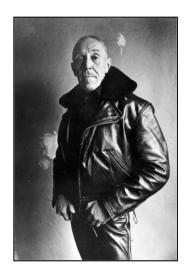


On The Baltimore Eagle and Its Symbol

In order to understand the story of The Baltimore Eagle and the symbol that represents it, we need to begin by understanding their inspiration. That inspiration is largely bound up in the histories of two men, both named Tom.

Our first 'Tom' didn't begin his life with that name; it was chosen for him because it was easy for his English-speaking friends to pronounce. Over the last half-century or more, Touko Laaksonen, known most commonly as Tom of Finland, has had a profound influence on LGBT iconography as a whole and has been universally recognized as the foundational figure behind many of the symbols commonly associated with leather culture throughout the world.



Tom of Finland began drawing images of well-muscled men while a student in Helsinki in the late 1930's. Sadly, few of Tom's earliest works survive. In a Europe that was becoming increasingly puritanical and regimented with the rise of National Socialism and Soviet Communism, Tom (perhaps rightly) thought that his images might place him or his family under scrutiny, so he destroyed nearly all of them.



During his service in the Finnish army during World War II, Tom became fascinated with military symbols, uniforms, and badges of rank. When Tom went back to his art after the war, he was attracted by the juxtaposition of rebellion and regulation, and he started combining hyper-masculine male depictions (similar to those being drawn at the time by American artist George Quaintance) with symbols of authority, discipline, and strength. Though many of his works were plainly homoerotic, they flew in the face of stereotypical views that saw gay men as weak or

effeminate. Tom's men were lumberjacks, and policemen, and sailors, and soldiers; Tom's men were men who clearly liked being men.

In the 1960s, greater sexual freedoms in general led to the decriminalization of male sexual images in U.S. publications, and Tom's drawings reached a much wider circulation than they had in the years immediately following WWII. Though he became particularly popular in America, the early 1970s saw his work being reproduced all over the world. In the decades since then, Tom's distinctive artistic style has been copied so many times by so many people that it has become almost impossible for anyone but an expert to tell many of his drawings from those that he inspired.

When our second 'Tom', Tom Kiple, decided to open a club in Baltimore in 1991, there were already a few leather-friendly bars in the city (most notably The Porthole and The Gallery), but none had yet established themselves as a 'home away from home' for the leather community.

Kiple wanted to change that by presenting his club as first-and-foremost a leather bar. He wanted a name that would make that point clear to his prospective clientele by connecting it to an icon that already had meaning to them: an eagle







During the 60s and 70s, the rise of openly gay communities in the larger cities of the U.S. met with resistance that often turned violent, and LGBT bars and clubs became safe havens where society's inequities – and those who perpetuated them – were unwelcome. These bars and clubs also became meeting places for an increasingly activist community that sought recognition without prejudice. One such club, prominent in New York, was The Eagle's Nest, a Leather/Levi bar founded in 1970.

Contrary to the misperception engendered by their 'fringe' status, the patrons and owners of The Eagle's Nest were huge proponents of community outreach, and the efforts they coordinated on behalf of charitable organizations went a long way toward easing local tensions. Over the next few years, the term 'Eagle' became synonymous with 'sanctuary', a judgment-free place where members of the leather community could gather and be themselves. Eagle Bars began opening all over the world, not as part of a brand, but as a movement.

According to one story, the original hand-drawn logo for The Baltimore Eagle was modeled after the hood ornament of a 1957 Ford Thunderbird. When ownership of the club and its brand were transferred in 2012, the new proprietors recognized that the old bird needed a little facelift. In the new design, the original wing configuration has been given a slight curve and talons have been added. The 'Baltimore Eagle' name has been placed on a round medallion, and the whole device has been given a metal sheen similar to police and military badges. The updated logo pays homage to both Tom Kiple's original design and the influence that Tom of Finland has had on the leather community worldwide.

Special Note

Richard B. Richardson, who took over management of the Baltimore Eagle in 1994 after Tom Kiple moved on to other ventures, wasn't involved in the founding of the Baltimore Eagle or the creation of its symbol, but he was instrumental in defining its purpose and expanding its reputation.

Richard moved to Baltimore from Atlanta to pursue his dream of owning an Eagle club, and he was deeply involved in every aspect of bar operations until his death in 2007. Richard was always fascinated with the outlaw mystique and the freedom it represented. One of his favorite phrases was: 'Leathermen do whatever the hell they want,' an expression which was used often during his tenure to describe the style of the club he ran.

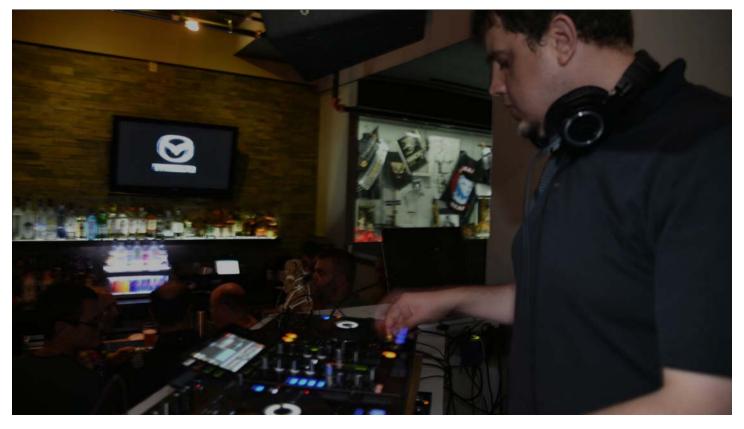
Richard was keenly aware of the leather community's history, and it was largely through his efforts that the Baltimore Eagle became a home for charitable events, gatherings, and contests both local and national. The Baltimore Eagle would certainly not be either so fondly remembered or so widely recognized if not for Richard, and the club's future owes a debt of thanks to the past he left it.

Also worthy of special mention are Richard's long-time friends and neighbors, father-and-son real estate moguls Charles and Ian Parrish. Charles's connection with the Eagle began in 1962 when the tavern was among his first stops upon returning from years of military service abroad (it was then named Al Wynn's). In fact, it was Charles who originally acquired and sold the building to Eagle Founder, Tom Kiple. Charles was proud to have been the Eagle's first customer.

After Richard's death and with no heirs to speak of, the future of the Baltimore Eagle was tenuous. Further complications arising out of the intolerance of a few community members nearly extinguished the Eagle. However, inspired by an outpouring of support from patrons of the Eagle, the Parrish Family stepped in and led a massive reconstruction and revitalization of what Ian Parrish called "a Baltimore landmark, and a special, judgment-free place worth saving." The spirit of this landmark tavern was restored with such love and goodwill that even the opposition joined in support at the Grand Reopening; and the Eagle heralded yet another generation of fellowship at our home away from home.

This narrative was compiled with input from several expert sources, including: Jakob VanLammeren and his group at the Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago, IL; ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the University of Southern California; the staff and patrons of Eagle NYC; and finally, the staff and patrons of the Baltimore Eagle, without whom there would have been no history to write.

Bar review Revived Baltimore Eagle leather bar pulsates with good energy



A look at the Baltimore Eagle, a Station North leather bar that reopened in January after a five-year hiatus. (Baltimore Sun video)



By Wesley Case The Baltimore Sun

JULY 21, 2017, 5:00 AM

hen the Baltimore Eagle closed at the end of 2012, the city lost a storied establishment that was more than just a place to socialize and dance. It was an open-minded, safe space for all visitors, including those who embraced its leather subculture for personal enjoyment and empowerment.

But after significant renovations and plenty of meetings with the city's liquor board, good news arrived in January. The Eagle was back.

And anyone concerned that the new Eagle — located at the same Station North address but with different ownership and noticeably shinier digs — would lack the essence that made the original resonate need not worry.

7/22/17, 2:01 PM

Recent visits revealed a bar thriving on good energy while offering options to suit different moods — from watching the Orioles at the first-floor main bar with a cocktail in hand to the Code Bar in the back, where entrants must wear leather and keep their phones out of sight.

Then there's the second-floor Nest, a Moulin Rouge-inspired space where I recently paid \$12.50 to watch Shigella Brown's Bottom-more Review, a deliciously tacky drag show that occurs the second Friday of each month. In front of approximately 70 seated audience members, the cast — in incredibly vivid makeup and "Alice in Wonderland" outfits — lip-synced and danced to songs like Kesha's "Gold Trans Am." Shots were handed out, dollar bills were given in appreciation, and hooting and hollering commenced.

"Didn't we make one hell of a mess? Didn't you [expletive] love it?" asked the host, Shigella Brown, a.k.a. Diamond Taylor.

In a word: Yes. At a time when the LGBTQ community is finding wider acceptance and debating the vitality of gay bars, it's natural to attach social and political significance to a bar like this. But beyond that, the Eagle has become an instant hit because it's smartly designed, well-executed, and pulsating with fun and positivity.

It's hard to have a bad time around people looking to dance the memories of the work week away through house music. The downstairs main bar has enough room for groups to sit at tables to chat and for people to dance near the DJ booth. Later in the night, shirtless go-go dancers gyrated on top of the bar as they flirted with on-looking patrons.

At the Eagle, the draw is the lively atmosphere, which is often bolstered by the night's theme or party. There's a monthly furry night, Baltimore Bear Fridays, Underwear Night on Thursdays, and Wednesday night trivia to name a handful.

The only aspect with room for improvement was the bar program — namely cocktails that just missed the mark.

The six signature cocktails (\$7) all feature the local brand Tart vodka, emphasizing summer-friendly fruit flavors like pineapple and kiwi. But cocktails like the Eagle Punch (pineapple Tart vodka and cranberry juice) and Envious Tart (kiwi Tart vodka, lemon juice and lemon-lime soda) were one-note and overly sweet. The sugar-rush overtook any alcoholic punch, despite what appeared to be heavy pours.

The affordable prices and daily drink specials made it harder to complain, though. On Fridays, Absolut Elyx Vodka and Red Bull is on special for \$7, while Saturdays offer \$5 Long Island iced teas. The weekday happy hour lasts from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., an eternity compared to most other bars in the city.

Next time, though, I'll probably stick to beer, as the Eagle has 16 draft lines (\$5.50-\$8) with a nice mix of local and national craft brews. Key Brewing, the Brewer's Art, Evolution Craft Brewing and Monument City were all available.

2 of 4 7/22/17, 2:01 PM

But the bar program did not feel central to the great time being had by one of the most diverse crowds I've encountered in the past decade of covering Baltimore's bar scene. With patrons of all genders, ages and backgrounds, it was the type of mix I rarely — if ever — see in the city's other nightlife-heavy neighborhoods like Federal Hill and Fells Point.

The customers I spoke with were from different neighborhoods in the city and outside of it, and some said friends from Philadelphia and D.C. have made the trip to Baltimore to see the new Eagle. The new ownership (which includes real-estate investor Ian Parrish), along with the hard-working staff led by general manager Chuck King, deserve the credit. They're not only doing right by the Eagle's legacy, but they appear to be building on it for years to come.

The Baltimore Eagle

Back story: Originally opened in 1991 and then closed in 2012, the Baltimore Eagle leather bar reopened in January under new ownership and after significant renovations. The bar has different sections, and often hosts theme nights and parties. There are plenty of drink specials, and pub fare made by chef Ed Scholly.

Parking: Metered nearby street parking

Handicap accessibility: First floor is accessible via wheelchair; second is not

Signature drink: The Eagle Punch (\$7) is made with pineapple Tart vodka, a Baltimore brand, and cranberry juice.

Where: 2022 N. Charles St., Station North

Contact: 410-200-9858; thebaltimoreeagle.com

Open: 11 a.m.-2 a.m. daily

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3 of 4 7/22/17, 2:01 PM

Iconic Baltimore gay bar The Eagle is finally back—and revamped



Patrons at the new Eagle (J.M. Giordano/City Paper)



FEBRUARY 7, 2017, 11:26 PM

The Baltimore Eagle has finally landed in Station North. The waiting has been palpable, at least for the queer folks who have watched their bars and clubs close one by one as assimilation and capitalism do their ugly work. When construction delays and a shake up on the liquor board put the Eagle's liquor license in jeopardy back in 2015, we got nervous that the \$1 million-plus remodel would be for naught, but with a liquor license transferred over from the Hippo to the Eagle and a whole lot of sweat equity from the community, the 10,000-square-foot Eagle is open and ready for business.

The kitchen isn't up and running yet, but in the next few weeks, we hope, the Eagle will open for dinner first, with a lunch service to be added. Award-winning Master Chef Ed Scholly brings a "gastropub" model to the bar scene, and we'll be interested to see how that plays out on this block more used to the cheap eats at Bismillah and The Crown. Scholly, who trained alongside celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey and has cooked for

1 of 3 10/10/2017, 2:50 PM

the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Bill Clinton, Madonna, and the Dali Lama, will offer up bar classics like wings and fries alongside upscale bites like miso-glazed salmon and a fancy burger menu. We haven't tried the food, but we're looking forward to sampling the sizable menu. Until then, we'll grab a plate of pupusas from Mi Comalito across the street before heading into the bar.

We stopped by on a recent Monday for happy hour. We were greeted at the door by security staff who will be a constant presence. The main room is cavernous and dominated by the main bar that will squeeze dozens of people around its black marble counter. Our group of four women chose a table by the large glass windows at the front and headed to the bar to place our orders.

The draft beer selection is impressive, including local and regional taps alongside corporate brews like Shock Top. A pint is normally priced at \$7, but happy hour knocks three bucks off that and makes it a bargain even in this still-bargain-priced neighborhood. Drink specials are offered every night of the week for the budget conscious, but it remains to be seen if the Eagle has hit the right price point for the gentrifying neighborhood.

Bartender Charles Pijanowski offered to take us on tour that took almost an hour. From the outside the Baltimore Eagle looks like a large bar, but inside it is a labyrinth of different bars and promised experiences that blew us away. Our tour started with a walk to the back of the main bar where they've installed a display of Eagle memorabilia, including mementos from the original bar and flags from other Eagles around the country that have closed. There's plenty more in storage that will rotate into the exhibit, a promised reminder that even if the Eagle's brand spanking new, it's kept its ties to the old.

We stopped in the all-gender bathroom, with all black stone walls, black toilets, and 200-pound granite sinks. There are multiple closed stalls and, in the back, a urinal room in what Pijanowski called the "European style"—drains on the floor and flush handles on each wall. This is one seriously sexy bathroom.

Next up was a quick tour of the Code Bar. This separate space is open only to those in leather or fetish gear on Friday and Saturdays—and for good reason. The Eagle was a leather bar, and the owners wanted to preserve that safe space for a community that has lost its public meeting spaces. No cell phones are allowed inside, ensuring privacy for the leather and fetish enthusiasts.

Pijanowski next showed us the area that will become the package store where the neighborhood can pick up bottles, even on Sundays—the Eagle's liquor license gives Station North denizens a place to buy booze all week long. Upstairs is The Nest, The Eagle's dance club. The room is long and elegant with red walls and plush red curtains. The walls are adorned with vintage pictures of queer folks lounging and loving—the new Eagle is the next phase of this queer history. The stage at the far end will feature a DJ for dance nights—one of three DJ booths in the place—and host drag shows and other events for the larger community. Some in the leather community were uncomfortable with the idea of drag queens in the Eagle, but as John Gasser later pointed out, "Leather's just another form of drag." There's plenty of room for both at the Eagle.

The Eagle will also house the largest leather shop south of New York City where designer and artist Michael

2 of 3 10/10/2017, 2:50 PM

Lado will do custom work. The back patio is still being built out, with a 40-foot long fire feature and a separate bar. The Eagle is a completely new gay bar, one that recognizes its core constituency while also attending to the realities of today's market. So many people have their hands in this place—Chuck Bowers sold much of the Hippo's fixtures to owners John and Paul Gasser and Charles and Greg King at bargain prices. Renovation costs were kept down by community members who offered to make curtains. "People wanted this," Pijanowski said. "They really wanted this. I feel like this is my home. I helped build it." The Eagle aims to stay that home for many while making room for new generations. The kitchen might not be open yet, but there's plenty on the menu already.

Check out our shots of the old Eagle here.

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3 of 3



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Friday, February 03, 2017

The Eagle is Back!

Written by Bill Redmond-Palmer

After a wait that seemed to many like forever, the Baltimore Eagle Night Club and Bar has finally opened. Their first night drew close to 600 people, with lines around the block. What they found, was like nothing you've ever seen in Baltimore.

While the Eagle continues to proudly serve its traditional leather, Levi, bear, fetish, and BDSM clientele, this Eagle has spaces, events, and fun for everyone. It fills both the need for spaces that feed people's unique identities, as well as spaces that create opportunities to be in unity and community. That breadth of inclusion, makes this, the first queer community bar and nightclub to open in Baltimore in decades, a unique space.

The owners of the Eagle building and its brand name are Ian Parrish and his father, Charles Parrish, local real estate developers and owners of a local real-estate school. Charles has the claim to fame of being one of the first patrons of the Eagle when it first opened. Charles's mother, Emma (a.k.a. Bunny Holiday) was a well-known burlesque performer who used to sing with Billie Holliday at the Gaiety and on other Baltimore, New York, and D.C. stages, making his personal story as intriguing as the Eagle itself.



"We could never have done this without the support of Ian and Charles," said Chuck King, manager of the Eagle. "They really worked to preserve the space, and I'm very happy we found each other."

Over the past months, the community has supported the Eagle's opening, but the city has not, most especially the Liquor Board, who gave a very clear perception of arbitrary bias, contributing in large part to the delays in opening. The owners have filed a complaint with the Maryland Court of Special Appeals and are optimistic while they await a final ruling.

The entrance to the Eagle has been restored to its original location on Charles Street, and is now handicap-accessible. The entrance leads into the Eagle Tavern, featuring a bar, picture windows, and restaurant seating.

The Code Bar, also on the first floor, is a throwback to the early days of leather, as a garage-styled old-school leather bar. Worn concrete floors, rubber tires, dark corners, and low light all contribute to a milieu that lends itself to cruising daddies, leather studs, and the fetish men and women of the region. Dress code is enforced during certain hours on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and access is restricted to those wearing appropriate leather or fetish gear. Exceptions may be made for those not in proper attire, but who are willing to remove their shirts.

The Nest is a "Moulin Rouge"-inspired multi-purpose event and entertainment space on the second floor. It features its own adjacent bar as well as the Eagle's catering kitchen. This reporter felt he was transported into a French cabaret. The Nest features a complete stage with dressing room, ideal for shows and contests, as well as professional digital video projection and sound equipment. When the space is set up for dance parties, the walls are lined with stools and bar tables, however it can be converted into a cabaret-style space with tables and chairs that can seat 160 people. The Nest will be home to dance parties featuring the Montreal and European dance music scene, and possibly the occasional "Hippo Retro Dance Party."

Eagle Eats, scheduled to open in the next couple weeks, will be a full-service restaurant, offering everything from burgers to sliders, and salads to fish. The food service will be led by Ed Scholly, a European-trained German-certified Master Chef with 26 years of experience. Chef Scholly has served pop stars, four U.S. presidents, the Queen of England, the Dalai Lama, and other dignitaries around the world.

The Eagle Leather & Fetish Shop, on the second floor, is scheduled to open around the same time as Eagle Eats. The shop will also display and sell fetish and erotic art by local artists and plans to offer classes on fetish interests.

Eagle Wine & Spirits, will be a package good store with a streetfront entrance where the old entrance to the Eagle and coat check used to be. An opening date has not yet been set, but work is well under way.

Once completed, the Eagle will feature outdoor spaces as well. On the ground floor, a large private space, will include a full bar, a large community table, planters, benches, and a covered section that can be used during the winter, thanks to a fire trough. A second floor deck adjacent to the Nest will have steps leading to the ground-level patio.

Even with all those amenities, there is still more to come. Recently the owners purchased the dentist offices next door, with plans for that space still under wraps. The Parrishes are also considering building a first-of-its kind in Baltimore hotel, on property they own directly across from the Eagle.

One of the reasons Ian Parrish says he wanted to buy the Eagle was the goodwill it had built over the years. "Since 1991, the Eagle has hosted benefits for HIV/AIDS awareness, research and testing programs, services for the elderly, and other deserving charities," Parrish said. "Now that we are hopefully moving past the fight for equal treatment by the Baltimore City Liquor Board, it's time to consider new outreach opportunities. We are proud to be involved with Baltimore Pride 2017, thanks to our manager Chuck King, and we are considering several other worthy causes on which to focus our service efforts."

The Eagle has several regularly scheduled weekly and monthly themed events. Every Friday night is "Baltimore Bear Friday" and every Saturday night is "Leather Saturday"; every first Saturday the Nest Nightclub will feature "Backspin: Music from 1980 to 2000," with DJ Vince Christopher; and every second and fourth Friday the Nest Nightclub will present an evening of drag performances. Some special events coming up at the Eagle include "Cheer," a Super Bowl party on February 5th; "Cupid's Kiss," a Valentine's Day Party on February 11th; and "Glow," a fundraiser for Baltimore AIDS Walk featuring go-go dancers and raffles, on March 11th.

The Eagle's Grand Opening celebration is tentatively scheduled for late February, pending confirmation of some details. "Stay tuned," said King, "as we have even more new plans in the works."

Baltimore Eagle bar and club reopens Friday night in Station North



Scenes from the 2016 Baltimore Pride parade on a hot afternoon on North Charles Street. The Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore hosts Baltimore Pride 2016 in celebration of the LGBTQ community.



By Sarah Meehan
The Baltimore Sun

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The storied Baltimore Eagle bar is reopening after two years of renovations.

JANUARY 20, 2017, 3:30 PM



fter shutting down in 2012, the Baltimore Eagle will reopen tonight with a new look under new owners.

The storied leather bar at 2022 N. Charles St. has undergone a massive renovation. The venue will host a ribbon-cutting at 7:45 p.m. Friday, followed by its opening at 8 p.m.

1 of 2 1/27/2017 8:01 PM

To start, the Eagle will operate as a bar and club with hours from 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Thursday, and noon to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday. A restaurant, retail section and liquor store within the building will open in the coming weeks, when the hours will be expanded.

Chef Ed Scholly will head the kitchen, offering gastropub fare such as burgers, sandwiches, seafood and nachos.

The project has been in the works for about two years, including a full renovation of the building, as father-son owners Charles and Ian Parrish of Investors United have worked with Charles and Greg King and John and Robert Gasser* to restore the gay bar. Aside from extensive construction, the team encountered a number of hurdles along the way, including problems securing a liquor license after its license expired.

Charles "Chuck" King, the bar's general manger, said it became a mad dash to open the Eagle on Friday when the owners were told their permits weren't in order earlier in the week.

"This has been the longest road of our lives, it's been the toughest road of our lives. We had no idea how hard it was going to be opening a business," he said. "We are humbled by the support of the community and the support and the outreach of our family and friends."

The original Baltimore Eagle closed in 2012. King said a grand opening celebration will likely take place in late February.

Correction: A previous version of this article incorrectly identified the Baltimore Eagle's owners. Charles and Ian Parrish own the Eagle, and Charles King is the general manager. The Sun regrets the error.

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2 of 2 1/27/2017 8:01 PM





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DIGITAL PRIDE JOBS

Iconic Eagle bar set to re-open after four-year closure

Baltimore Eagle shut its doors in 2012 but is set to re-launch following a multi-million dollar redevelopment



Baltimore Eagle

16 December 2016

by David Hudson



The Baltimore Eagle is set to reopen its doors: hopefully before New Year's Eve if it passes city inspections.

The venue first opened in 1991 but closed in 2012 following the death of its previous owner, Richard Richardson.

The venue was eventually bought by developers Charles and Ian Parrish. They quickly realized that the building was in need of extensive repair and redevelopment.

However, because this redevelopment took so long, the club fell foul of the city's strict liquor license laws. A license can be lost if it remains inactive for more than 180 days.

Since this time, the Parrish family, along with the Eagle's new management team, have been battling to get the license renewed. The issue is still tied up with the courts. However, in the meantime, they have instead purchased another license – buying the license from the now defunct Hippo, which closed late last year.

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This gay teen was

The Parrishes don't intend to run Eagle Baltimore themselves but have instead taken on a management team. This consists of two married gay couples: Charles 'Chuck' King and Greg King, and Robert and John Gasser.

The four are joint partners in the venture and are leasing the premises from the Parrish family.

Chuck King, general manager, spoke to GSN. He said the venue has been transformed.

What was formerly a one-floor, long and narrow venue has now been extended. An official capacity has not yet been decided by city inspectors, but King says the team are looking at 'around 1,000.'

'Originally it was a one-floor bar, with a couple of steps between the two sides. There was a right and left side. What we've done is completely re-done it. We've leveled all the floors to the same level, dug out the basement to put a proper basement in with a cement floor.

'We took out walls, and then we actually went into the second and third floor, so now there will be a leather shop upstairs, and a whole night club called Nest. The first floor is the front bar. The entrance is now on Charles Street. That's the sports bar.

'Go down a corridor, past the unisex bathrooms, to enter the Code leather bar. You will have to wear some sort of leather to get in there on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. And then there's some dark corners, of course.

There will also be a full food menu.

'It can't just be a small, dark leather bar. It's just not profitable'

'We've completely reimagined what the Eagle bar will be for the next generations. It can't just be a small, dark leather bar. It's just not profitable.

'We decided to maximize our profitability and create other spaces in the building that are conducive to the bear and leather community but also the LGBT community at large, so there's something for everybody in the building.'

Baltimore Eagle is not the only venue that has realized it must diversify to survive. GSN recently profiled the extensive refurbishment undertaken at Eagle London (an unrelated business which shares the Eagle name). Again, it was undertaken



disowned and thrown out by his parents last year look where he is now Straight men reveal how much gay sex they would have to get a lightsaber



Here are the 11 biggest asexual myths busted

to move away from the 'sex club' image of yore.

Asked how much money has been spent on the new venue, King says: 'The Parrish family have spent about \$1.1million, and our share is almost \$650,000, so it's about \$1.75million on the whole project.'

From a business point of view, we hear a lot about LGBTI clubs and bars closing down. Rising real estate and the popularity of hook-up apps have particularly hit the scenes in London, New York and San Francisco.

It must take faith and courage to invest that sort of money in a gay club venture in 2016.

"It does,' King agrees. 'You know, I'm not afraid of it though. Because as much as gay life has been accepted, it's still very uncomfortable to go into a straight bar, or a straight environment and be intimate with your partner.

'Whether you're a gay man or lesbian. You still need that safe space to feel comfortable. There's still a lot of homophobia, a lot of ignorance, a lot of intolerance, and some places are very accepting and other places are not accepting at all.'

'It's time for the younger generation to step in'

King thinks that real estate and apps are only part of the story behind bar closures.

'I think a lot of the reasons that so many of the bars have closed is because, back in the 70s and 80s when a lot of these bars started popping up and gay life really spread like wildfire, well, those people are getting old and retiring now.

'That's the case in Baltimore here. The biggest gay club, the Hippo, closed last year, because the owner retired. A lot of these small pub owners are retiring, and it's time for the younger generation to step in and take ownership of that.'

It's a viewpoint backed up by the situation at The Stud in San Francisco. As we reported <u>earlier in the week</u>, the owner of the 50-year-old business is soon to retire to Hawaii and a co-operative of LGBTI cabaret artists, bar staff and others have come together to take over the lease.

A billboard promoting the return of Eagle Baltimore went up in the city last week



'We're four leather men and this is a passion project for us'

'The Eagle is our passion,' says King. 'We're four leather men and this is a passion project for us. I can't see myself doing anything else in my life right now.'

All that remains now is for Eagle Baltimore to actually throw open its doors. A prominent billboard went up in the city last week saying it will re-open 'soon'.

'We're trying to open the week between Christmas and New Year. But we're also at the hands of city inspectors right now, and the holiday time is a very difficult time to get inspections done because a lot of people have taken vacation, so if not then, we're hoping the first week of January.

'Everything is pretty much done in the building; all the tiling, the wood flooring, everything is painted ... it's a beautiful space. The leather bar is great. It's just waiting for the final inspections.'

UPDATE 19 January 2017: The Baltimore Eagle will re-open at

6pm on 20 January 2017.

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January 11, 2017 at 1:41 pm EST | by Steve Charing

Baltimore Eagle set to take flight



Logo on wall of Sports Bar, ground floor. (Photo by Bob Ford)

The world was recently fascinated by the hatching of baby bald eagles in Florida. The leather community and other interested individuals in the mid-Atlantic area are excited about the long-awaited rebirth of a different eagle—the Baltimore Eagle.

Since the iconic leather bar closed its doors in December 2012, its path to reopening has been characterized by major challenges, setbacks and ultimate victories.

The owners and the management team dealt with unforeseen problems with the building's structure, plumbing and wiring soon after the property, located at 2022 N. Charles St., was purchased by local developers Charles Parrish and Ian Parrish for \$300,000. This necessitated the virtual gutting of the original building.

There were other impediments including early opposition from local community associations, the refusal to approve the transfer of the original license by the city liquor board, construction and utility delays, and the usual red tape.

However, through the efforts of Charles King, Greg King, Robert Gasser and John Gasser—all partners in the business—as well as the Parrishes, the management team was able to allay the concerns of the community associations; the liquor license transfer subsequently purchased from former Club Hippo owner Chuck Bowers was approved by the liquor board; and the massive renovations, which continued while the earlier battles

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Baltimore Eagle set to take flight

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3 of 4 partners/managers From left, **Robert Gasser**, **Greg King**, **Charles King** of the new Baltimore Eagle. (Photo by Bob Ford)

"In a city plagued by economic hardship and social injustice, we endeavored a highly technical and financially demanding reconstruction in order to welcome back friends of the Baltimore Eagle to their home away from home," Ian Parrish told the Blade. "Our fight for equal treatment by the city liquor board strengthened my belief that equality isn't just an LGBT issue; it's a cause that affects every member of our community, and we're honored and humbled by how our friends and neighbors came together to support us. We've come out on top, and our new opening shows that there's no wrong in this town that our pride can't cure."

Accordingly, the Baltimore Eagle's owners and managers can state at last that the bar is about to be open for business, though an exact date hasn't been announced. The final inspection and permit issuance are scheduled to take place this week.

The management team, with its experience in the leather community, designed the concept for the Baltimore Eagle. From a physical standpoint, the differences between the original Eagle and the new iteration couldn't be starker.



Part of the new Sports Bar at the Eagle. (Photo by Bob Ford)

The previous Baltimore Eagle consisted of a gritty, long narrow space that, aside from a small leather store above a staircase in the rear, was confined to the ground floor. The extensive reconstruction of the building, which cost \$1.7 million, has dramatically increased the area of the original footprint and added a full-use second floor. It will have a state-of-the-art air conditioning system among its myriad improvements.

From a thematic standpoint, the Baltimore Eagle retains and enhances its leather identity

and vibe while adding features that will appeal to a broader community.

The popular outdoor courtyard that offered a respite from the often crowded and stuffy air inside the old bar will continue to be a facet of the new establishment. The courtyard with its own bar will have many improvements according to management and is expected to be ready for use this spring.

Inside the front entrance on heavily travelled Charles Street—a main artery that runs north though the city—sits the Sports Bar with several flat screen TVs. There are also open spaces for casual dining with

"gastro-pub" inspired lunch and dinner menus and custom catering by European-trained Master Chef Ed Scholly with his 26 years of culinary experience. A DJ booth from which an eclectic mix of music will be played is situated in that space.



Part of the Eagle Sports Bar including a new DJ booth. (Photo by Bob Ford)

Outside the Sports Bar is a sitting area and lounge. Along the wall there is a display case containing a variety of leather-related memorabilia and artifacts. That area also includes a pansexual restroom.

Additionally, on the street level is an exclusive Code Bar whereby only those in leather or fetish gear will be admitted. This area, with a garage-themed décor, has its own DJ set-up.

"For those who are concerned about having a dark cruise bar, we will encompass that," explains Charles King, the general manager.

A package goods store is located on the ground level where the entrance to the original Eagle stood.

In a dramatic departure from the old Eagle there is a Moulin Rouge-inspired cabaret/nightclub space on the upper floor called Nest. This includes a stage with professional digital video projection and sound that can be used for entertainment, film festivals and special events.

Management promises regular dance parties bringing the Montreal and European dance music scene to Nest and perhaps the occasional Hippo Retro Dance Party. It is also suitable for weddings, banquets and other celebrations.



Part of the Nest area, second floor of the new Baltimore Eagle. (Photo by Charles King)

Nest has a bar of its own as well as a patio. On this level, another set of restrooms is located, but they are separated by gender. In addition, there is a leather and fetish store as well as an erotic art gallery.

The successful end to this arduous journey is not lost on partner John Gasser, who oversees the package goods store operations as well as administration.

"With gay bars shutting their doors here and across the country, people told us we were crazy to reopen one, hence the name of our corporation, 4 Crazy Guys. Really!" Gasser told the Blade.

"What has given us the most confidence in this project and Baltimore in particular has been the incredible community support and the many volunteers who have generously given freely of their time and various areas of expertise — far too many to start telling you about them all. It is they who have helped us make it possible for the Baltimore Eagle to soar again and even higher. I am inspired, personally deeply grateful, and humbled."



A wall inside the Eagle's newly decorated Sports Bar. (Photo by Bob Ford)

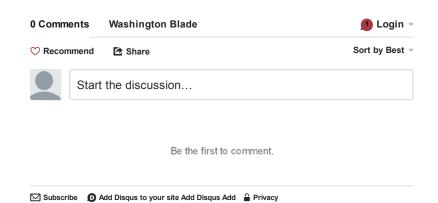
For more information about the Baltimore Eagle and upcoming events, visit $\underline{thebaltimoreeagle.com} \ and \ the \ \underline{Facebook page}.$



Items in the Eagle's new memorabilia display case. (Photo by Bob Ford)

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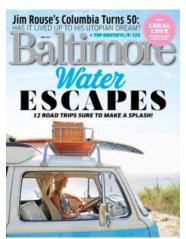
Baltimore Pride Festivities Move from Mt. Vernon to Station North

From film screenings to drag shows, the festival honors its LGBTQ roots.



By <u>Lauren Cohen (http://www.baltimoremagazine.com/editors/LaurenCohen)</u> | June 08, 2017, 12:51

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(http://www.baltimoremagazine.com/issue /june-2017)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS (/THIS-MONTH)

6/9/17, 7:22 PM 2 of 8



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Forty years ago, members of the local LGBTQ community gathered to establish the Gay Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore (<u>GLCCB (http://glccb.org)</u>) in the basement of a building on Maryland Avenue in Station North.

The center is making it a priority to honor those roots this year, by moving the 42nd annual Baltimore Pride celebration—which returns June 17-18—from its iconic venue in Mt. Vernon to the Station North arts district.

"It's a big circle back to where everything started for us," says Mimi Demissew, current executive director of the GLCCB, which moved from Mt. Vernon to Lower Charles Village last year. "There is such a long, rich LGBTQ history represented in Baltimore that I don't think many people realize."

As in previous years, <u>Pride weekend (http://baltimorepride.org)</u> will kick off with a parade and block party on Saturday, followed by a festival with vendors and live entertainment in Druid Hill Park on Sunday.

Demissew says that organizers remained mindful of Pride's ties to Mt. Vernon by designing a symbolic parade route—which will step off from Chase Street and descend into the center's new home. Afterward, a block party will take place in a footprint

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3 of 8 6/9/17, 7:22 PM

similar to Artscape, from North Avenue to 23rd Street.

Though there are some locals who stand by the idea that Pride is meant to stay in Mt. Vernon (where it has been held for the majority of the past four decades), Station North community leaders are enthusiastic about the change of venue.

"There are a lot of people saying that the 'gayborhood' is shifting," says Ian Parrish, a local developer who recently reopened The Baltimore Eagle (https://www.thebaltimoreeagle.com/home/) on North Charles Street. "But I really think that the neighborhood is nothing without its people. It's not that Mt. Vernon is losing anything, there's just a lot of new energy and revitalization in Station North. It adds to the entire community as a whole, rather than detracting from it."

Bolstering the community even more, the Maryland Film Festival (MFF), which recently <u>unveiled the refurbished Parkway Theatre</u> (http://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2017/5/1/cinema-paradiso-maryland-film-festival-finds-new-home-parkway-theater) on North Avenue, is featuring a curated selection of LGBTQ films on all three screens June 16-22.

"We've essentially been in Station North all along," says Eric Hatch, director of programming for MFF, which has partnered with the Charles Theatre and the Windup Space for many years. "It feels like home, and it's a perfect fit for Pride."

Films highlighting LGBTQ content will range from international works and shorts to revivals including Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* and Sean Baker's *Tangerine*.

"One of the most exciting things about any art form is encountering other perspectives and embracing diversity—and historically film has not done a good job of that," Hatch says. "Film festivals have always been an opportunity to correct that, to portray more content that positively represents women, people of color, and certainly more from the LGBTQ perspective."

Inclusivity is something that the GLCCB is stressing more than ever this year. The organization asked for community feedback to brainstorm the festival's theme, and landed on "Pride: Unleashed."

"We're in the midst of this new reawakening," Demissew explains. "The change in political climate has reinvigorated everyone across the country. We want to celebrate the community unabashedly—we're not going to apologize for who we are and the rights we're demanding."

In keeping with the inclusive sentiment, the GLCCB will host <u>specific programs</u> (https://www.facebook.com/pg/glccb/events/) for LGBTQ youth, seniors, transgender community members, and people of faith throughout Pride week.

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4 of 8 6/9/17, 7:22 PM

Youth Pride will once again have its own designated area with food, activities, and live music at Saturday's block party in Station North, and the center will introduce the inaugural Elder Pride in partnership with Chase Brexton Health at Sunday's festival in Druid Hill Park.

Other highlights to look forward to include the annual High Heel Race on North Charles Street, and headliners including former Pussycat Doll Jessica Sutta, *American Idol* contestant (and Baltimore native) George Lovett, and New Orleans-based hip-hop star Big Freedia.

The Baltimore Eagle, located in the epicenter of all of the festivities, has many activities planned for Pride (https://www.facebook.com/TheBaltimoreEagle/), including art installations, drag shows, and special rainbow drink deals.

Parrish, who faced drawn out struggles with the City Liquor Board to reopen the iconic gay club, is excited to officially celebrate the bar's first Pride since debuting in Station North.

"Our fight for equal treatment by the city strengthened my belief that equality isn't just an LGBT issue—it's a cause every Baltimorean should take to heart," he says. "We came out on top because we did it together, and that showed me that there's no wrong in our hometown that a little pride can't cure."

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5 of 8 6/9/17, 7:22 PM