

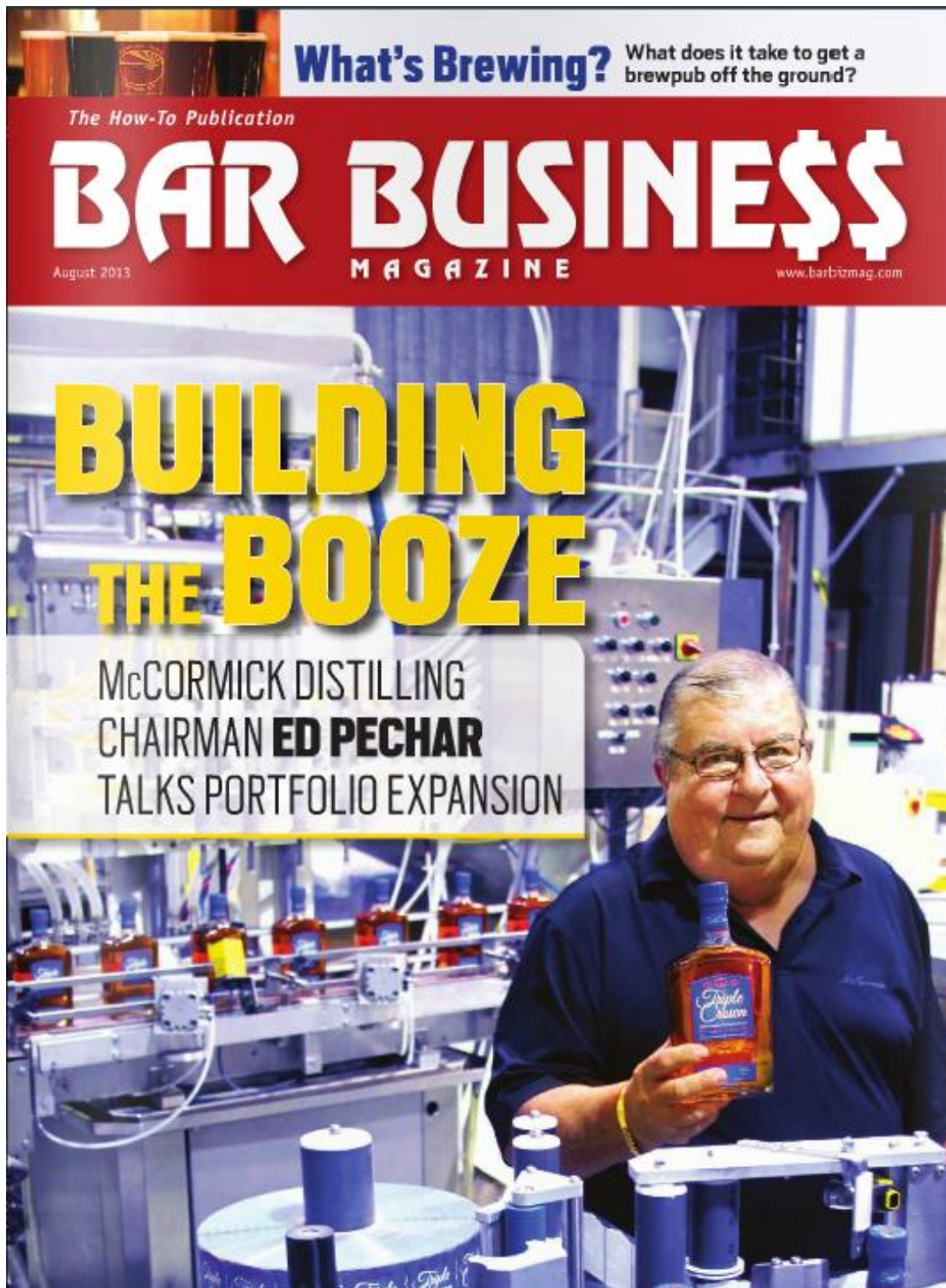
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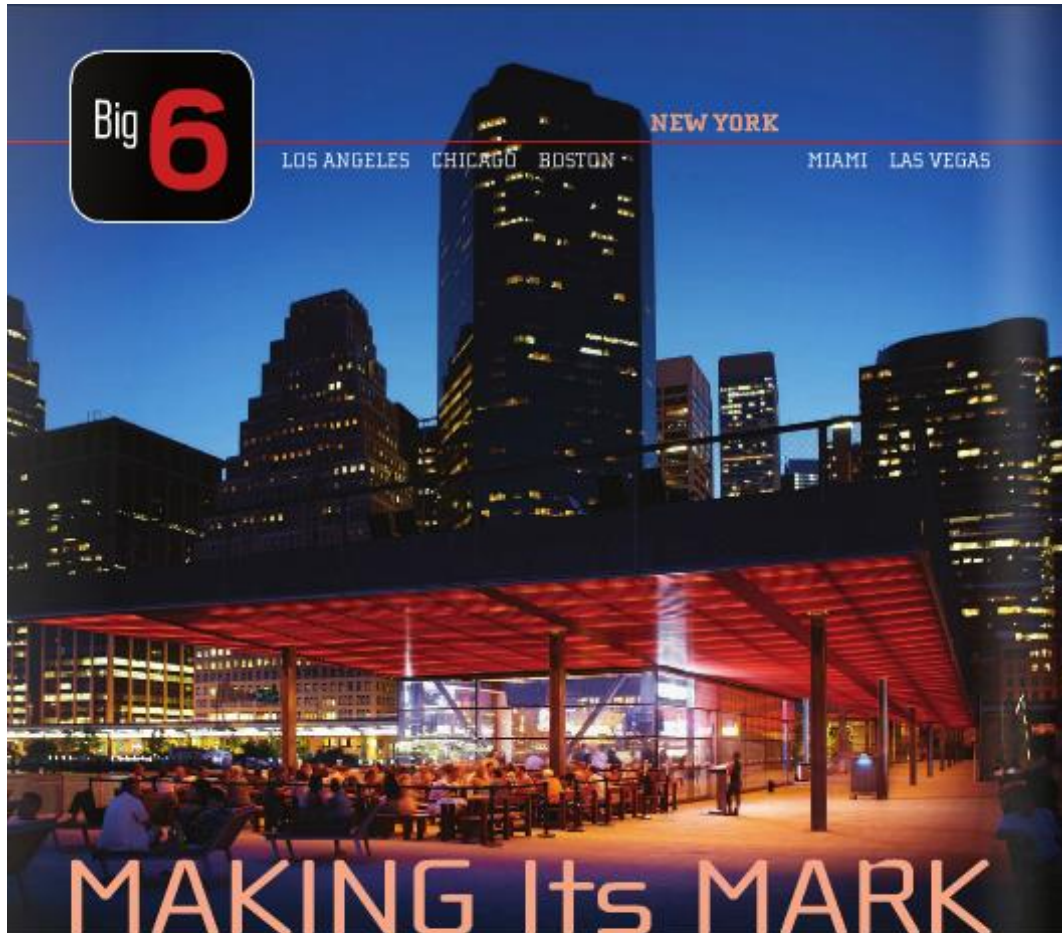
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In a waterfront neighborhood of Manhattan that took a ferocious hit from Hurricane Sandy last year, two New York City nightlife stalwarts are teaming up to make a mark on the recovery process near the South Street Seaport with their new venue, Watermark Bar.

By CHRIS YTUARTE

Nearly a year ago, Hurricane Sandy slammed into the East Coast, and the rising waters of the East River decimated the tourist destinations in and around the South Street Seaport in New York City. Restaurants, bars, shops, and boating exhibits were destroyed. In terms of commercial property damage, it was one of the most hard-hit areas in the city.

So it makes sense that two of the heaviest hitters in New York City nightlife, Telly Hatzigeorgiou and Abraham

Merchant, have teamed up to do their part to help the resurgence of this neighborhood by opening a spectacular waterfront venue, aptly named Watermark Bar.

Abraham Merchant is President of Merchants Hospitality, a full service hospitality company behind the brands SouthWest NY, Merchants NY, Merchants Cigar Bar, Neelys Barbecue Parlor, Merchants River House, Quality Burger, Pound and Fence Pub & Restaurant, Oaxaco Mexican Grill and most recently Black Hound, among others. Telly

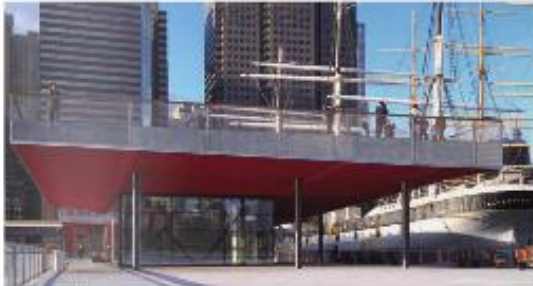
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Hatzigeorgiou is owner of Lure Group, the masterminds behind Beekman Beer Garden, Governors Beach Club and Slate, all in New York City. Hatzigeorgiou also owns Governors Beach Club on Governors Island, a concert venue on the New York waterfront, and will be opening Maiden Lane Pavilion in the South Street Seaport area [viewable from Watermark] and Clinton Hall, an upscale beer hall located in Battery Park and named after the first beer garden in America, Castle Clinton.

In other words, these two gentlemen know New York nightlife. And for the first time, they are working together to create a space suited for the recovery efforts along the East River.

"We're thrilled about the opening of Watermark Bar," says Merchant. "We think locals and visitors alike will appreciate a lounge that merges an innovative upscale nightlife concept with ultimate serenity and various entertainment elements."

Three of lower Manhattan's bridge crossings can be seen.

Perched on the edge of the stunning new double level Pier 15 adjacent to NYC's historic South Street Seaport, Watermark

Bar will be the latest addition to New York City's two-mile East River esplanade, which is part of the NYC Economic Development Corporation's East River Waterfront project creating a continuous "greenway" from 125th Street all the way down to Battery. "Mayor Michael Bloomberg wanted all the waterfront developed, and he's been taking a great initiative in both the East side and the West side and everything by the water is now amazing to see," says Merchant. "You can sit on the water and have a drink and have something to eat and it's just an amazing place to be in New York."

Watermark Bar's double-deck design is completely unique.

"To be part of this great waterfront redevelopment is an honor for us."

Located at the end of the Pier on the East River, Watermark Bar aims to enhance appreciation of the waterfront through a sophisticated and stylish, yet serene bar and lounge atmosphere with an unparalleled

panorama of the New York Harbor and Brooklyn Bridge.

"What's exciting is that New York City is taking this great turn towards developing the waterfront," says Hatzigeorgiou. "To be part of this fantastic redevelopment that the EDC is great."

The stunning 3,500 square-foot venue with indoor and outdoor space is already becoming one of New York City's premier getaway destination for visitors and locals. Patrons can take in the eye-catching views of the Seaport's historic vessels docked nearby while indulging in a wide variety of locally and domestically sourced craft beers, top-shelf liquor options



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Watermark Bar's sleek, modern design was expertly blended with Pier 15's nautical nature to create a futuristic look without losing the history of the location.

and signature cocktails crafted by in-house mixologist extraordinaire Jeremy Strawn. In the kitchen, Executive Chef Jason Mayer offers a gourmet twist to American Grille cuisine, including a signature burger selection unique to Watermark Bar.

"We've kept our food very basic," says Merchant. "We use all-natural beef, and all-natural products, and keep our food very simple because we're able to provide people all the food they would normally enjoy while sitting on a pier—fish and chips, burgers, a great lobster roll, etc. We also have some super craft beers we'll start changing on a monthly basis once things are all lined up."

Therein lies Hatzigeorgiou's expertise. "There's a part of the market that not only offers craft beers like Blue Moon and the Stella, but there are these breweries now in parts of New York with local single-hatch beers that are hard to get and they only make a couple of kegs at a time," he says. "So we want to bring in those brew masters and have them talk about these beers and put them on display, because they're quite amazing. The beer industry is expanding with some great products."

Coupled with Pier 15's futuristic architecture of the Pavilion created by ShoP Architects, Watermark Bar will feature cutting-edge interior design by Wid Chapman



ShoP Architects and Wid Chapman Architects created the exterior and interior looks.

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"We're very excited to be part of the resurgence down here after Sandy. Some parts of the area are still being affected, but it's coming back quickly."

Architects that emulates the historic nature of the location. Accommodating up to 200 seated indoor and outdoor, guests can choose from the cherry red bar stools that punctuate the bar's dark reclaimed wood décor with a pop of color, or take a seat on any of the wooden tables and benches.

"This particular pier has day slips," says Merchant. "In other words, you can bring a yacht or a boat over and come in and enjoy the day and then ship right out. It's not an overnight berthing space. You can just come up to the pier, enjoy some drinks and food, and then sail right back out without an overnight stay."

Steel and glass make up the structure of the venue, and floor-to-ceiling windows seamlessly separate the indoor and outdoor areas, framing a picturesque view of the waterfront that can be enjoyed all year. The eight HD-TV's surrounding the space, coupled with the state-of-the-art sound system, ensures guests won't miss a beat of the entertainment from any seat in the house. On the western facing portion of the location, Cones Café will operate a full service ice-cream and coffee shop featuring twelve Ben & Jerry's flavors and a rotation of kid-favorite movies.

"We had the opportunity to come in and say, 'What can we do with this space that will attract the locals and the tourists and business?'" explains Merchant. "And Watermark was a perfect answer. It's friendly and it's approachable. We wanted to include everyone in the area, and we wanted to let the views and everything else speak for themselves."

But in the end, both men are more thrilled about being part of the recovery process in this hard-hit area than anything else. One of Hatzigeorgiou's venues, Beekman Beer Garden, is located just south of Watermark Bar, on the water, and was decimated by Hurricane Sandy. He relishes the idea of helping the area make its comeback.

"We're very excited to be part of the resurgence down here after Sandy," says Hatzigeorgiou. "Beekman Beer Garden, which is two piers down, was demolished. We were lucky to at least be able to rebuild for another season. So we're very excited. Some parts of the area are still affected, unfortunately, but it's coming back quickly."

As for two New York City nightlife giants working together, they may have created a monster. "It's a fantastic partnership because we're always throwing ideas off of each other and I think it's a good making for a great relationship," says Hatzigeorgiou. "And it's been a lot of fun."

I have a feeling these two may be raising a toast over an East River sunset as we speak. ☺

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