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## Eli and Oliver Zabar Plan a Lower East Side Dining Spot

'We're doing something appropriate for the neighborhood'



Sasha, left, and Oliver Zabar with their father, Eli Zabar, at a pre-opening party for Eli's Night Shift on East 79th Street in 2015. Eli and Oliver Zabar are planning to open an all-day dining and drinking establishment on the Lower East Side. PHOTO: CLAUDIO PAPAPIETRO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By [Charles Passy](#)

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As a restaurateur and gourmet-market operator, Eli Zabar has built his reputation by focusing largely on Manhattan's Upper East Side, where he runs more than 10 establishments.

Now, after three decades in the neighborhood, he is turning his attention elsewhere—specifically, the Lower East Side.

In partnership with his son Oliver, Eli Zabar is planning to open an all-day dining and drinking spot at 252 Broome St., a space formerly home to the Lucky Bee, a Thai restaurant.

The Zabars haven't finalized the concept for the space or signed a lease. But they are slated to appear this month before a Community Board 3 subcommittee to present their plans for approval.

From there, additional approvals will be required, including from the New York State Liquor Authority. If all goes well, the Zabars hope to open the space, which still doesn't have a name, in the fall.

The move downtown is a "very big deal" for the family, said Eli Zabar, adding that he has faith in the project because of his son's involvement. "I know he knows what he's doing," he said.

Oliver Zabar has been instrumental in helping his father launch and run Eli's Night Shift, a concept that opened on the Upper East Side two years ago. With its focus on craft beers, it has drawn a customer base that is younger than is typically found at many of Eli Zabar's other establishments.

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The new Lower East Side spot won't be another Eli's Night Shift, Eli and Oliver Zabar say.

Nonetheless, father and son expect it to be a place that caters to the Lower East Side, which has become a hub for adventuresome bar and restaurant operators.

"We're doing something appropriate for the neighborhood," said Oliver Zabar, who added that he lives on the Lower East Side.

A particular challenge for Eli Zabar in establishing himself downtown may be pricing, said Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant consultant. On the Upper East Side, she said, Eli Zabar caters to a market that can afford to dine out or shop without questioning the cost so much. That isn't the case on the Lower East Side, she said.

"If he thinks he going to sell a \$14 tuna-fish sandwich, that's not going to happen," said Ms. Spiegel.

Eli Zabar has branched out beyond the Upper East Side before. In 2012, he opened spaces within Grand Central Market, a gourmet-food complex at the Midtown rail terminal.

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