

# JEREMIAH'S VANISHING NEW YORK

A.K.A. THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS:  
A BITTERLY NOSTALGIC LOOK AT A CITY IN THE PROCESS OF GOING EXTINCT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2011

## Caffe Vivaldi

### VANISHING

A year ago, I made the mistake of getting [excited about Jones Street](#) in Greenwich Village. It seemed like a well-kept secret, an untouched one-block oasis of old New York with its two record stores, antique butcher shop, and 30-year-old jazz cafe. I spoke too soon.

Recently, we heard from Stupefaction that its [Strider Records will be closing](#). And now we hear that [Caffe Vivaldi is being forced to shutter--Steve Croman is the new landlord and is tripling the rent](#), according to this [petition](#).



It seems we're in the midst of an epidemic, where landlords are jacking up the rents on old-school Italian joints (Vivaldi by way of Pakistan). First we heard that 30-something [Rocky's is being booted](#)

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RECENT COMMENTS

[NyFoodee](#) commented on [Dante Returns](#): *I've been a long time customer of Caffe Dante, going there since 1985 .. I loved the old Caffe...*

[Anonymous](#) commented on [Dante Returns](#): *I don't like the TVs at Di Robertis either. I wish they weren't there, they just seem ugly...*

[Walter](#) commented on [Sixth Ave Panorama](#): *West 46th Street was considered "Restaurant Row". West 44th Street housed the famous...*

[Anonymous](#) commented on [Cowgirl](#): *Had lunch there last week and it was packed. Dont think its going anywhere anytime soon! Who can...*

so the Balaboosta people can take over, then Eater reported the shameful news that 90-year-old [Rocco's rent is being hiked](#) so another group of new foodies can expand their mini empire (with [\\$125](#) tasting menus), and now Vivaldi.

The [Village Voice](#) put Steve Croman on their 10 Worst Landlords List of 2008 and outlined his typical tactics: "badgering phone calls, endless lawsuits, and leaning on already hard-pressed tenants." There's a [Stop Croman Coalition](#) of his tenants and a "[Croman Realty Sucks](#)" blog--but both seem to be defunct since 2009.



*Bloomspot*

Caffè Vivaldi is one of those places I've been meaning to get to for a long time. They have live music 7 days a week and no cover charge. Monday is Open Mic Night. They serve things like ravioli. They have been featured in films by Woody Allen and Al Pacino.

Here's how the restaurant's owners describe the place: "Our old wooden chairs have a history and are mostly positioned in approximately the same spot where they were when they first seated the likes of **Andy Warhol, Al Pacino, Woody Allen, Bette Midler, John Cusack, Rob Reiner, Joseph Brodsky** and many others. We have a fireplace and it is usually lit on cold evenings."

[Anonymous](#) commented on [Dante Returns: They put flat screens in at di Robertis a while back, but at least the sound is OFF.I try not to...](#)

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#### JEREMIAH MOSS

"Jeremiah Moss does an excellent job of cataloging all that's constantly being sacrificed to the god of rising rents." --Hugo Lindgren  
New York Times Magazine

"Jeremiah Moss...is the defender of all the undistinguished hunks of masonry that lend the streets their rhythm." --Justin Davidson  
New York Magazine

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Village Voice Web Award 2012:  
"Blogger We Love"

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[NY Times: Room for Debate](#)

[NY Times: Opinion 2012](#)

[NY Daily News: Opinion pieces](#)

[The New Yorker](#)



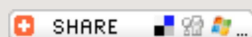
*L.D. at Vivaldi in Whatever Works*

Against all odds, the Friends of Caffè Vivaldi have started a [petition to save the restaurant](#). They write:

"There is a place in New York, that is 1/3 real and 2/3 magical and it is about to disappear... unless we do something now. **For 30 years it has nurtured artists writers, poets, but mostly musicians. It has a new landlord and he wants to triple the rent. We cannot fight him; he is too strong.** The only way forward is to appeal to his better side and reason with him not to snuff the life out of this cherished haven of hope and encouragement for young artists. Our aim to urge our landlord not to increase our rent to an amount we can never come up with in 685 sq ft of space. We want to be fair to him and want him to be fair to us: All we are asking is that he charge us the fair market rent."



Croman's 9300 Realty already has the Vivaldi space up for rent on its [website](#). They're asking \$19,995 a month.



POSTED BY JEREMIAH MOSS AT 6:00 AM

[New York Observer](#)  
[Financial Times](#)  
[The Paris Review Daily](#)  
[Village Voice: Gotham's Best](#)  
[Playboy](#)  
[The London Times](#)  
[Dagens Næringsliv \(Norway\)](#)  
[Frankfurter Rundschau \(Germany\)](#)  
[24 Heures \(Switzerland\)](#)

### SOME QUESTIONS

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[What is hyper-gentrification?](#)  
[Is money & shopping evil? \(No.\)](#)  
[What about shopping at chain stores?](#)  
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### GOT A TIP?

Tips and photos are always welcome. Please send them via email to [jeremoss \(at\) yahoo \(dot\) com](mailto:jeremoss@yahoo.com).

### BLOG ARCHIVE

► [2014 \(76\)](#)  
 ► [2013 \(250\)](#)

LABELS: [GREENWICH VILLAGE](#)

**16 COMMENTS:**

[Tricia](#) said...

RE the enormous, calculated-to-get-them-out rent hikes at the three restaurants...

unfortunately this tactic seems to have become commonplace. sometimes I start counting how many restaurants and stores that have been in the Village for more than 25 years are still here

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 8:09 AM](#)

[EV Grieve](#) said...

Jesus Fucking Christ.

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 8:23 AM](#)

Anonymous said...

he owns the building he can charge what ever he wants....sucks but the owners should have came up with a plan during their 30yrs to purchase the property.

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 9:37 AM](#)

Anonymous said...

@Anon 9:37

The naturalistic fallacy: mistaking what is for what ought to be. Who cares if the landlord \*can\* raise the rent - do you take every action that is in your self-interest, and screw whoever else gets run over in the process?

As for the restaurant, I think their plan was to run a beloved restaurant for decades...Do you think property values skyrocketed in the neighborhood over 30 years because an absentee landlord beamed good vibrations telepathically from a McMansion in Westchester? Maybe, just maybe, it's because of the tenants in the buildings in the neighborhood, and the individuals they entice to come. I know it might sound shocking, but maybe a small proprietor with good food that

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[Katharine House](#)

[Fedora Dorato](#)

[Meat on Hooks](#)

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[Manhattan Theatre Source](#)

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[Caffè Vivaldi](#)

[Buy \(Another\) Book Weekend!](#)

[\\*Everyday Chatter](#)

attracts celebrity clients would raise property values on a block.....

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 10:50 AM

Anonymous said...

As Ms. Didion wrote, goodbye to all that.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 11:18 AM

Marty Wombachersaid...

Tripling someone's rent is insane and the mark of pure greed. I guess we can look forward to a Starbucks here in the future. I just signed the petition and hope others do as well.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 11:52 AM



esquaredsaid...

also vanishing, sometime in January of next year -- the Manhattan Theater Source theater

<http://broadwayworld.com/article/Manhattan-Theatre-Source-to-Close-in-January-2012-20111107>

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 12:25 PM

Patricia Morrison said...

Another disgusting greedhead ruining something good. Caffe Vivaldi was very kind to me some years ago, allowing a film crew to interview me there, and I've tried to patronize the place as often as possible ever since. This is horrible news, and the landlord needs horsewhipping...as landlords so often do.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 2:50 PM

nygrump said...

And where do these brokers live? If they are going to destroy our country, let's put a light on them.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 3:00 PM

Anonymous said...

wow how many one sided comments. While I dont want to defend the landlord, seems to me the owners of this place

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[\\*Everyday Chatter](#)

[\\*Everyday Chatter](#)

[In the Martian Scaffold](#)

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#### VANISHING NY FLICKR POOL





have been paying the below market rent for a long time, so either they have not charged YOU enough (or you didnt order enough drinks) or they have enriched themselves quite a bit.

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 3:37 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

how about all those sex shops and tatoo parlors in the village, how come those joints stay open while cafe vivaldi is forced to close?

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 3:38 PM](#)

[Mitch Broders](#)said...

Losing Strider is a real heartbreak, too. Not only was the shop a great place to hide, but Bob was great company while you hid. He is free of the 'tude that curiously afflicts so many record-store proprietors. I will miss him, I will miss his records, and I will miss his walls filled with reminders of jollier times.

[NOVEMBER 7, 2011 AT 4:46 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

Why do you assume that the new business will be worse than the old business?

[NOVEMBER 8, 2011 AT 10:34 AM](#)

 [patrick](#)said...

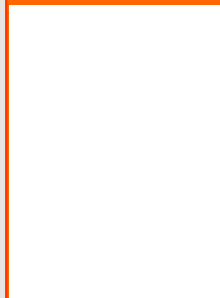
I hate to see this cafe close. But landlords make money by charging what the market will allow. If the market allows for a tripling of the rent then so be it. The owners should've figured out how to buy property long ago.

[NOVEMBER 8, 2011 AT 1:13 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

Welcome to Bloomberg's NY. I'm disgusted. It's been obvious for a very long time that we need commercial rent control. It's not possible to do business when you can't plan your future in your location from one lease to another. Profit is not the ONLY value. And there is plenty of that for all. This excessive greed is ruining everything. I miss New York.

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#### SEARCH

NOVEMBER 16, 2011 AT 1:11 PM

Anonymous said...

this petition worked, the landlord has fear of bad publicity

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven\\_Croman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Croman)

APRIL 2, 2012 AT 8:04 PM

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