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From the San Francisco Business Times:
<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/news/2022/12/13/left-door-bus-stop-saloon-cow-hollow-paoletti.html>

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Owner of century-old Cow Hollow bar adding second-floor restaurant

Dec 13, 2022, 2:49pm PST



Google Street View

The Left Door, a second-floor restaurant on the way to 1905 Union St. above the 122-year-old Cow Hollow fixture Bus Stop Saloon, takes its name from one of the pair of entryways seen on the right side of the building.

The owner of Cow Hollow sports bar Bus Stop Saloon — a 122-year-old neighborhood fixture — is decking out the building's second level with an unusual amenity: a new restaurant called Left Door.

Permits show that building owner Joseph Wallace is converting the second floor from health services offices to a dining concept, seating about 36 or so patrons and its own bar. The restaurant is expected to debut in the first half of next year following construction improvements.

The eatery will mark at least the second major improvement to the building since Wallace and Robert Lemons purchased the three-story building from the Ferroni Family Trust for \$4.8 million last year, according to public records. They gave the saloon bathrooms a swanky \$300,000 upgrade soon after.

Left Door will be located at 1905 Union St. (the building's three floors are unorthodoxly addressed, from top to bottom: 1901, 1905 and 1907 Union St.) and takes its name from the left-most of the two easy-to-miss entry doors on the Union Street side of the Bus Stop Saloon leading up to the second floor.

The approximately 1,450-square-foot space sits below the top-level residence and features large windows overlooking the corner of Laguna and Union streets.

"The window area projects over the sidewalk, really changing the ambiance of that second level," said Gi Paoletti, the project's architect and interior designer, collaborating with interior designer and friend of the Bus Stop Saloon, Sean Carino. "It makes you feel like you're floating over something."

For now, Wallace declined to comment and is keeping details about the menu and interior aesthetic under wraps until closer to the opening date. However, Paoletti was able to share some details about the project, including that the new restaurant will be an independent concept separate from the Bus Stop Saloon rather than extension of it.

While Paoletti, via her Gi Paoletti Design Lab, has designed dozens of bars and restaurants around the city including Topsy Pig, Per Diem and Underdogs, the second-floor adaptation required some creativity that will make itself manifest on the eatery's cooking

capabilities. For instance, replacing the typical restaurant hood vent with a ductless HVAC system.

Second-level restaurants are unusual and often present difficult and expensive conversions, but they're easier in the Cow Hollow and Marina neighborhood because the use is principally permitted on the second floor. Stand-alone bars aren't, but bars within a restaurant setting are allowed, Paoletti told me.

That policy enables the Bobo's two-floor steakhouse at 1450 Lombard St. and would make a two-story food hall proposed elsewhere on Lombard Street an easier sell, at least as far as nonformula retail goes.



Alex Barreira

Staff Reporter - *San Francisco Business Times*

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