

# D | Local Business

## Boca, Delray to get Bossi's

### Big Time's newest Italian concept already runaway success in Lauderdale.



**Alexandra Clough**  
Business Watch

The group behind Rocco's Tacos eatery is bringing its successful new Fort Lauderdale restaurant, **Louie Bossi's**, to sizzling downtown Delray Beach.

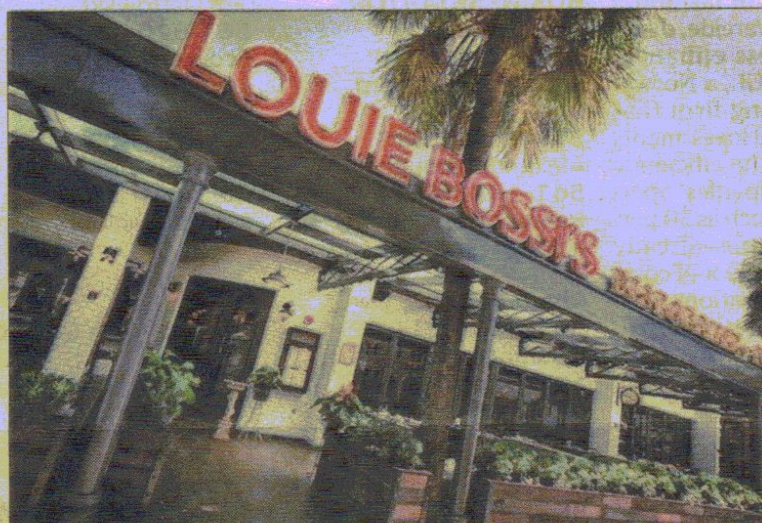
The Italian restaurant from West Palm Beach's Big Time Restaurant Group is going into 44 E. Atlantic Ave., the former Masonic Temple building at Atlantic Avenue and Southeast First Avenue in downtown Delray.

Louie Bossi's will be a two-story, 10,400-square-foot restaurant.

Work now is afoot to design the building's space, which promises to be a comfortable, warm interior that will feel "as if it's been in the neighborhood for 70 years," said Big Time partner **Todd Herbst**.

Architectural touches from the 1920s are planned. Attorney **Michael Weiner**, who owns the historic 1924 property, has the building's original designs, Herbst said.

Herbst said Big Time has been thrilled, and a little surprised, by the success of Louie Bossi's on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. The restaurant opened just last year, but it has exceeded expectations



Louie Bossi's, which opened on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale last year, has exceeded expectations for owner Big Time Restaurant Group. PHOTO BY CANDACE WEST 2015

and is up 25 percent over last year, he said.

Herbst would not disclose further financial details of the privately held company, but he said a recent Fort Lauderdale boat show led to dinner waits of an hour and a half.

Louie Bossi's is popular because the food is fresh and the wood-and-brick interior is inviting, Herbst said. Everything is made in-house, too, including the breads, numerous types of pasta and desserts. Earlier this year, Big Time decided to open a Boca Raton location, the concept's second restaurant.

Louie Bossi's in Boca is slated to open in January, attached to the new **Hyatt Place** hotel opening next month. The Hyatt is in the

heart of downtown on the southeast corner of Federal Highway and Palmetto Park Road. In addition to an 8,000-square-foot restaurant inside and a 2,000-square-foot bar outside, it will feature a bocce ball court and fireplace.

**Jeff Sussman**, the restaurant broker who handled the deals for Delray Beach and Boca Raton, said he believes Louie Bossi's is successful because it appeals to all the senses, from the food to the décor to the "eater-tainment" quality of a grand time out.

"That restaurant in Fort Lauderdale is like a water fountain in the middle of a desert," said Sussman of **Sussman Realty** in Boca Raton.

But with Boca Raton opening soon, why bring Louie Bossi's

to nearby Delray Beach?

"We love the Delray market," Herbst said.

Big Time knows it well. The company has operated **City Oyster** on Atlantic Avenue for 16 years, and it opened **Rocco's Tacos**, its Mexican food concept, last year there, too.

Delray Beach already overflows with Italian restaurants, including **Tramonti**, **Sazio**, **Vic & Angelo's** and **Caffe Luna Rosa**, to name a few. Many are good, Herbst said.

"But we're going to build a great Italian restaurant," he said. "It's a natural for downtown Delray Beach. It's an amazing corner and an amazing space, and tremendous views of **Old School Square**."

The redo will require a complete renovation of the space. Downstairs was **Cafe Bleu**, now closed. Upstairs is Weiner's law office, which will move elsewhere.

Herbst hopes the Louie Bossi's Delray Beach location will open sometime next year.