



FiDi hospitality king Peter Poulakakos unveils Le District food market at Brookfield Place

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LE DISTRICT

Peter Poulakakos and partner Paul Lamasare ready to swing open the doors of Le District

gazing out at the North Cove marina.

"This is like opening 20 restaurants all at once," Poulakakos said. "It's daunting."

Le District, by design firm Icrave, is located on the ground floor of the office and retail complex known as Brookfield Place at 225 Liberty St. It's directly below Hudson Eats, a trendy food court comprising Blue Ribbon Sushi, Mighty Quinn's and Umami Burger, that opened to mass acclaim last year.

For Poulakakos, whose family has quietly worked in the restaurant business in Lower Manhattan since the 1950s and struggled to stay afloat after 9/11 and then Hurricane Sandy, the public's interest in the project serves as further proof that his long-term bet on the Financial District has paid off massively.



BY KATHERINE CLARKE

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The king of Lower Manhattan dining has a new jewel in his crown.

Peter Poulakakos, the 38-year-old restaurateur behind Stone St. haunts such as Harry's Cafe, the Growler, Ulysses and Adrienne's Pizzabar, is finally swinging open the doors of Le District, a brand new French-themed food hall that promises to permanently alter the FiDi food scene.

The massive, 30,000-square-foot dining destination has a market district where shoppers can snag fresh produce such as bread, meat, fish and charcuterie, plus a patisserie, a crepe counter, a waffle and ice cream stand, a bar, a florist and even two stand-alone restaurants.

The large-scale project, which opens Monday and is similar in concept to Mario Batali's Eataly, will also comprise 7,000 square feet of outdoor space, where diners will be able to graze while

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Le District at Brookfield Place will have a creperie and even a chocolate mousse station

"When we were investing down here, people were saying, 'What, are you crazy?'" he said. "But you have to stick to your guns. As much as people thought we were nuts, we knew there was a need here."

Now, retailers and condo developers are flocking to the neighborhood, as excitement about Brookfield Place and the new World Trade Center reaches fever pitch. Retail rents went up 17% last year as a result.



JEFF THIBODEAU/JEFF THIBODEAU PHOTOGRAPHY

Le District at Brookfield Place will be a new destination for foodies

And the Lower Manhattan dining revolution is slated continue with the opening of an Eataly outpost at 4 World Trade Center later this year and the relocation of Nobu to 195 Broadway by 2017. Poulakakos and partner Paul Lamas also recently launched Pier A Harbor House, a nautical-themed eatery at the former fire boat command post on the southern tip of Manhattan.

"Great food is the ultimate neighborhood-maker," said luxury real estate broker Leonard Steinberg of brokerage Compass. "What Eataly did for Madison Square Park was the equivalent of a revolution."

In a previous version of this story, the Daily News misstated Peter Poulakakos' age.

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