



CANDACE BARBOT/HERALD STAFF

OPENING SOON: Jason Starkman, general manager of Jerry's Famous Deli, scheduled to open on Sept. 17 at 1450 Collins Ave. on South Beach.

A 'famous' deli to open on South Beach

BY LINDA BROCKMAN

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Jason Starkman has a vision for the new South Beach location of Jerry's Famous Deli:

It's 4 a.m. Post-theater patrons clad in tuxedos and gowns are nibbling dessert at one table, while a party of tourists, dressed in flip-flops and swimsuits, are eating pizza at another.

All the while, there is a wait to get in, since the 300-seat restaurant is always occupied with happy diners.

Even in the wee hours of the morning?

Absolutely, said Starkman, 28, general manager of the 24-hour deli scheduled to open Sept. 17 at 1450 Collins Ave.

"We are expecting that when functions let out, people will stop here and eat and they won't feel awkward about doing it. Whether you are dressed up or casual, there is no difference. It doesn't matter what time of day it is or where you came from. You can sit anywhere here and be comfortable," said Starkman, who has managed other Jerry's in the 24-year-old, Los Angeles-based chain owned by his father, Isaac "Ike" Starkman.

Father and son came to South Florida six years ago. The elder Starkman bought Epicure Gourmet Market in Miami Beach and Rascal House in Sunny Isles and Boca Raton. Previously, Ike Starkman divided his time between LA and Miami, but now is planning a permanent move to South

Florida.

This is the first Jerry's — named for Ike Starkman's former business partner — in the state. Housed in an art-deco building built in 1939, the space was originally home to Hoffman's Cafeteria, then an Army USO headquarters in 1940. It later had many incarnations, including the Warsaw Ballroom nightclub. Jerry's is a few blocks south of the Wolfie's location, which closed in April.

"We've restored it back to its original glory," said Tel Aviv-born Ike Starkman, "retaining the original art deco architecture that was here. From the floors to the columns, the building is absolutely stunning. It took a long time to build it, but now it's gorgeous."

It's a typical deli-style restaurant, with a modern twist, Ike Starkman said.

"We feel it is the deli of the new millennium, brought up from what people used to think of as an old-fashioned Jewish deli. It's been very popular in LA and we hope it will be very popular in South Beach. The energy and ambience of the restaurant is pretty energetic. It's a place for everyone in the community, whether you are 2 years old or 90."

Jerry's boasts a menu with 700 items.

"There is something for everyone," said Jason Starkman, who is director of operations for his family's South Florida restaurants. "You may find a group of Japanese businessmen ordering Mexican or a Mexican party eating Japanese

food. In this town, with its diverse mix of people, everyone will be satisfied. I can take a group of friends here and all of us can get what we want."

Coming from health-conscious California, the deli offers an unusual combination of two favorites — salad served in a pizza crust. It's a Jerry's original, said Jason Starkman, of Bay Harbor Islands.

Another signature food is Jerry's over-stuffed deli sandwiches — a \$10 pastrami contains a half-pound of meat. Other sandwiches range from \$6.15 for a half-sandwich to \$12.75 for a triple-decker. Most entrees fall between \$8.95 and \$15.50. One favorite is the chicken brochette with vegetables, served over rice, for \$13.50.

Delivery and party platters are also available.

Breakfast is served all day. There is also steak, homemade soups, pasta, salads, fajitas and pizza.

"Everything is good," said Ike Starkman, 64. "It's a very, very expansive menu. From a corned beef on rye to a triple decker turkey sandwich to stuffed cabbage and a veggie melt. We serve good food at reasonable prices."

Ike's other son, Guy, president of the restaurant chain, will also be at the Tuesday morning opening. Also expected is Guy's wife, model Cindy Margolis (known as "the most downloaded woman on the Internet"), who will cut the ribbon along with Miami Beach Mayor David Dermer.