

OUR TOWN



THE ORIGINS OF THE ICE CREAM QUEEN <P.21

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ANOTHER EFFORT TO SAVE SECOND AVENUE

SAVING SMALL BUSINESS

A new proposal to offer grants to some businesses on Second Avenue impacted by subway construction gets mixed reactions

BY MARY KEKATOS

UPPER EAST SIDE Ever since Joe Zafiroopoulos bought Atomic Wings on Second Avenue near East 94th Street six

months ago, maintaining the restaurant has been an uphill struggle. He says that the construction of the Second Avenue subway line, which began in 2007, has left doors jammed not being properly aligned and foundation cracks.

Atomic Wings is not the only restaurant suffering from construction. Businesses up and down Second Avenue have been reporting loss in profits. Some have even had to close due to poor sales.

Many complaints stem from the fact that storefronts are

blocked by fences, limiting foot traffic as well as cars being able to park.

"No parking out front makes it a nightmare," said Zafiroopoulos. "Parking to get food is not an option, which limits the amount of people that normally would be coming in here."

While local business owners, organizations like the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and Upper East Side elected officials have been trying to help

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In Brief

F.D.N.Y. TO INCREASE ROLE IN GAS LEAK REPORTS

The New York City Fire Department will now have a much greater role in responding to reports of possible gas leaks, according to an order made by Mayor Bill de Blasio in response to the March explosion that leveled two East Harlem buildings and killed eight people.

The plan also calls for more efficient repairs to the city's aging infrastructure and improved communication about potentially deadly leaks among the city's agencies, independent utilities and the public.

Previously, residents who smelled gas were often told to call their gas utility or dial 311, the city's information hotline. The fire department, which possesses the most suitable manpower and equipment to conduct a quick evacuation or ventilation of the area, would only be notified if the leak met certain thresholds, such as a multitude of calls or other warning signs, like a flickering of lights.

SUMMER STREETS ANNOUNCED FOR AUGUST

The city announced another season of Summer Streets, a series of vehicle-free days on major stretches of NYC roads. On three consecutive Saturdays in August, about seven miles of NYC's streets are opened for people to play, run, walk and bike. In 2013, more than 300,000 people took advantage of the open streets.

Held between 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Summer Streets extends from the Brooklyn Bridge to Central Park, along Park Avenue and connecting streets. All activities at Summer Streets are free of charge, and designed for people of all ages and ability levels to share the streets respectfully.



La Tarte Flambee, on Second Avenue, has been forced to adjust their hours due to subway construction.

RE-SELLING LUXURY THROUGH GENERATIONS

PROFILE

The mother-daughter team behind Michael's keeps the tradition of high-end fashion consignment alive on the U.E.S.

BY MARY NEWMAN

UPPER EAST SIDE Sustainability is not usually a term associated with high end, luxury fashion, but one family-owned consignment shop has seen 60 years of success by promoting sustainable fashion, offering New Yorkers a place to sell their expensive sartorial items. Michael's Consignment occupies a gorgeous retail space on the Upper East Side, filled with designer names like Hermes, Alex-

ander McQueen, Manolo Blahnik, Louis Vuitton, and Jimmy Choo.

Laura Fluhr and her daughter Tammy Fluhr-Gates are the second and third generations at Michael's Consignment, continuing the tradition that was started by Tammy's great-great-great father Simon Kosofsky in 1902. Kosofsky was working as a tailor in the Lower East Side when he opened a shop named Cast Off clothing & Furs, focusing mainly on re-selling women's fur coats.

By 1941, Kosofsky's son Aaron opened Ritz Thrift Shop on 57th Street, coining the term "Every woman can look like a million without spending a million." The idea of offering women

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Mother-daughter team Laura Fluhr and Tamy Fluhr-Gates at their store, Michael's Consignment

RE-SELLING LUXURY THROUGH GENERATIONS

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access to the most luxurious fashion has remained consistent through all 60 years the family has been in business. In 1954, Aaron's son Michael Kosof (their name was shortened to appeal to more clients), headed the current Michael's on Madison Avenue under the same business model his grandfather started in 1902.

"What's interesting about Michael's is that neither my mother nor I wanted to get involved with the family business, but when my grandfather needed some extra help, my mother started working and decided she wanted to become a part of the tradition," Tammy said. "The same thing happened with me, and I immediately loved the entrepreneurship of this store's business model."

In addition to embracing the idea of resale, Michael's also believes in community involvement, and has seen such long-standing success because they have always catered directly to the customers who live in the area surrounding the store. "My grandfather created a real community 60 years ago; he was a very charismatic man, all of the ladies in the neighborhood loved him."

Tammy explained that although the store has grown in popularity, they have business partners and customers that have been involved with the store for several



generations as well. The store has relationships with local consigners, and often helps support local charities. They frequently offer discounts to Lenox Hill Hospital employees and PS. 6 teachers for their hard work, and contribute special experiences, like a night of private shopping, to be raffled off for local fundraising events.

The beautiful two-story shop, located on 79th Street and Madison Ave, is surrounded by some of the same luxury designers that they sell in the store, but Tammy explains that consignment stays competitive by only selling items that are under two years old. Celebrity stylists, costume designers, and television personalities looking for either inspiration or something to wear often visit the clothing racks at Michael's.

"The nice thing about our shop is that

everything is all under one roof," Tammy said.

Tammy became part of the team in 2006, offering a young perspective to the established shop. Creating an online presence through social media and an online shopping option, Tammy has introduced her family's store to a new generation of women looking for more affordable high-end fashion.

"I quickly realized that this store is a win, win, win, and there are very few business models out there today that keep everyone involved happy," she explained. "Our partnered consigners win by getting money for items they no longer want, customers win because they are spending less money on the world's most coveted designers, and we are winning by being able to offer such

great pricing and fashion to our customers."

MTV Networks senior stylist Alana Kelen often praises Michael's as her favorite consignment shop when shopping for her celebrity clients, and the mother-daughter team that has formed between Tammy and Laura has become very well respected in one of the biggest fashion capitals in the world.

"It's essentially recycling and our customers realize that the products they no longer have use for shouldn't just be thrown away," Tammy said. "So many of our customers take pride in their clothing, and we offer a place for them to bring these beautiful items, allowing other women the opportunity to feel beautiful wearing them."

Michael's stays current by only accepting high-end clothing and accessory consignments that are less than two years old.