

West Village Relic Caffe Vivaldi Is Going Out Of Business

by [Ben Yakas](#) in [Food](#) on Jun 6, 2018 12:57 pm



Photo via Yelp

Another day, another classic NYC institution has gone the way of [hundreds of other beloved local businesses](#): West Village mainstay Caffe Vivaldi, which opened in 1983 on Jones Street, has announced it will be closing down this month after a protracted battle with their landlord. Their last day open will be June 23rd.

Caffe Vivaldi was a throwback to a retro era in New York dining—the Italian-leaning restaurant served live jazz with its ravioli, and had played host to a myriad of artistic Village boho types over the past 35 years. [Back in 2011](#), new landlord Steve Croman—the notorious vulture landlord [who was sentenced](#) to a year in jail in 2017 for grand larceny, tax fraud, and mortgage fraud—tripled its rent.

Although they were able to get a new [10-year lease](#) at the time, they reported [landlord harassment](#) in 2016. In April of this year, owner Ishrat

Ansari [recounted his legal struggles](#) with Croman, revealing he had suffered a stroke in the midst of it as well:

My untimely stroke occurred two weeks before a crucial court hearing about the Caffe's future—that has continued to drag on to the present.

In 2011, my tormentor, Steven Croman, became the new owner of the building where Caffe Vivaldi resides. From the beginning, his conduct has been belligerent and illegal, unilaterally breaking the renewed lease, which commenced on January 1, 2012, that I signed with him for the Caffe Vivaldi space, and treating me with dismissive contempt.

My emotional distress reached its most damaging state as Mr. Croman's conduct towards me rose further and further above the law. The menace that Mr. Croman continues to pose threatens to destroy 35 years of history nurtured by Caffe Vivaldi in the West Village.

I am still not even close to full recovery, with many challenges ahead. My cognitive deficits especially have forced me to take a backseat in making decisions for the Caffe, and have prevented me from continuing to take full and strategic action against Mr. Croman.

This is what they posted [on their website](#) this week:

With heavy hearts we announce the upcoming closure of Caffe Vivaldi and the conclusion of our 35-year run at this magical room on 32 Jones Street in our beloved West Village.

In brief: our legal and financial difficulties with our landlord came to a head this spring. To continue to fight would be self-destructive in many, many ways for the business and for all of us. Because of these extenuating circumstances, we will be closing our doors for the final time on the evening of June 23.

With open arms and open hearts, we invite you to join us here in these final three weeks, and make some final memories with us.

For three and a half decades, Caffe Vivaldi was a salon for artistic and intellectual dialogue, a community space in the old European coffeehouse style, a haven for creativity, a cultural institution. The brainchild of one man, Ishrat Ansari. At its core, Ishrat's purpose with the opening of the caffe was to bring people together and that it did. We want to honor you, the people Caffe Vivaldi has touched and transformed, through music, through vision and ideas, through love.

Our community is strong as ever. And we want to remain engaged with all the many thousands of you.

For the present moment, we ask you to share your memories here, so we can begin to create a digital record of the people that the caffe has brought together. And honor this place we've held in common. This long legacy does not end at 32 Jones Street — rather, this is where it begins! So many stories have begun here. And more than anything, we want them to continue to be told. Please do share yours below.

Thank you for being a part of the Caffe Vivaldi family.

Vivaldi has also asked people to share their experiences at Caffè Vivaldi [over the last 35 years here](#): "Whether it is a tale of love, friendship, community, music, any kind of discovery— personal, artistic, professional— we welcome you to share your memories with all of us here."

Caffè Vivaldi is located at 32 Jones Street (at Bleecker Street) — drop by before it's gone forever.

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CC_RRT • 6 hours ago

Well, now we can have some Australian group move right on in. Keep the name as an ode to irony. Keep the facade as required by Landmarks Commission. Change the menu (re: Avocado Toast, meatballs with locally source ricotta, squid ink pasta with bottarga, etc.), double the prices. Nix the live music. Gotta hand it to those wily Aussies.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jamie McDonald → CC_RRT • 6 hours ago

wait why Australian

^ | v • Reply • Share >



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Scotty Weeks → CC_RRT • 3 hours ago

To be fair I credit Aussies with the vastly improved coffee situation over the last ten years. (And Caffè Dante was tolerable at best before the skippies took over.)

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Reign-of-Drones → Scotty Weeks • 38 minutes ago

Aussies took over the Dante??? Turned it into an upscale cocktail lounge I take it. Was one of my favorite spots for years. When I think how much we've lost in this city...

^ | v • Reply • Share >



fictionless • 6 hours ago

Unfortunate story, but Blind Tiger was more my cup of ale.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jamie McDonald → fictionless • 6 hours ago

is that gone

^ | v • Reply • Share >



fictionless → Jamie McDonald • 6 hours ago

I don't think so, though I haven't been in several years.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jamie McDonald → fictionless • 6 hours ago
so then, you don't know what the word "was" means? cool man
1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



fictionless → Jamie McDonald • 6 hours ago
I do know. It was a place I used to go to on occasion.
^ | v • Reply • Share >



OhHeyltsaJay → Jamie McDonald • 3 hours ago
Blind Tiger is alive and packed with finance dudes every happy hour.
^ | v • Reply • Share >



brunostrange • 6 hours ago
I used to sleep with a bartender there. Good times.
6 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Lloyd Bergenson → brunostrange • 5 hours ago
Haven't we all.
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Reign-of-Drones • 39 minutes ago
Well, this sucks. Croman strikes again. Even from jail, he continues to be a malicious, grasping, leech.
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