

Toast of Downtown

By Kim Thomas

Wine + Market opened on Good, Good Friday

"It sloweth age, it strengtheneth youth, it helpeth digestion, it abandoneth melancholie, it relisheth the heart, it lighteneth the mind, it quickeneth the spirits, it keepeth and preserveth the head from whirling, the eyes from dazzling, the tongue from lisping, the mouth from snaffling, the teeth from chattering and the throat from rattling; it keepeth the stomach from wambling, the heart from swelling, the hands from shivering, the sinews from shrinking, the veins from crumbling, the bones from aching, and the marrow from soaking."

—copied by Joseph Lyons from a 16th Century manuscript

Second Street, in my view, is one of the most interesting neighborhoods that Lexington has to offer. If you start in Gratz Park at the Carnegie Center and wander west, there's the John Hunt Morgan house on the right, Mary Todd Lincoln's birthplace on the left, the Thomas January home on the right. Giant pillars, tall trees, and even taller ghost tales—yes, it's a great street for the historically curious and those who appreciate aesthetically pleasing but grand architecture. It seems that on nearly every corner there is something to point out to visitors. And it's not exactly like walking down the Champs Elysees, but once you enter the recently opened Wine + Market, at the corner of Second and Jefferson, owned by Krim and Andrea Boughalem, you do feel as if you've found your own little European haven, right here in Lexington.

Since I myself live not far from the Wine + Market, I was crazy with delight when I learned that not long from now, I could actually walk a few blocks, perhaps buy a potent Port

President, Bill Johnston, is also a downtown dweller who is among those eagerly awaiting the market side of the opening. He laughed, "People have been 'whining' for years for a downtown grocery!" He sees this is the answer to many desperate prayers. He's also glad about the fact that Krim and Sims plan to sell organic wines, mainly because "you have to drink a lot more of it to get a headache!"

Proprietor Krim Boughalem is from France, and his wife, Andrea Sims, is from Lexington—the two met at a Bastille Day party in New York City. Andrea went to Henry Clay, then Tulane Architecture School, and IPEDEC School of decorative design in Paris. She "lived in France for three years restoring chateaux and studying trompe l'oeil, mural and decorative painting," adding, "When it was time to return to the U.S., I decided New York would be the best place to start my business. I had several friends who lived there as well as a fellow student from Paris. So the transition was easier."

Krim spent 16 years selling wine and operating restaurants in New York before moving here with Andrea. In total, he has been in the food and wine business for 25 years. The new store is still in its infancy, with the grocery portion to open in a few weeks, but the impressive wine section is full of "interesting" wines ranging from \$8.95 to \$44.95. Boughalem says "it is helpful to know how much you want to spend and what the occasion is for the wine you are seeking." That way, he can assist you in your search for the 'perfect wine.' He specializes in wines that

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—Lissa Sims, sister of market proprietor, Andrea Sims

and wedge of Stilton, and be back home, planted back in my armchair in no time, ready for a relaxing evening watching *House* or reading my newest Dick Francis novel. Ahh, such a pleasant thought for a downtown girl whose only immediately available cheese up to this point has been the string-type I could muster up from Rite Aid, and that had to be purchased before their closing time of 5 pm, of course.

It is looking good in the neighborhood.

Just across Jefferson on one corner is Wingspan Gallery and the nearby Ace Weekly (with a fairly declared heavily biased hope for the market's success); across another corner is Jefferson Fitness Center, for those who want a little workout or some yoga before their wine.

Could this qualify as a burgeoning neighborhood renaissance?

Historic Western Suburb Neighborhood Association

are Biodynamic, natural and organic from Chile, the United States and of course, France.

Andrea says, "the design is very much a collaboration between Krim and me...For us it was like a sculpture, we were just uncovering what was already there." As for the restoration, she says "The most difficult part of the project was tearing out and getting rid of all the layers of previous renovations. I think we removed 10 tons of debris from that building. Only once we began did we truly understand what a gem we had. We uncovered old wood beams and beautiful plaster walls." Of the labor of love, she says, "Krim and I worked every day and almost every night on the demolition and then construction. My brother Rob and his wife Stockton helped every free minute they had. We could not have

done it without them. We also had a lot of help from other friends and family.” She says, “when you do a project like this, you realize what an incredibly strong community we live in. Everyone has pitched in to help.”

Krim and Andrea also live downtown and suffered the same complaint all downtowners have; they got tired of having to get in the car to go buy groceries. Unlike most people, who are content to simply comment on the tragedy of a downtown without a grocery, they decided to do something about it—and they’ve opened the corner market so downtowners wouldn’t *have* to make the commute for a little bread, wine, and cheese. The neighbors seem happy, as the store has been busy since they opened March 21.

Fresh. Seasonal. Local.

As is common in many a European market, Krim greets visitors at the door and is happy to accommodate all their questions, even pointing to a map in a large reference book (one of many) which is open and ready for him to help inquirers get a bearing on where his native home, Bourg Saint-Maurice, is in Northern France.

Personally realizing the significance, however, he is eager to get the grocery market open, which will sell cheese, smoked and

about Andrea and Krim’s venture because “we know how much downtown needed a market and if anyone could do it, well those two can. Andrea is an amazing mural artist who can make almost anything LOOK beautiful and Krim has a great sensibility and like most French men, is an epicure in the extreme.”

She adds, “Or anyway he takes his food and wine very seriously. He applied his very refined aesthetic to the look and stocking of the wine store. I know he has researched the wineries for the past year and because his space is limited, only allowed the most special wines to find a place on his shelves.”

Lissa doesn’t consider herself an expert or “anything like a serious oenophile, but I do love to drink wine and I particularly love well-paired wine and food so it is great to be able to go to the Wine Market and have Krim makes suggestions I know I can trust... I have bought three cases of wine in ten days because it is so nice to be able to walk in and say to Krim ‘pack me up some wine’ and know that no matter what, I can trust that it will be great. Three cases in and I haven’t been disappointed yet. (I should point out that I have had about four dinner parties and certainly would find it highly irresponsible [but not impossible] to drink three cases of wine all by myself!) Last night we had grilled steaks with a Grenache Shiraz blend from the Market called ‘Dirty Bliss.’ It was spectacular. In the warm weather I love Sauvignon blanc or a dry Riesling.”

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cured meats, fish, and Kentucky farm-raised meat—the fare will include baked goods, coffee, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices as the sun and Spring do their part in everyone’s desire to eat fresh, seasonally, and locally.

Andrea says, “The market side will be very European-modern in its rustic simplicity. It will be very much like the wine store in its basic materials and design which all work in unison to emphasize the products.”

With his background in owning and operating fine-dining restaurants, Boughalem was not exactly a fish out of water when it came to asking the right questions to procure the proper licenses and permits and maneuvering through the many intricacies of bureaucratic bluegrass Red Tape (groceries and wine sales still have to be separate in Kentucky, for example—until the law is changed). His years of restaurant experience, combined with Andrea’s eye for design have combined for a charming shop delivering Old World tradition but with a tip of the hat to the New World’s user-friendly design as well.

Dirty Bliss

Andrea’s sister, Lissa Sims used to live on Third Street, but says, “I had to move because there was no market downtown. HA! I live in Ashland Park. I like to walk as much as I can and the main thing that drove me crazy when I lived downtown was that I had to get in the car to go anywhere. Now the downtowners never have to leave. Like most people, I guess, I am downtown every day myself so it is still really convenient for me to go to the market.”

According to Lissa, Andrea’s family was really excited

“In victory, you deserve champagne, in defeat, you need it.”
—Napoleon

For a couple who met on Bastille Day, it is only fitting that the Boughalems should bring a revolutionary concept to the western corner of Second and Jefferson.

You may not see a grande dame walking a poodle as you travel down Second Street (it’s more likely you will see the nice lady taking her Great Pyrenees for a spin around the neighborhood), but a little taste of France is not far away.

As Johnston sums it up, “Working with neighbors to surmount obstacles and make everything work better is fun, exciting, and fulfilling. You get the feeling that your small contribution will have some lasting value, leaving the world a little better for one’s efforts.”

Next time you are traveling down what I consider Lexington’s *plus belle avenue* (pardon my French, or lack thereof), stop in for a little ambience and *je ne sais quoi* at Wine + Market.■

Andrea and Krim Boughalem have worked to bring Downtown Lexington what they describe as “the best of the World’s Wines at a variety of prices. Fresh flowers, premium liquors and vintage barware.” They invite you stop by any Friday for a free wine tasting, or anytime Monday-Saturday 12pm to 8pm and Sunday 1pm to 4pm. In a few weeks, the Market will open for coffee, groceries, imported cheeses, fresh baked bread and the freshest produce.



Location, Location, Location

The corner of Second and Jefferson will look familiar to Ace Readers as it was the longtime home of Ace Weekly before the newspaper moved to its current digs across Jefferson, next door to Wingspan Gallery.

The Western Suburb neighborhood is also home to Jefferson Fitness, Stella’s Kentucky Deli and Christopher Michael Furniture, on the corner of Short and Jefferson (soon to relocate). ■