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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

Caffè 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 [Caffè 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](#) so the Balaboosta people can take over, then Eater reported the

BLOG ROLL

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RECENT COMMENTS

Crazy Eddie commented on [Everyday Chatter_11: @Jeremiah-I think Jimmy B is still alive:\)@Uncle Waltie-If the Son of Sam had been released by his...](#)

Uncle Waltie commented on [Everyday Chatter_11: Wasn't Mailer the guy who thought Jack Abbott was rehabilitated?](#)

Karen Gehres commented on [Katharine House: Right you are Jake. And "Coffee Shop" was once a real coffee shop.Lots of Union meeting...](#)

Jeremiah Moss commented on [Faile On Houston: yeah, the Automat sign i mean was actually not on a McDonald's--my mistake--but on a deli next...](#)

JakeGould commented on [Katharine House: That corner she's standing on--and out of view in this shot--is where the bar "Coffee Shop" is now,...](#)

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RANDOM POSTS

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

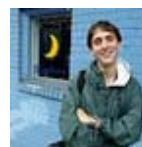
Caffe Vivaldi is one of those places I've been meaning to get to for a long time. They have live music 7 days a week and no cover charge. Monday is Open Mic Night. They serve things like ravioli. They have been featured in films by Woody Allen and Al Pacino.

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."

*Everyday Chatter



Saving Cheyenne



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JEREMIAH MOSS

"Jeremiah Moss...is the defender of all the undistinguished hunks of masonry that lend the streets their rhythm and give people a place to live and earn a living: bodegas, curio stores, a metalworking shop in Soho, diners, and dingy bars."

--Justin Davidson,
New York Magazine

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PRESS

[New York Times: Opinion](#)



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

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"gentrification has changed tremendously since the '70s and '80s. **It's really a systematic class-remaking of city neighborhoods** ...it's about creating entire environments."
 --Neil Smith, CUNY

BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2011 (388)
 - ▼ November (17)
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15 COMMENTS:

Elaine said...

This is just disgusting. People like Croman won't be happy until regular people and all traces of meaningful history are wiped out of NYC. Makes me sick.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 7:34 AM

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 8:09 AM

EV Grieve said...

Jesus Fucking Christ.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 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 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

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▶ [April \(34\)](#)

▶ [March \(37\)](#)

▶ [February \(38\)](#)

▶ [January \(37\)](#)

▶ [2010 \(441\)](#)

▶ [2009 \(466\)](#)

▶ [2008 \(459\)](#)

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VANISHING NY FLICKR POOL

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SOME QUESTIONS

[How did this blog begin?](#)

shocking, but maybe a small proprietor with good food that attracts celebrity clients would raise property values on a block.....

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 10:50 AM

Anonymous said...

As Ms. Didion wrote, goodbye to all that.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011 11:18 AM

Marty Wombacher said...

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 11:52 AM

esquared said...

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 12:25 PM

Patricia Morrison said...

Another disgusting greedhead ruining something good. Caffè 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 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 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 have been paying the below market rent for a long time, so

Is money & shopping evil? (No.)

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either they have not charged YOU enough (or you didnt order enough drinks) or they have enriched themselves quite a bit.

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

[Mitch Broder](#) 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 4:46 PM](#)

Anonymous said...

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

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

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