

**SUGAR, SPICE AND MORE**

**The Park Street strip**

Standing in the overgrown grass in front of a vacant two-story brick building, near where Park Street stretches over I-670, nightclub mogul Chris Corso points to a patch of tall dandelions. "That's where the U-shaped bar will go," he says. Then, looking up toward the building's roof, he adds, "And up there is going to be a rooftop bar. People will be able to look down and see what's going on below."

The noise of the nearby highway only adds to his enthusiasm. "Imagine this freeway at night with the lights from all the cars," Corso says. "It has a lot of energy. The freeway is exciting to me."

It's hard to picture this shabby lot as the city's newest hot spot. But Corso and his business partner, Mike Gallicchio, are betting millions that this stretch of Park Street in the Arena District will be the place for Columbus nightlife in the coming years. They're so sure, they've purchased nearly the entire block between Goodale Boulevard and Spruce Street.

The venture began with the opening of Spice Bar and Lounge a year ago. By the time Spice's doors opened, however, Corso and Gallicchio already had purchased a neighboring property, which they renovated into another upscale club called Sugar Bar. It opened in March.

Sugar and Spice will be joined by another restaurant and lounge (no, not Everything Nice) next spring called Park Street Patio, which Corso describes as an upscale, Key West-resort-themed club with lots of outdoor space—and the elevated patio that Corso envisions when he looks to that second-story rooftop.

And after Park Street Patio debuts, Gallicchio and Corso will work on plans for two more bars nearby. "The rest will follow as fast as we can pop them up," Corso says. "This is a big project, it will take some time. People in Columbus, they're not stupid. They're going to know if you don't do it right."

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**Standing on their strip: business partners Mike Gallicchio (left) and Chris Corso.**

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The track record for this street, which links the Arena District to the Short North, has been spotty. A handful of other ventures, including such restaurants as Tapatio, Strada and Network, have closed recently. Corso's batting average, however, is noteworthy. His past endeavors have helped define the dance-club scene in Columbus, including Mekka, Redzone and the Longstreet Entertainment Complex, which included Fabric, the Mambo Room and Long Street Live.

He and Gallicchio sold the Long Street cluster in February so they could focus on their Park Street development, and they're putting their money where their optimism is. "Any nice bar or restaurant, you're going to spend at least \$1 million," Corso says. "Maybe more—a lot more."

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