

NEW YORK

# West Village's iconic White Horse Tavern could go upscale under new management

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By **TREVOR BOYER** and **LEONARD GREENE**  
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It's not quite the last call at Manhattan's iconic White Horse Tavern, but regulars in the know don't expect it to be the same. (Barry Williams for New York Daily News)

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Customers of the fabled White Horse Tavern can only hope its reputation as a literary hangout and neighborhood drinking spot does not go gently into that good night.

The West Village tavern — where rock-star poet Dylan Thomas downed his last 18 whiskey shots, sending him to his good night in 1953 at age 39 — is at risk of turning upscale now that its building has been sold and its ownership is changing.

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Restaurateur Eytan Sugarman has a deal to take over the place, and although he hasn't detailed his plans, he is best known for the opulent Hunt & Fish Club, a Times Square steakhouse that caters to high-end clients.

He owns that eatery with former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci -- who is not expected to

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Sugarman is also behind Southern Hospitality, a barbecue restaurant in Hell's Kitchen best known for once being associated with Justin Timberlake.



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Through a spokesman, Sugarman declined to comment on his plans for White Horse, one of the city's oldest bars.

Community Board 2 is scheduled to hear Sugarman's application later this month for a new liquor license at the space, located at 567 Hudson and W. 11th Sts.

A bartender and a waitress at the bar would only offer a "no comment" — served with a smile — when asked about the sale.

At the moment, the guessing is that Sugarman does not want to change much.

"Sugarman is insisting that he's paying attention to the historic aspects of White Horse Tavern," according to a report on the food website Eater.

That would be a relief at a tavern that has remained low-key for more than 100 years and has retained much of its original woodwork and a charming tin ceiling.

The building that houses the bar has been sold for an estimated \$14 million, according to reports and building tenants.

The building and an adjacent property have 17 market-rate apartments. Among the reported buyers is Steve Croman,

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He was also required to pay rent-stabilized tenants \$8 million in restitution after he was accused of harassing and coercing them to give up their apartments.

The White Horse Tavern was originally a longshoreman's bar serving the men working the piers lining the Hudson River.

The bar, which opened in 1880, became popular with writers and artists in the early 1950s, including Beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac — who, like Thomas, was destroyed by alcohol.

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It was also a hangout for Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary; Bob Dylan; James Baldwin; and Norman Mailer. [A post on the website](#) of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation notes the tavern was also a haunt for famed

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The White Horse Tavern has been run for years by native New Yorker and former longshoreman Eddie Brennan, who bought the place in 1967, when he was a worker there. He hung a painting of Dylan Thomas in the middle room, and poets still sit beneath it to drink.

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