by Sarah Rufca
Wall detail at Eddie V's

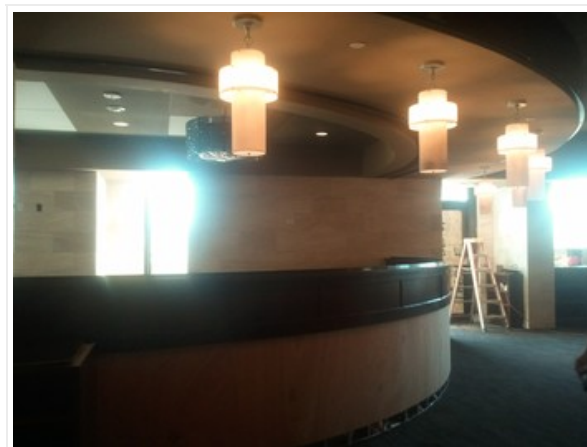


Photo by Sarah Rufca
The bar at Eddie V's, opening Oct. 18.

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Soon-to-open Indian diner to be called Pondicheri

By *Greg Morago*

Created 09/28/2010 - 4:06pm

“Use your imagination,” Anita Jaisinghani said Tuesday during a hardhat tour of her new Indian restaurant still under construction at West Ave. That wasn’t hard to do. Even without fixtures or furniture (the industrial concrete walls and floors were about the only thing to look at), it was easy to imagine this space being one of Houston’s most inviting new restaurants.

Called Pondicheri, the new venture for Indika ^[1] chef Jaisinghani already feels like a place that will draw foodies to the fabulous food/retail/living complex that is West Ave at Kirby and Westheimer.

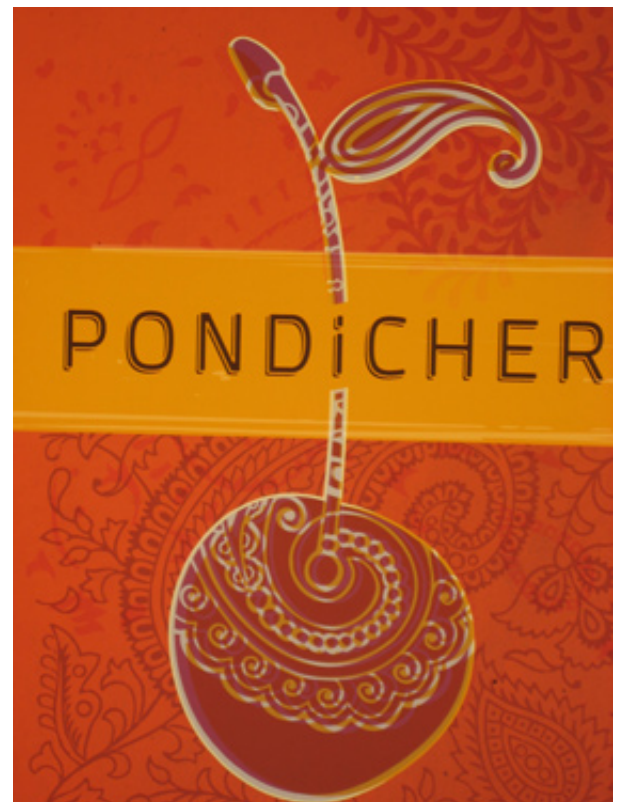
Expected to open in early December, Pondicheri will be an all-day affair serving breakfast, lunch and dinner from 6 a.m. to 11 pm. Breakfast and dinner will offer counter service, while dinner will feature traditional table service.

“This is my chance to do something completely different,” Jaisinghani said. “It will be like a great, cook, hip Indian diner.”

The Indian-born and -raised chef plans to take classical Indian dishes “that never make it onto Indian restaurant menus” and treat them to her own style of cooking. One example on her menu that is yet to be written will be a kathi roll – a paratha-like bread wrapped around grilled meats and vegetables with a green chutney.

Pondicheri will seat about 90 with additional patio seating on two sides.

Jaisinghani said the name of the restaurant comes from a town in southern India (Pondicherry).



But the name Pondicheri is significant in Jaisinghani's life. She tells a story of her childhood when she was extremely ill with malaria as a girl of nine. Her mother took her to an ashram in Pondicherry where the young Jaisinghani was given a poem that her mother believes was responsible for her healing. So the name of the restaurant (originally slated to be Zaika) has a special meaning to the chef: rebirth, a new start, good fortune.

And that, Pondicheri certainly is, Jaisinghani said. "This town has supported me. I'm just so grateful," she said. "I'm the luckiest person in the world."

Also inching toward completion at West Ave are two other new restaurant ventures that are sure to create a big buzz: the cool, sophisticated Eddie V's, which is expected to open Oct. 18, and the Schiller-Del Grande doubleheader Ava Brasserie and Pizzeria Alto.

Candy and Lonnie Schiller led reporters through their new double-decker fantasy, which like Pondicheri, was pretty much bare bones. But the huge windows on both levels (a grand brasserie on the first floor and a more casual pizzeria on the second) hinted at what a spectacular production the restaurants will be. Ava Brasserie is expected to open just after Christmas and Pizzeria Alto will come right behind it in January.

We can't wait.

Restaurants

Source URL: <http://www.29-95.com/restaurants/story/soon-open-indian-diner-be-called-pondicheri>

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The logo for Intown Magazine features the word "intown" in a large, blue, sans-serif font with a slight 3D effect. To the right of "intown", the word "Magazine" is written vertically in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is a dark, textured blue.

West Ave

The gargantuan development in the heart of River Oaks is finally coming to fruition. Despite great success with the residential leasing of their 200 plus units, the retail shops have been dormant. Not anymore. The opulent Rome Salon and Day Spa is officially open for business and is a welcome addition to the area. Founder Paul Winkler spared no expense and offers VIP treatment and atmosphere. Another salon, Azure West, opens during the coming holiday season. This will definitely be a destination for hair care and color, as it is a Shu Uemura Temple salon, one of just three in the U.S.

Arizona-based Eddie V's will probably be next to open and it will impress. A large bar and sushi area will no doubt attract the seafood aficionados from Intown. In January Tootsie's will move from their longstanding Highland Village location and become the anchor tenant with 34,000 square feet facing Westheimer and Kirby Drive. The retailer is a mecca of women's haute couture offering a vast array of American and European designers, contemporary and classic collections, denim, accessories and shoes. Joining Tootsie's in the retail mix will be an interesting startup by two sisters recently married called Ivory Bridal. Set to open in December, this by-appointment bridal shop will feature chic couture bridal gowns ranging from lustrous to modern to classic and feminine.

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EAT SHEET

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Fresh Meat!

After three years at The Grove, exec chef Ryan Pera has departed to open **REVIVAL MARKET** with Revival Meats biz owner and Yoakum, Texas farmer Morgan Weber. Opening in the Heights later this year, it'll be a deli-slash-posh-grocery-store stocking locally sourced ingredients as well as house-made dry goods and charcuterie, such as Mangalitsa pig prosciutto. Dessert consultant Rebecca Masson's pastries will also be up for grabs, as will bread by Slow Dough. And while Pera says his departure from The Grove is bittersweet, "not staying up till midnight every night will be nice!" ... Meat lovers might also like **SAMBA GRILLE** (530 Texas St., 713.343.1180), which just opened Downtown. The mahogany-wrapped

modern space with bold red seating and wave-inspired pearl-ized metallic walls has a long amber-orange-lit Caipirinha-serving bar; sommelier Marc Borel, late of 13 Celsius, pours wine in the dimly lit dining room. Expect *churrascaria* dinners—waiters swirl around carving out filet mignon, top sirloin, bacon-wrapped chicken and more, with your choice of soup (maybe spinach and broccoli cream with lump crab on top) and side dishes like coconut rice. A la carte items include seafood paella. ... **NEW BURGER GUYS** (12225 Westheimer Rd., 281.497.4897) is delighting foodies with its list of inventive Akaushi beef burgers and hot dogs named after cities around the world. The "Houston" burger,

for instance, is gussied up with smoked cheddar, bread-and-butter jalapenos, onion-bacon jam and Saint Arnold beer-spiked mustard, while the "Saigon" has pickled carrots, daikon and paté. Hot dogs and sides are similarly gourmet, as in the potato-wrapped deep-fried "Boise" dog, and the "Brussels" fries, shoestrings fried in duck fat. ... **EDDIE V'S PRIME SEAFOOD** (2800 Kirby Dr., 713.874.1800), is set to open its second H-Town location in the West Ave development this month. Reps say it'll have the same live-jazz-and-martinis approach as their CityCentre locale, but more of a free flow between the lounge and restaurant, a raw bar, and a circular bar where see-and-be-scenesters can order up oysters, Texas-sized chops and seasonal fish like west Australian lobster. —Allison Bagley

FASHION FLASH



John Varvatos' 10-year anniversary campaign and, below, the designer's new limited-edition eyewear (hangover optional)

For Those About To Rock...



"Themes are fickle," said designer **John Varvatos** after his spring/summer 2011 show in Milan. "They do not interest me. Characters are relevant. That's what I always have in mind when I design." And now, in honor of the label's 10-year anny, keeping with its rock 'n' roll-chic campaigns, he's launched his baddest ad yet: a collage featuring 39 artists, including Iggy Pop and Houston's ZZ Top, an homage to The Beatles' 1967 *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album art. But instead of John, Paul, Ringo, George and co., we're hit with rock icons of *our* time, several shot by Grammy-nominated music photog Danny Clinch. *Join the party in Varvatos' new commemorative shades, \$450 each, at johnvarvatos.com.* —Elise Hofer

UNCOMMON SCENTS

The Royal Treatment

Two of Europe's most high-end perfumeries have rare new scents for men, both inspired by historical icons. The Parisian House of **Creed** is marking its 250th year with **Aventus**, which mixes Napoleon-inspired notes like blackcurrant from his native Corsica. Meanwhile, England's **Clive Christian**, once the royal family's official perfumery, has released its first new scent in a decade. **C For Men** infuses saffron and other notes inspired by Queen Victoria's romance with Prince Albert. "As if a man had come to your door in that era," says Victoria Christian. "Brave and ripe." *Both at Neiman Marcus.* —AB



C For Men by Clive Christian (\$375, 1.7 oz.) and, far above, Creed's new Aventus (\$240, 2.5 oz.)