

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2012

RESTAURANT OPENINGS **The Melrose's Austin Ray Finally Admits He's Planning a New Joint on Charlotte**

POSTED BY DANA KOPP FRANKLIN ON THU, JAN 12, 2012 AT 5:22 AM

Restaurateur Austin Ray — who helped found the late, pioneering Gulch spot Bar TwentyThree and is now best-known for his hugely popular pub **The Melrose** (remember, the burger that made the cover of the Scene in April) — has finally announced that he bought a piece of property on Charlotte Avenue near Sylvan Park and plans to put a new establishment on it.

Back in April, my *Nashville Post* colleague J.R. Lind **sussed out** that a group had bought the former Lavender Motors lot at 4408 Charlotte and had submitted a building permit under the name Melrose West. George Spiva, the general partner listed on the land purchase, referred questions to Ray, who declined to comment.

On Wednesday, Ray issued a press release finally announcing that he bought the property at 4408 Charlotte and is renovating and expanding the Tudor-style brick building on the lot (which was originally a 1920s service station).

"I'm excited to bring my newest project to West Nashville and I'm confident the neighborhoods nearby, including Sylvan Park and Historic West Town, will welcome new business to the area and the revitalization of a vacant building," Ray said in the release. "I'm still finalizing plans for the project, but since the real estate transaction has taken place, I'm eager to announce that I'll be bringing something fun to the neighborhood."

No name or description of the new business was included. (Neither the word "restaurant" nor "bar" was used in reference to the project.) We're not sure why Ray and his team are being so stingy with info, since this sounds like exciting and welcome news for diners in West Nashville and beyond. We're hungry for details, man!

Check out the full (not so full) release after the jump.

NASHVILLE ENTREPRENEUR PURCHASES WEST NASHVILLE PROPERTY

Austin Ray, owner of popular pub The Melrose on Franklin Road, helps continue to redevelop Charlotte Avenue

NASHVILLE, TENN. (January 11, 2012) — Nashville native and restaurateur Austin Ray is pleased to announce that his company has purchased the property at 4408 Charlotte Avenue. The former Lavender Motors site is located on the corner of Charlotte Avenue and 45th Avenue. Construction has begun on the renovation and expansion of the tudor style brick building, originally a 1920's service station and more recently a used car lot.

"I'm excited to bring my newest project to West Nashville and I'm confident the neighborhoods nearby, including Sylvan Park and Historic West Town, will welcome new business to the area and the revitalization of a vacant building," said Ray. "I'm still finalizing plans for the project, but since the real estate transaction has taken place, I'm eager to announce that I'll be bringing something fun to the neighborhood."

The Charlotte Avenue corridor has been a hot topic for several years now. With the increasing popularity of walkable neighborhoods with shops and restaurants, Sylvan Park stands to benefit immensely. In addition to well-known spots such as Bobbie's Dairy Dip and Miel Restaurant, growth in the area includes recent openings such as the \$5 million West Nashville Police Precinct, Stone House BBQ, Harmony Yoga, and Boa clothing. Ray's purchase promises to bring even more forward movement to the area between White Bridge Road and the under-construction 28th Avenue connector linking Charlotte Avenue to West End.

Ray, known for his now-closed but still innovative nightclub BarTwenty3 in the Gulch, and for his popular neighborhood pub The Melrose on Franklin Road, has had success opening establishments in neighborhoods that are on the cusp of expanded growth. He promises to give more information on his newest addition soon.

Tags: Austin Ray, The Melrose, Sylvan Park restaurants, West Nashville restaurants

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this sounds promising, you know, in a vague way.

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1 of 1 people like this. like dislike

Posted by **hungryhippo** on January 12, 2012 at 10:58 AM



In 2002 our realtor told us that strip of Charlotte would be the next Hillsboro Village. 10 years later...

report

0 of 1 people like this. like dislike

Posted by **WestEndGirl** on January 12, 2012 at 12:50 PM

I sure hope that strip of Charlotte never becomes the next Hillsboro Village. But it sounds like your realtor did their job.



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Posted by **ryan** on January 12, 2012 at 4:26 PM



Very excited about this - working up on Charlotte can be a relative deadzone for good unique places to grab lunch, maybe this will help fill that void!

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Posted by **foodisagoodthing** on January 13, 2012 at 12:28 PM



I don't know that I'll be a regular patron, but I am very excited to see something going on with that building (assuming there isn't a teardown in the plans).

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Posted by **Lesley** on January 13, 2012 at 12:36 PM