



Photos by H John Voorhees III/The News-Times

Some of the tequila that will be available in the new restaurant, Casa Tequila, which is opening in Bethel at 85 Stony Hill Road. The Armonk, N.Y.-based restaurant will be offering modern Mexican food.

Casa Tequila brings ‘upscale Mexican’ cuisine to Bethel

By Kaitlin Keane
STAFF WRITER

BETHEL — With over 185 different tequilas, about 75 different mezcals and a full menu of creative Mexican cuisine, Casa Tequila is “not your average Mexican restaurant,” according to owner Mike Guerra.

“It’s a more upscale restaurant... a place where you can go for a drink and some tacos and also a place where you can go for a date and special occasions,” Guerra said. “We’re going to be one of the nicest restaurants in the area, so that’s a big thing for Bethel.”

Guerra, who first opened Casa Tequila in Armonk, N.Y., in December 2019, will be opening a second location for his restaurant at 85 Stony Hill Road in Bethel in the next few weeks.

“My family and I moved to Bethel in 2020,” Guerra said, “and



Mike Guerra in his new restaurant, Casa Tequila, which is opening in Bethel.



we are foodies. We like to go out, we like margaritas and tequila and all that ... We didn’t see a place that would fit what we wanted, so I told my wife we should open something here.”

Guerra said he plans to open the new Bethel restaurant by the end of the month and that he will continue running the restaurant’s Armonk location at the same time.

“Honestly, I’m looking forward to just giving the people of Bethel and Danbury and all the (surrounding) areas the experience that you can have in Armonk,” he said.

Casa Tequila’s Bethel location will be open every day from 11 a.m. to midnight and will be available for dine-in or takeout.

Among the restaurant’s offerings is an impressive selection of tequilas and mezcals

Tequila continues on A4

Final 14 acres of Newtown’s Great Ring Farm pitched for development

By Rob Ryser
STAFF WRITER

NEWTOWN — For passersby, a 2-acre microfarm on Route 34 with a white road sign commemorating Great Ring Farm is the most visible remnant of the former 377-acre agricultural enterprise, which was divided up 40 years ago to build homes.

But for Newtowners who live nearby, a 14-acre field with a hilltop manor house that was part of the farm but never developed is a living, everyday reminder of the neighborhood’s rich agricultural heritage.

Farm continues on A4



Newtown GIS/Town of Newtown

A manor house on 14 acres which was once part of Great Ring Farm in Sandy Hook has been proposed for four additional single-family homes.

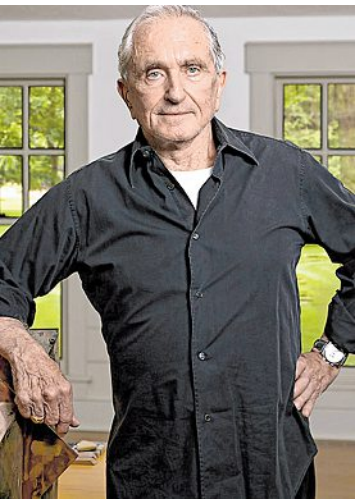
Arthur Carter, founder of the Litchfield County Times, dies

By Kaitlin Keane
STAFF WRITER

ROXBURY – From launching two newspapers and a private equity holding company to showcasing his sculptures across the country, Arthur Carter was known to many for being “a polymath” and “a Renaissance man.”

“He lived like 17 different lives, and in every single one of them, he was enormously successful,”

Carter continues on A4



Contributed photo

Famed sculptor and founder of The Litchfield County Times and the New York Observer Arthur Carter recently died. He was 93.

TEQUILA

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that Guerra has collected throughout the years on trips to Mexico and purchased online. While the restaurant does offer classic

Mexican dishes like enchiladas and burritos, he said their chef gets “very creative with the Mexican cuisine” by adding his own twist to the dishes. The lobster tacos are a popular menu

item for Casa Tequila customers as well as the Jalisco steak, Guerra said. In terms of the new restaurant’s atmosphere, Guerra said they’ve invested “almost half a million dollars in the

Bethel location, so it’s going to be nicer,” but the “food and flavor is going to be the same.” “The goal of the location is, of course, to be successful,” Guerra said. “We’re going to be successful

because why not? Our recipe is good. (For) the first year, we want the people to get to know us and try our food, our drinks, our locations, and just give the people of Fairfield County a really different and

good experience.” After opening the new Bethel restaurant, Guerra said he hopes to continue expanding Casa Tequila’s presence, though the next location has not yet been determined.

CARTER

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said Bob Burns, executive director of Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury. “He just kept moving into different career paths and conquering them and moving on to the next career path.”

Carter recently died at the age of 93. The date and cause of his death was not public, though Burns said Carter’s funeral was held Tuesday at the Frank Campbell Funeral Home in Manhattan.

While Carter was well-known in Litchfield County as founder of The Litchfield County Times, many Connecticut residents may best remember him for his artwork that was featured in multiple galleries across the state, including Mattatuck Museum, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford and the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Carter’s metallic freestanding sculptures have also taken root in New York City, Burns said. One of his sculptures was installed outside the library at New York University, where the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute was founded.

“He’s taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary from

the way he’s manipulating the metals and the finishes on the metals themselves,” Burns said.

A New York City native, Carter was trained as a classical pianist and studied French literature at Brown University in Providence, R.I., where he received his bachelor’s degree in 1953, according to his website.

He served three years in the U.S. Coast Guard as a lieutenant junior grade and was honorably discharged in 1956. During his service, he was commanding officer of a search air and rescue patrol craft, Carter’s website states.

Carter later enrolled in the Amos Tuck School at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., where he received his master’s in business administration in finance in 1959 “before embarking on a 25-year-long career as an investment banker,” according to his website.

Through his private equity holding company Utilities & Industries Corporation, Carter owned and operated more than 100 industrial companies, according to his obituary.

Carter launched The Litchfield County

Times in 1981, and then the New York Observer in 1987, according to his obituary. He also owned the monthly magazine The Nation and was a part owner of The East Hampton Star on Long Island.

He sold The Litchfield County Times to the Journal Register Company in 2001. Hearst has since acquired it.

In 2005, Carter made “a transformative gift” to the NYU Faculty of Arts and Science Journalism Support Fund. His philanthropy was recognized in 2008 when the NYU Faculty of Arts and Science Department of Journalism was renamed for him, his obituary states.

Richard Foley, who was dean of NYU’s Faculty of Arts and Science when the journalism department was renamed, said the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute is now a full-service multi-faceted journalism program.

Calling Carter “one of the most brilliant and independent people I ever met,” Foley said Carter believed the institute’s students should major in another subject beyond journalism and that “in addition to knowing the craft of journalism, the

student must want to be fluent in some intellectual area, whether it be economics, science or art.”

As a journalist, Foley said Carter was “a great storyteller” with a sense of humor that added a punch line to his stories.

“Our faculty and staff are saddened to hear of the passing of Arthur L. Carter,” said Charles Seife, director of the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. “Arthur Carter was not just a talented businessman and artist – several of his sculptures grace our halls – he was an amazing newspaperman.”

Carter served as a member of the NYU Board of Trustees, which named him a Life Trustee in 2012, and was a member of the FAS Board of Overseers, where he also held adjunct professorships in philosophy and journalism, according to his obituary.

“Arthur was a great friend to us,” Seife said. “We were lucky to have him at NYU as a professor and as a trustee and as a benefactor. We are proud that our institute bears his name.”

Carter’s sculptures were created at his barn-turned-studio at his Roxbury home, where his “monumental works” would start with

sketches and paintings before they turned into freestanding sculptures, Burns said.

Carter’s artwork has also been showcased at the Leila Heller Gallery in New York, Southampton Arts Center on Long Island, Tennessee State Museum in Nashville and the Grey Art Gallery and 80WSE Galleries at New York University, according to Carter’s website.

“He’s been extremely generous to the institutions here in Connecticut that he has worked with,” Burns said. “There’s a lot of Arthur Carter works up and down Park Avenue and Madison Avenue... but to have works that are on public view in Connecticut where he spent so much time and stayed here, it’s great to have that legacy to continue.”

Matthew Hargraves, director of Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, said The Wadsworth was “privileged” to present Carter’s work in his final solo exhibition at the museum in fall 2023.

Carter’s works “The Couple IV” and “Mathematika V” remain outside as part of the museum’s collection, “visible to

the public in downtown Hartford as enduring symbols of his support for The Wadsworth and of his legacy as a great Connecticut artist,” he said.

“Arthur Carter was a true Renaissance man, and The Wadsworth is deeply saddened by his death,” Hargraves said.

Given how much Carter has accomplished in his lifetime, Foley said that “it’s hard to say there’s one legacy” for Carter.

“I miss him,” Foley said. “It seems the people I miss the most are the people who made me laugh the most, and Arthur made me laugh a lot ... Being around Arthur was never dull. The world’s a duller place with Arthur gone.”

Carter is survived by his wife Linda Carter, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and a member of the NYU Steinhardt Dean’s Council, according to his obituary. He is also survived by his son, Jon Carter; his daughters Whendy Carter, Ellen Carter, Ginna Carter, and Mary Dixie Carter; his stepdaughter, Ali Marsh; and his sister, Ellen Carter Wiesenthal, his obituary states.

FARM

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“We moved here because of the grandeur of the land.

That is Great Ring Farm,” said John Hegarty about the manor house property, which is proposed to be developed with four additional single-family homes. “Take that away and you’re losing history.”

An engineer representing the manor home property owners, Joel and Margaret Fitzgerald, said he knows all about the history of Great Ring Farm because he was there when it was divided.

“This is a property that

I worked on with Joel 40 years ago when the Great Ring Farm properties were split up. He bought the manor house up on the hill,” said engineer Alan Shepard, during a public hearing. “We left the open fields in the front. We left it open there with the intent in the future to come back. It’s been 40 years but now we’re back.”

Most of the neighbors who turned out to a Dec. 4 public hearing told Newtown’s Planning and Zoning Commission they wished Fitzgerald’s had not come back with plans to build four new homes downhill from the manor house.

“Being that it was Great Ring Farm, this is the last open space on this road. It seems an awful shame being as it was of historical value that it’s not going to be an open space anymore,” said Tim Byrne during the Dec. 4 hearing, one of eight residents who objected over concerns about drinking water quality and increased traffic.

The residents are referring to a high-profile manor house at Great Ring Road and Bradley Lane that is listed for \$1.9 million. The 7-bedroom, 10-bathroom mansion, which comes with a pool and a hilltop view, would remain

as-is under the plan to build four more homes down hill.

Preserving the mansion’s aesthetics is important to the neighborhood’s property values, said one resident.

“There should be some restrictions to protect other homeowners in the neighborhood. When we’re sitting on homes in our neighborhood that are between \$800,000 and \$1 million dollars ... we have a vested interest in making sure that what is subdivided can in fact reflect the neighborhood,” said Neal Berko. “It looks like it is a decent plan, but I think it does

need to be tweaked ... to protect the neighborhood.”

Newtown’s Planning and Zoning Commission, which will continue its review of the proposal on Jan. 15, said it wants to see more specifics.

“The town engineer ... [is] asking for more detail associated with drainage on the site,” said Rob Sibley, Newtown’s planning director, during the Dec. 4 public hearing. “What was that?” the engineer Shepard asked.

“An engineering report for the storm drainage must be provided,” Sibley said.

“I have that on the plans,” Shepard said.

“[The town engineer] said that wasn’t sufficient for him,” Sibley said. “He wanted a written report.”

The commission chair asked the developer’s engineer about screening.

“The area is pretty exposed,” said David Rosen. “Are there any planned landscaping buffers for some of the properties that are going to be developed?”

“No. This is an open field. These will be individual lots with very little grading. They are all over 2 acres,” Shephard said. “[Any landscaping] would be done individually by each person that buys the lot.”