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## The 117-Year-Old Rao's Is Indeed Expanding to Hollywood

2/21/13 at 11:50 AM | [Comment](#)



Somebody tell Harvey Keitel.  
Photo: Courtesy of Rao's

Spanish Harlem institution [Rao's](#) is [indeed opening at 1006 Seward Street](#) in the Hollywood Canteen space, according to co-owner and managing partner Frank Pellegrino Jr., who says in a press release that the restaurant is targeting a late spring or early summer opening.

The restaurant has a long and colorful history with the mob, and while most of that has settled down now, there was a fatal shooting at the East 114th Street restaurant in 2003 after Louis "Lump Lump" Barone told another customer named Albert Circelli to cool it after he heckled performer Rena Strober while she sang "Don't Rain on My Parade," and Circelli [did not cool it](#). These days, for some, the restaurant is better known as the site of the back room poker scene in Jay-Z's "[Death of Auto-Tune](#)" video. Because regular customers essentially "own" tables for life, Rao's is also commonly considered the country's toughest reservation, because you either have to be lucky or know someone to get in. Here's the full press release:

RAO'S RESTAURANT GROUP ANNOUNCES HOLLYWOOD LOCATION

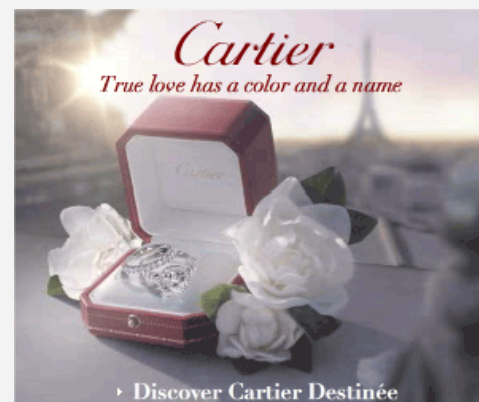
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Hollywood, CA. (February 21, 2013) - Rao's Restaurant Group, known for its award-winning and unforgettable Southern Neapolitan Italian cuisine in New York and Las Vegas, is pleased to announce the opening of a location in Hollywood, California. The restaurant will open at 1006 Seward St., on the site of The Hollywood Canteen. The restaurant's partners are targeting a late spring/early summer debut.

"We've had our eye on California for quite some time and think opening a Rao's in Hollywood is a natural progression for our family," said Frank Pellegrino Jr., co-owner and managing partner. "The people of Southern California represent a large portion of our guests in Las Vegas, and many have become good friends of ours. We can't wait to have a Rao's in their backyard to call home."



Rao's Hollywood plans to open with dinner service, six days a week, offering a variety of traditional Rao's classics such as the legendary meatballs and lemon chicken, combined with more contemporary dishes created specifically for this location. Guests can expect to experience the same level of comfort and service that people have become accustomed to in both the New York and Las Vegas locations. The restaurant plans to feature both indoor and outdoor seating, with room for approximately 95 guests in all.

Additional information including the restaurant's executive chef, complete menu and operating hours will be announced soon.

#### About Rao's

Rao's first opened its doors as a local saloon and 10-table restaurant in East Harlem, New York, in 1896. Its customers were city's residents who came by after work to spend time with friends and family while sharing great food and drink. After receiving three stars by then New York Times dining critic Mimi Sheridan, the restaurant enjoyed increased popularity and is now widely thought to be the toughest reservation to land in the United States. In 2006, the ability to eat at Rao's increased as it opened its second outpost at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, and made an immediate impact on that city's rising culinary scene and is now recognized as one of the city's top dining destinations. Rao's has been covered by Travel + Leisure, USA Today, Conde Nast Traveler, Bon Appetit, Food & Wine, SAVEUR, Los Angeles Times, The New York Times; and featured on programs such as Good Morning America, TODAY, Fox & Friends, Throwdown with Bobby Flay, Top Chef All-Stars and The Best Thing I Ever Ate. In addition to its award-winning restaurants, Rao's also features a line of gourmet food items available in retail stores throughout the U.S. and at [www.raos.com](http://www.raos.com); and have written three critically acclaimed cookbooks Recipes from the Neighborhood, Over 100 Years of Italian Home Cooking and Rao's on the Grill. Learn more about Rao's Caesars Palace at [www.raosvegas.com](http://www.raosvegas.com), on Facebook and follow along on Twitter @RaosRestaurants.

#### Earlier: It Looks Like Rao's Really Will Open a Hollywood Location

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