

# Armory “Castle” to be Rejuvenated as Top-Notch Restaurant

Peters Development and Ashling Inc. Convert Head House into Smith & Wollensky Restaurant

**B**oston, MA - The New York-based Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group, Inc. has leased the Head House of the armory castle from the Park Plaza and is refurbishing the structure to serve as a steak house that will be fit for a king.

Located directly on the corner of Arlington Street and Columbus Avenue in Boston, the historical integrity of the building is being restored during the present construction to reflect the original uses of the various rooms. This includes a gunroom, social hall, Civil War room and museum that are being converted to dining rooms. The architectural appeal of these hexagon shaped rooms is astounding as is the decor that is being restored to its original craftsmanship.

Gary Peters of Peters Development Corp. and Tom Clark of Ashling Inc. joined forces to manage the reconstruction of the Castle into The Smith & Wollensky Restaurant.

Ashling, Inc. of Somerville is the construction management company coordinating the revitalization. Tom Clark, formerly of Shawmut Design & Construction is president of Ashling and has a history of teaming with Gary Peters to create fine dining experiences including numerous House of Blue locations and the Motown Cafe in New York City.

Locally, he has managed the construction of hot spots such as Excelsior's, B&G Oysters, Nine Park, Flemings and Legal Sea Foods. His previous experience includes a 10



year stint as a construction executive with The Flatley Company of Braintree

The interior of Smith & Wollensky's Boston restaurant has been designed by Haverson Architecture and Design of Greenwich, Connecticut.

This 25,000 sf space will seat approximately 425 patrons and offer one of the most exceptional dining atmospheres in the United States. The prominent stone and brick medieval structure was constructed in 1881 and originally served as the Armory for the First

Corps of Cadets.

The building is on the National Historic Register and has an impressive fourth floor Banquet Hall that will ensure the restaurant one of Boston's top destinations for large gatherings.

One of the only armories still left in the state, the building was built to be self-sustaining with a water tank in the basement, iron shutters with gun holes and a draw bridge so governing officials could be safe from civil uprisings should the need occur.

The Cadets, who first served as bodyguards for the Massachusetts governor in 1726, created the building to house local politicians and later helped in Shea's Rebellion, the Korean War and then became part of the National Guard.

Many of the Armory's existing historical light fixtures and artifacts will be restored and incorporated into the design. The Association of the First Corp of Cadets has also offered its own collection of memorabilia to display and further authenticate the atmosphere.

"No matter how well the plans are drawn, the architect and engineers cannot possibly account for the many nuances and existing conditions of a building like this. The challenge of going through 54" granite walls, keystone terra cotta floors, and heavy steel construction was daunting but we have been able to make it work," said Gary Peters, principal of Peters Development Corp. "Our goal is to have the mechanical systems hidden in the walls and floors unapparent to customers who will enjoy a fine dining experience in a turn of the century castle."

Peters managed the construction of the first four Smith & Wollensky restaurants outside New York City in Miami Beach, Chicago, New Orleans, and Las Vegas. He specializes in renovating historical buildings into restaurant and entertainment facilities, having completed two major projects in the

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## High-Profile FEATURE: Smith & Wollensky

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French Quarter of New Orleans and in Key West among others.

The Truman Annex Community, in Key West was a mixed use project that had many sensitive buildings most notably The Truman Little White House and a building that once housed President Kennedy's command post during the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

The Truman Annex was a \$250 million project and took approximately four years to complete.

The heating, air conditioning and plumbing systems for the rehab are being coordinated by United Inc. of Rockland. "A project of this scope presents unforeseeable challenges," explains Tom Scolaro, President of United, Inc. "Our responsibility is to work within the parameters of an historical building that offer no room for error as we are on a

very tight timeline. It is a true team effort as all as aspects of the job need to be revisited as you can plan on receiving many curve balls."

The new Boston location will be run by restaurateur extraordinaire James M. Dunn, former President and COO for Smith & Wollensky who has recently become President and Operating Partner of the new restaurant in Boston. This location will benefit from the leadership of an industry veteran who both knows the Smith & Wollensky concept extremely well and has significant experience operating restaurants in the region.

The new Boston restaurant will offer the traditional Smith & Wollensky menu and to complement the outstanding food, its brand new Great American Wine List, which consists exclusively of 650 of the finest wines produced in the United States.

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*Fireplace in 19th century sketch (above left) is the same in recent photo (below).  
(above right) 2nd floor fireplace.*

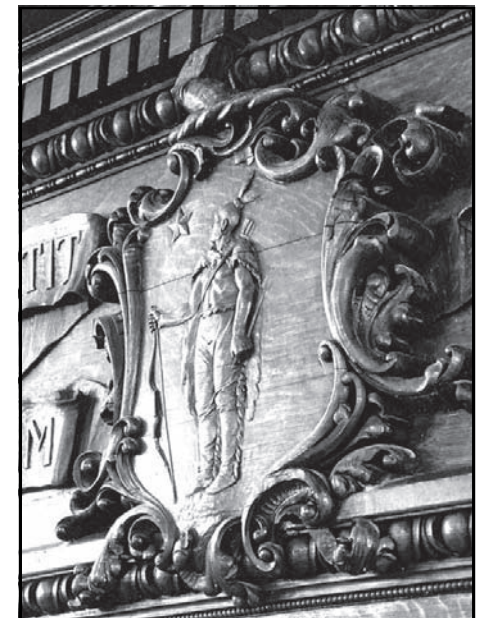


High-Profile FEATURE: **Smith & Wollensky**

( right ) *The Banquet Room on the fourth floor*



*The Gunroom (right and below) in the Head House, first floor - then and now.*



The Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group develops, owns and operates high-end, high-volume restaurants in major cities across the United States. The original Smith & Wollensky, a traditional New York steakhouse, opened in 1977 and is currently the largest- grossing a la carte restaurant in the country. Since its inception, the company has grown to include 16 restaurants.