

## James Beard-Nominated Chef Andrew Weissman Brings Italian Concept to Historic Pearl Brewery

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### Five-Star Food and Service in a Casual Setting

Andrew Weissman, James Beard-nominated chef and owner of the acclaimed Restaurant Le Rêve, today announced plans for a destination Italian restaurant, Il Sogno (The Dream), at the historic Pearl Brewery just north of downtown.

Expected to open after the first of the year, Il Sogno will be located in the newly renovated Full Goods Building at the 22-acre former brewery site, now an emerging urban culinary and cultural destination on the banks of the San Antonio River. Earlier this year, Pearl became the location for the third campus of The Culinary Institute of America, which counts Weissman as a graduate of the Hyde Park, NY school.

Weissman, also the force behind local popular eateries the Sandbar Fish House & Market, Sip Coffee & Espresso Bar and Big'z Burger Joint, says his vision for Il Sogno is to offer five-star food and service in a casual setting, featuring the authentic Italian fare found in the trattorias and osterias of Rome and Florence.

'We've worked very hard to find the best foods and techniques from Italy,' Weissman said. 'We want our guests to feel transported, both by the menu and by the type of relaxed dining experience you'd find in European café society. To help recreate the sense of connection between people and food that you see in Italy, we've worked on a design that showcases the food throughout the restaurant.'

The experience will begin at the restaurant entrance, where a floor-to-ceiling pasta window will feature fresh pasta being rolled and cut on one end of an open viewing kitchen, which will allow an almost 360-degree view of food preparation. A 'chef's table' will offer seating along a cantilevered dining counter facing the kitchen - an experience 'just short of eating inside the kitchen,' Weissman said. Two massive display tables will allow diners to view the extensive antipasta selection that will make up 20-30% of the menu. Additional tables will display fine cheeses and the day's dessert offerings.

The approximately 3,000 square-foot, two-story restaurant space will allow al fresco dining on a landscaped courtyard patio, as well on an open-air upper deck. The second story will also allow for private dining. In the future, Weissman plans to offer breakfast every morning at a communal table in the tradition of casual Italian cafes, as well as at the European-style eating counter facing the kitchen and private tables.

'Andrew has a passion for the freshest, most wholesome food, prepared and served by the most professional and knowledgeable staff, in a setting that encourages conversation and engagement,' said Ken Halliday, Chief Operating Officer of Silver Ventures, owners of the Pearl Brewery. 'The plan he has created for both the food and the social atmosphere at Il Sogno really brings to life important elements of the vision we have for the Pearl Brewery.'

Il Sogno will be located in the Pearl Brewery's Full Goods Building, a former warehouse being renovated into mixed-use office, retail and residential space. The adaptive re-use of the Full Goods Building, for which Silver Ventures is pursuing LEED certification, will include the largest solar power installation in the state of Texas.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America at the top of his class, Andrew Weissman worked under Master French Chef Jacques Thiebeult for two years and then was offered the opportunity to work for a year throughout France as a stagier. He worked at Restaurant Bernard Andrieux, Hotel de la Poste, and even a brief stint at world-renowned Restaurant Troigros in Roanne, before returning to the states and the newly opened Le Cirque 2000 in New York. His desire to return to his hometown of San Antonio, Texas, coupled with the city's need for a world-class French restaurant, brought forth Andrew's ultimate dream, Restaurant Le Rêve, which means 'The Dream' in French. Since its inception, the contemporary French cuisine has received critical acclaim: named the sixth best restaurant in America by Gourmet magazine, the best restaurant in the state by both Gourmet and Texas Monthly, ranked by Zagat as the top-rated restaurant for both food and service in San Antonio, and awarded four stars by the Mobile Travel Guide. Chef Weissman, a three-time James Beard Award nominee for Best Chef: Southwest, has been recognized as a rising star in the culinary industry.

The historic Pearl Brewery, a San Antonio landmark located just north of downtown along the San Antonio River, opened in 1883 and operated as a brewery until 2001. Today, Pearl is an emerging urban culinary and cultural destination. The 22-acre Pearl site is an historic gathering place where you can live, eat, play and learn on the banks of the San Antonio River. The site includes a mix of grand 1890s architecture featuring Victorian-era ornamentation along with mid-20th Century industrial facilities being renovated with a modern, urban aesthetic. Other tenants in the Full Goods Building, a 67,000 square-foot former warehouse being converted to mixed use, will include the American Institute of Architects-San Antonio, the AIA Foundation and the Nature Conservancy.

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