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NEWS Goldberg Brothers Buy Merchants, Promising to Revitalize Dining Landmark

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Benjamin and Max Goldberg, the brothers whose diverse projects include chic cocktail haven Patterson House and the kitschy Southern-fried bar and restaurant Paradise Park, are tackling a complete overhaul of pioneering downtown dining spot Merchants.

The Goldbergs bought the restaurant and have recruited an accomplished chef to take over the kitchen, according to a release sent out today on behalf of their company, Strategic Hospitality LLC. The new executive chef, Clayton Rollison, is a Culinary Institute of America grad who has worked at New York's well-known Gramercy Tavern. In Nashville, he served as sous chef at the swanky Capitol Grille at the Hermitage Hotel.

Merchants, which has operated in the 19th century commercial building at Fourth and Broadway for more than 20 years, helped jumpstart the revival of Lower Broadway as a home for fine dining and not just honky-tonks.

Always ambitious, the Goldbergs plan a unique economic strategy with Merchants. "Because of our location, we attract a lot of tourists," Rollison says in the release. "We then plan to invest their money back into our community by using local products and supporting local farmers."

"I am looking forward to sharing our contemporary American food with a Southern soul to natives and tourists alike," the chef adds.

Merchants remains open for business, but a complete overhaul is planned in the coming months. In addition to a new menu, the decor will be completely changed. The first floor is expected to have a gastropub feel, with a bar and bistro menu, while the upstairs will be reserved for more elegant dining, including a seven-course chef's tasting menu.

The new menu and decor are expected to be complete by late summer. Merchants continues to accept reservations through the transition at its [website](#).



ERIC ENGLAND

Max (left) and Ben Goldberg hang out with their vintage convertible

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