

Inside the East End restaurant rush

Eleven Madison Park's trendy East Hampton pop-up is among the restaurants that are gone this year, but others have come in to replace them

Edward Williams | May 31, 2019

While a handful of high-profile restaurants and old standbys have shuttered on the East End, there are a bunch of newcomers on the scene.

Southampton's Red Bar Brasserie and Little Red — which opened in 1998 and 2011, respectively — are both gone this season.

Restaurateur Will Guidara and chef Daniel Humm — whose Eleven Madison Park in Manhattan has three Michelin stars — will also not be bringing their pop-up EMP Summer House, a hotspot with backyard bocce, back to East Hampton.

But the owners of Paola's, the swank Upper East Side Italian restaurant, snapped up a lease for the high-profile EMP space, which is in a picturesque white house with black shutters at 341 Pantigo Road. Brokers told TRD that while there was some demand for the space, landlord Bernard Kiembock — who is known to frequent the Upper East Side restaurant — had been "talking about doing something like this for a few years" and brought in the tenant directly.

While details of the deal were not disclosed, news reports indicate that it's starting as a short-term lease, although Paola's may consider signing on for longer if the rollout goes well. Still, it's a big loss for Kiembock, who sources say had been receiving north of \$200,000 a season from EMP. Paola's is said to be paying under six figures for the space. (Kiembock could not be reached for comment).

But not everyone is getting a discounted deal.

"If you are looking to open a seasonal, 100-seat restaurant, you are looking at \$200,000-plus for three of four months," said Tony Cerio of Brown Harris Stevens, who is marketing the restaurant and marina East Hampton Point for \$28 million. "There are no deals out here to be had. If you want to play the game, you have to pay the price."

In Montauk, many restaurateurs seem to be up for playing the game — though the prices there are not as steep.

They are not opening white-tablecloth establishments, instead opting for more burger-and-oyster experiences.

Kristin Vincent, the owner of the trendy spot Sel Rose on the Bowery in Manhattan, is opening the Sel Rose Oyster Bar a block from the beach. Vincent paid \$2.75 million for the building — a former home to the Bavarian-themed restaurant Zum Schneider — last September.

Meanwhile, Circle Burger is taking the former Saltbox space in downtown Montauk, and Morty's Oyster Stand is moving into Cyril's Fish House, the famed roadside outpost on Montauk Highway, which was vacant for two seasons after its operators were found guilty of 45 misdemeanors for violating the East Hampton Town Code. The family sold the building to Jeremy Morton for \$1.3 million, according to published reports.

And there's lots more in the way of musical chairs.

In East Hampton, partners Chris Eggert and Kevin Boles are taking over the Bay Kitchen Bar space and installing Bostwick's on the Harbor. In turn, the owners of



the Bay Kitchen, Marc and Eric Miller, are relaunching in the diner at the turn onto Route 27 in Southampton. The Millers are renaming the space Silver Lining Diner.

Meanwhile, Ian Duke is opening Union Burger on a site connected to his party spot Union Cantina in Southampton, and Ed McFarland's Ed's Lobster Bar will replace Bay Burger in Sag Harbor. (Bay Burger's owners sold the property, which had been asking \$3.2 million.)

"There weren't any concessions here," said Hal Zwick, the retail broker at Town & Country Real Estate who handled the deal. "It's a sought-after place, but Ed is a very good operator. He's going to do casual seafood. He is adding a bar. He is very experienced."

Zwick added that McFarland took a lease option to buy it: "They want to see if they do well first."

In Amagansett, the Honest Man Restaurant Group — the owner of Hamptons institution Nick & Toni's, Townline BBQ, Rowdy Hall and La Fondita — is unveiling a ceviche-and-tequila spot dubbed Coche Comedor. The company already owned the space, which it had been using for its catering services.

And there's a batch of upscale establishments debuting.

Terrance Brennan of the Artisanal Group locked in a lease at owner Zach Erdem's 136 Main Street in Southampton, where the company is opening Blu Mar, a Mediterranean seafood spot.

And finally, Mark Geragos, celebrity attorney to Mike Tyson and P. Diddy, has brought in the hot steakhouse Brooklyn Chop House to Southampton's Capri Hotel.

Geragos nabbed the 30-room hotel in 2015 for \$4.7 million. The sellers — former Surf Lodge owner Steven Kamali and W South Beach owners David Edelstein and Jackie Mansfield — had been asking \$5.2 million.