

A new Mecca for Elmhurst

Businesses on Park Ave. committed to being "green"

By Jean Lawrence
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Keeping with the times, Elmhurst residents are going green and rejecting sprawl in favor of a more urban feeling City Centre. The new owners of the 110-112 West Park Avenue building are tapping into these trends with their creation of Mecca2, a destination com-

bining an organic winehouse, art gallery, wellness center and salon.

Effigy Salon, owned by Frank and Irene Sibr, occupies part of the building's first floor and the entire second floor. The first floor includes three cutting stations as well as a color bar where clients can watch stylists mix their hair color. The sec-

ond floor has ten more cutting stations as well as manicure and pedicure stations.

The winehouse, Flight 112, features organic, sustainably grown and bio-dynamic wines.

"Organic wines are USDA-certified after three years of their oversight," explained owner Visal Kheam. "Sustainably grown means that no pesticides or chemicals are used on the vines. And bio-dynamics takes organic to another level. It means using astrology and being in tune with nature to planning the timing of watering, pruning a picking." The chic wine shop serves cheese, salads, appetizers and panini and offers a private party room.

Dr. Brian Karwowski's Park Avenue Wellness clinic is adjacent to Effigy on the first floor. He and his staff offer chiropractic medicine, massage therapy, acupuncture, waxing services, physical therapy, and meditative yoga.

Jack Stoltz owns Glitch Gallery, which displays and sells the work of local artists in an entryway gallery and on walls throughout the other three businesses, which are interconnected inside.

Determined to be green

The owners are unified in their efforts to be green. They are repurposing many of the materials left behind by Café Las Bellas Artes, the building's previous owner.

"Effigy reused the chandeliers, skylights, doors from the Chicago Opera house, stainless steel sink behind the color bar, and as many other things as we could so we'd go green as much as possible," Frank said. Jack added that they are saving some of the businesses' garbage, such as wine bottles and corks, to make into artwork to sell through Glitch Galleries and benefit battered women.

Frank, Visal, Brian and Jack came together over the past six years as clients of each other's previous businesses. Frank and Irene owned Effigy Salon in Lombard and had been planning for years to own their own building. Brian became a client at Effigy when he was at National University in Lombard. He started his practice in Lombard and three years ago began talking with Frank about combining their businesses. Jack and his wife lived above Effigy in Lombard and did the graphic design work for the spa, in addition to sharing musical interests. And

Visal was located in downtown Lombard a few years ago and began exploring opportunities with the others.

"We've been talking about this for years and the time and place were finally right," said Frank. The group formed a partnership called Lolo, named after his wife's deceased grandfather, purchased the 110-112 West Park buildings, and went to work getting the space ready.

Effigy, Flight 112 and Park Avenue Wellness opened for business in late 2008. Glitch Gallery celebrates its grand opening on Saturday, February 21 at 7 p.m.

In addition to their four businesses, the group owns the space occupied by Lou Malnati's Pizza and the area that was formerly the ice cream shop Scoops.

"We want to put ice cream back in there," said Frank. "And keep those great Scoops prices for little kids!"

For more information, please call (630)758-0808 or visit www.mecca2.com.