

The Miami Herald

August 31, 2010

Circulation: 222,742

BUSINESS

Sales decrease at Winn-Dixie

COCKTAIL TOWER

Prepaid cellphone plans gaining popularity

More than 100,000 people are expected to attend the opening of the new Sears Tower in Miami.

What's to come: A new lounge at the historic former Sears Tower, will become a gathering place both for patrons of the Arsht Center and others in the neighborhood seeking a hip place to hang out.

"We are very much about creating a new downtown in our neighborhood," said M. John Richard, president and chief executive of the Arsht Center. "Bombay will help establish our neighborhood as a destination. It's the next step."



MARSHA HALPER/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

TO THE FUTURE: M. John Richard, left, CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center, and Bacardi USA CEO John Esposito share a toast to the Bombay Sapphire Lounge.

COCKTAIL TOWER

The historic Sears Tower comes to life as Bombay Sapphire Lounge - a new gathering spot at the Arsht Center that hopes to become a local hang out on Biscayne Boulevard.

BY ELAINE WALKER
ewalker@MiamiHerald.com

The next piece in the revival of Biscayne Boulevard's Omni area could be Bombay Sapphire.

We're not talking about ice blue bottles of the super premium gin lining the street, but this week's soft-opening of a new Bombay Sapphire Lounge at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami.

The goal is that the lounge, located in the historic former Sears Tower, will become a gathering place both for patrons of the Arsht Center and others in the neighborhood seeking a hip place to hang out.

"We are very much about creating a new downtown in our neighborhood," said M. John Richard, president and chief executive of the Arsht Center. "Bombay will help establish our neighborhood as a destination. It's the next step."

*TURN TO BOMBAY, 3C



Bacardi portfolio consultant (and mixologist) Gabriel Urrutia pours a Sapphire Collins.

The Miami Herald

August 31, 2010

Circulation: 222,742

New life for long dormant tower

• BOMBAY, FROM 1C

The Bombay Sapphire lounge, at the corner of 13th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, is the first stand-alone branded venue for Bacardi U.S.A. in the country. It's part of a \$300,000 commitment to the Arsht Center, which gives Bombay the rights to the space for the next five years.

The partnership was a good fit for Bombay, the fastest-growing super premium gin on the market, which has always tied its marketing efforts to the art and design community.

Bombay Sapphire was the second-largest selling gin in the United States based on volume in 2009, behind Tanqueray, according to Impact Databank. But the brand still faces challenges to grow its market share in Miami, where vodka and rum get more attention.

"It's another great opportunity to connect with a Miami audience and do so in a way that's true to the brand," said Giles Woodyer, brand managing director for Bombay. "You can build that recognition that Bombay is a leader in the cocktail culture."

The Arsht Center spent \$1.2 million on remodeling the 1929 historical building, which had never been used since the performing arts center's opening. It's now decked out in Bombay's signature blue tones with seating for about 140 people, inside and on an outdoor patio.

The opening is great news for local residents like Jonathan Stern, who normally has to go to Brickell Avenue or South Beach to go out for a drink.

"I'm super excited because we don't have anything like this, within walking distance," said Stern, a 27-year-old attorney, who has lived in the neighborhood for two years. "I hope it's going to be the first of many."

Alyce Robertson, executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority, believes the Bombay Sapphire opening is another step in the redevelopment of the Biscayne Boulevard corridor.

"Having a company like Bacardi open here, shows that Biscayne Boulevard is making great strides," Robertson said. "What's starting to happen is that you're adding some excitement to an area that hasn't had much retail activity."

While the concept of standalone branded lounges is relatively new for the liquor industry in the U.S., industry experts say it's a natural evolution. You already have companies ranging from Coca-Cola and Pop Tarts opening up stores or restaurants.

What's made standalone lounges difficult in the U.S. is that liquor companies are not legally allowed to sell products directly to consumers.

It's why you will find branded liquor lounges in places like airports and arenas. Bacardi has Grey Goose

and Dewar's lounges at American Airlines Arena, as well as Casa Bacardi at the Miami International Airport.

"What consumer goods companies are doing is trying to move along with this whole new dimension of social bonding," said Tom Pirko of BevMark, a consulting company. "You want to get closer to your consumer. You have to become a meaningful part of their lives instead of just selling them something."

Operated by Barton G's Performing Arts Catering, the Bombay Sapphire lounge will officially open to the public on Oct. 19. Until then, it will only be open on performance dates.

On the menu will be a wide-range of specialty cocktails featuring the signature spirit and a menu of light bites. While Bombay is the featured brand, the lounge will feature a full liquor bar. The food runs the gamut from \$6 for a trio of flavored popcorn to a \$9 paella crab roll and \$15 lobster rolls.

Barton G. Weiss expects that to start about 75 percent of the business from Arsht center patrons and 25 percent from the neighborhood. He doesn't expect it to cannibalize existing sales at Prelude by Barton G., the restaurant inside the Arsht.

"The vibe is completely different," he said. "This is fun food, but it's not whimsical. You're not going to have smoke and fire blowing out of the place."