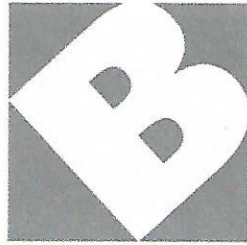
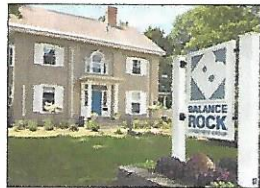


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## 'Gramercy 3.0' launches at Williamstown location

BY JOHN TOWNES

After a hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, chef/owner Alexander (Sandy) Smith has reopened the Gramercy Bistro in a new location at 16 Water St. in Williamstown.

The restaurant opened Oct. 21 in a building that had previously housed Casa Lina, Hops and Vines, and Mezze, among others.

While the site is a change, Gramercy Bistro is a familiar name in the northern Berkshires as a popular restaurant formerly based in North Adams.

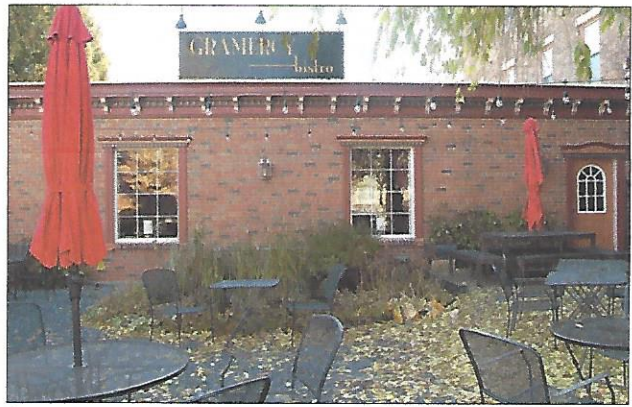
"This is the third version of Gramercy Bistro," said Smith, referring to the fact that this is the third location for the restaurant. "So, in a sense it's Gramercy 3, or, as they say in the tech industry, Gramercy 3.0."

Smith, who grew up in Williamstown, founded the original Gramercy Bistro in 2001 at 24 Marshall St. in downtown North Adams. He relocated the restaurant in 2010 to a nearby space in the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) complex. (For a while he also operated the Rub Bourbon and Barbecue restaurant in the Marshall Street site.)

He operated Gramercy Bistro at MASS MoCA until March 2020, when the state emergency order went into effect, and ordered the closure of in-person restaurant dining.

"When the world turned upside down and we had to close due to COVID, I did what many others did and hunkered down for a while," said Smith. "Then, after about eight months, I decided to take a new path. I considered several sites, and this one seemed like the best option."

Smith said he is maintaining the approach that he has taken with the previous versions of Gramercy Bistro. That includes an emphasis on farm-to-table sourcing of organic, farm-raised food from independent producers, locally and abroad.



Gramercy Bistro has re-emerged from its COVID hiatus at a new location on Water Street in Williamstown.

The menu features a mix of American and international influences. Entrees include Grilled Trout, Paella, Fusilli Primavera, Coq Au Vin, and Filet Mignon, among others. There is a Sunday Brunch menu that includes familiar brunch staples plus specialty items such as Rabbit Pot Pie and Sauteed Trout Meunière.

As with the prior Gramercy Bistro, Smith said he will change the menu periodically, while retaining popular staples.

Smith noted that they serve a diverse selection. "We aim to offer whatever people are looking for, whether it's a full meal or something lighter," he said.

He added that his approach is based on his training as a French chef, but he eschews labeling it as any particular form of cuisine.

"I apprenticed under a French chef who used to say that everyone is trying to reinvent the wheel," he said. "He always told

us that what's most important is simply to concentrate on making good, quality food."

Smith has about 25 employees, although he noted that like many other restaurants, he is currently having issues finding staff.

He is leasing the 3,500-square-foot building from Charles Fox. It has seating for about 80 people indoors, with an additional 25 seats in a courtyard outside.

Smith said he has updated the building's infrastructure, including plumbing, electric and other systems. He also reconfigured the bar and did extensive cleaning, painting and repointing of the interior.

Gramercy Bistro (413-458-6222 or Gramercybistro.com) currently opens at 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday for dinner. Smith expects to add Wednesdays to the schedule when he is able to staff the restaurant more fully. In addition, he plans to add lunch service after Memorial Day in 2022. ♦

**"What's most important is simply to concentrate on making good, quality food."**

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