

# THE REAL DEAL

---

July 2007

## Chambers gets retail revival

### New retail upgrades Tribeca commercial strip in advance of residential boom

By Alison Gregor

A spate of high-end residential development along Chambers Street is transforming perhaps the only truly commercial street in Tribeca from a scrappy strip into what may eventually be an elegant retail thoroughfare.

Chambers, which runs about eight blocks between the Hudson River and City Hall, has long been lined by 99-cent stores, Chinese takeout storefronts and other restaurants.

Construction of about 1,000 residential units is under development, a boomlet some brokers believe will give the area's revival a boost. As plans for new tenants and buildings move forward at the site of the World Trade Center five blocks to the south, momentum is building.

"Chambers is like a train on the fast track now," Faith Hope Consolo, head of Prudential Douglas Elliman's retail leasing and sales division, said. "The only thing you ever had there before was, like, Hamburger Harry's and the Cheese of All Nations, but now you have good restaurants looking in the area.

"By the end of the year, we're going to see a completely different street," she said.

The transformation has already begun, with the addition of new restaurants like Kitchenette at 156 Chambers and the Soda Shop at 125 Chambers, along with a Starbucks, joining old standouts such as Acappella at 1 Hudson Street at Chambers, which appeared in the first episode of the recently-ended television series "The Sopranos." Nearby, an upscale wine shop is now serving patrons, and soon a gourmet bagel shop will open its doors.

But Consolo said she believes that Chambers Street has the raw material to become a thriving commercial artery, though it is as yet unrealized. A two-way street with shops lining both sides, it receives heavy foot traffic thanks to two subway stations, the A/C at Church Street and the 1/2/3 at West Broadway. Many pedestrians are students traveling to the Borough of Manhattan Community College, Stuyvesant High School or one of the other schools in the area, or are residents of nearby Battery Park City. Government workers from nearby City Hall and shoppers also traverse the neighborhood. "There are a lot of feet on the street, but as yet there is not a strong retail landscape, because you've had a street that's been known for discount stores and nondescript tenancies," Consolo said. "The fact that you have residential developers very interested in bringing the neighborhood forward is important. They know what needs to be done."

Consolo said she has been talking with several established restaurateurs -- from Soho, the Meatpacking District and the Upper East Side -- about opening on the street.

Matt Pomerantz, co-founder and co-owner of Murray's Bagels, which has shops in Chelsea and Greenwich Village, agreed that Chambers Street is on the radar of restaurateurs. He will be opening the first Original Zucker's Bagels & Smoked Fish, an upscale shop selling hand-rolled bagels and gourmet smoked fish, in the next two months.

Pomerantz, who lives in the neighborhood, said he is paying "well north of \$100 a foot" to lease his 1,400-square-foot street-level shop, plus the large basement area, of a condominium conversion at 146 Chambers Street. The space is being designed by Glen Coben, an architect formerly with the Rockwell Group who has designed such notable spaces as the restaurant Sascha and celebrity chef Mario Batali's Del Posto.

"We're looking to make an impression Downtown with a bagel shop because we're confident about what's going on," Pomerantz said. "Glen Coben has designed a 22,000-square-foot restaurant for Mario Batali, and for him to be interested in designing a bagel shop, I think that says something about the area."