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THE FAMILY SECRETS**

& THE BEST SPRING PARTIES!





IN THE HOOD Clockwise from left: The north-facing view from the roof of 500 Lake Shore Drive; Local Root's cheese and charcuterie board; and Flour & Stone's Sicilian and cheese pizzas, which take about three minutes to cook in the oven kept at 700 degrees



Neighborhood Watch

Meet the new Streeterville you've yet to explore. | By Katie Schroeder |

When I say I live in Streeterville, the response is usually something along the lines of, "There's nothing over there but chain restaurants and tourists; it's just a bunch of sterile high-rises; not much of a neighborhood feel." To that I say, Chicago needs to revisit this neighborhood along Lake Michigan, between the Chicago River and Oak Street. "It's such a mixed environment between the hotels, institutions, the great schools, hospitals and then Navy Pier," says Gail Spreen, president and owner of Streeterville Properties and vice president of the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents (SOAR). "It's kind of amazing to have all that in a limited area."

Staples like Fox & Obel, UnCork-It and D4 Irish Pub & Café have recently welcomed new restaurants Local Root, Arami Go!, Quay, Yolk, Dollop Coffee & Tea, and Flour & Stone. Isaac Welivér, chef and co-owner of Local Root, says they looked at nearly 80 locations before realizing they could fill a unique niche in Streeterville. "We're trying to provide local, organic food in a style Americans can enjoy on a regular basis," he says. And the businesses rely on those regulars, even though tourists visiting Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier—which had an estimated 9.2 million visitors last year—help. Chris Murphy, co-owner of Brooklyn-style pizza place Flour & Stone, which opened in February, says they've settled into a neighborhood-centric business as they'd hoped. "We knew if we could

make a great product, Streeterville residents would welcome us, and they've been amazing," he says.

Opening early next month is Tre Soldi Trattoria and Pizzeria, an Italian restaurant serving Roman-style pizza, housemade pasta, roasted meats and fish. Restaurateur Jack Weiss, who also owns Coco Pazzo and Coco Pazzo Café, has seen the neighborhood transform since opening his café there 17 years ago. "When we first opened Coco Pazzo Café, Chicago was experiencing a pretty significant recession, and a lot of the buildings in Streeterville were either vacant or bankrupt," he says, noting that he could count the number of people on the street with one hand. "The neighborhood was always really charming, with the combination of residences, hotels, the hospital and, of course, the retail on Michigan Avenue. We felt it was great because it had so many variables."

Streeterville draws its name from George Wellington "Cap" Streeter, who in the late 1800s claimed his boat had run into a sandbar just off the shoreline. The city was rebuilding from the Great Chicago Fire, and Streeter encouraged contractors to dump rubble around his boat, creating new land he declared an independent territory called the District of Lake Michigan. As property values increased, angry shoreline owners contested Streeter's claims and a battle ensued over ownership as well as his continual

violation of laws like the prohibited sale of liquor on Sundays. Eventually, Streeter was detained and the legendary story of this resident who gave Streeterville its name is now commemorated with an 8-foot bronze sculpture on the corner of McClurg Court and Grand Avenue.

Today, Northwestern University is to credit for much of the growth. Its medical campus of affiliated buildings includes the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, a 23-story facility that replaced Children's Memorial Hospital in 2012 thanks to a \$100 million gift from Ann Lurie; the world's largest Ronald McDonald House near Lurie Children's, which provides four times the number of rooms as the old Lincoln Park facility; and a proposed \$523 million new Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

Spreen, who's been a leading residential realtor in the area for 16 years, names at least six new buildings east of Michigan Avenue built within the last five years. The makeup ranges from condos and co-ops near Oak Street to more rental and condo buildings on the south side of Streeterville. "We have all age groups and more families than we've ever seen," she says. "In a building where we might have seen two children at one point, we have 20 to 30 now. We have students, professionals, people who come in on weekends, and we probably have more of that in South Streeterville. It's a unique mixture."

The newest addition is 500 North Lake Shore Drive, a 47-story, 500-unit rental tower developed by Related Midwest and opening this month. "There's no question Streeterville is one of the great neighborhoods in Chicago, and one of the newest as well," says Curt Bailey, president of Related Midwest. "If you CONTINUED...

...CONTINUED look at pictures from the '60s and '70s, you had Lake Point Tower, and then a lot of industrial and tough areas. There's a lot of newness to the area, but it's incredibly vibrant." Ranging from studios to three-bedrooms, units start at \$2,500 and go higher than \$13,000 per month. The concept is rooted in luxury, from the interiors to the amenities and services. "This is renter-by-choice kind of living," says Bailey. "It's a spectacular location on Lake Shore Drive, and these are very busy people who expect a spectacular level of service. We're going to provide it." (See sidebar for a more detailed look at the property.)

In early 2013, Dan Weiss, who owns Dollop Coffee & Tea in Buena Park and Kickstand Espresso Bar at Belmont and Clark, opened his second Dollop location after noticing a void in Streeterville. "Of course there are coffee shops, but there wasn't a place where you could park and get all your work done, which is pretty normal in almost every neighborhood in the city," he says. "I was just blown away that there was no neighborhood coffee shop yet; it was almost too good to be true." As someone who grew up in Rogers Park, he admits the neighborhood isn't the first that comes to mind. "When I told my friends I was opening a coffee shop in Streeterville, half of them were like, 'I don't even know where that is.' Obviously, there are thousands of people who live there, but I think it also felt like it was on the precipice of something happening. Within a year, I feel like it's going to be totally different."

Scheduled for a 2015 completion is the Loews

Chicago Hotel, developed by DRW Trading Group. The 52-story property will feature 400 hotel guest rooms, a restaurant, multiple outdoor terraces and a rooftop pool, as well as nearly 400 residential apartments. Down the street, there's also a new CorePower Yoga, a coming-soon City Pets grooming and supplies store, newly renovated and already leased retail and restaurant spaces along Ohio, and plans for local restaurants Saigon Sisters and Protein Bar to open on the second floor of Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

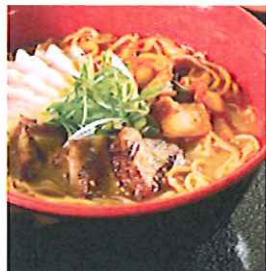
But the growth hasn't been overnight. "There was a rush of new developments from 1999 to 2009," says Spreen, "but with the market having changed, a lot was cancelled, from the Spire to the Waldorf Astoria." She continues to press developers to deliver designs that will make Streeterville known for landmark architecture. "The fact is, to build here, you have to go tall, but we want tall, iconic and fantastic," she says. "I would rather have a lot be vacant for another 10 years than put up some average, ordinary, mediocre building." But there's more risk in building a dense, tall building, she explains, so banks are more apt to fund them as rental and hotel properties, which are currently strong markets. "Banks are afraid of the condo market, still feeling the sting of the past few years."

Along with SOAR, Spreen works to influence developers in changing Streeterville's landscape. "Our job is to represent the residents and what is best for the neighborhood," she says. "It's about balance. That's why we live here—for the energy of it." ■



500 North Lake Shore Drive is a one-of-a-kind rental building with a truly high level of service. Here, we outline just a few of the amenities residents can expect.

- > Overlooking Lake Michigan, the 12th floor amenities include a residents-only Equinox-designed fitness facility, a pool, hot tub and cabanas.
- > A white-gloved doorman and 24-hour concierge are there to assist, from unloading groceries to delivering a forgotten passport to the airport.
- > Key fobs open all doors, including those to apartments, and the building includes the nation's first port system in the elevators of a residential building, which means as a resident enters the building, his or her key fob passes by a reader, which will direct the resident to an elevator bound for the proper floor. No keys, and no elevator buttons.
- > A Related Personal Assistant plans residents' move-ins, from organizing a moving company to pick up and ship belongings to setting up cable and utilities, and even hanging a TV if needed.
- > An in-house dog spa offers grooming, walking, feeding and playdate services and will even board a pet overnight if a resident is stuck traveling.



Clockwise from left: Artist Dennis Downes created the bronze sculpture of Cap Streeter holding his beloved dog, fitting for what's now a very pup-friendly neighborhood; the pork belly miso ramen by Arami Go!; inside Dollop Coffee & Tea in Streeterville; and the new CorePower Yoga studio.

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