Curtain Call

The Valley music scene is about to get a big boost with a groundbreaking alliance between Michael Feinstein and Upstairs at Vitello’s.

Fans of jazz and live performance have been patronizing Upstairs at Vitello’s since 1964. The venue, perched above Vitello’s Restaurant in Studio City, is known for its intimate performance room, which holds just 125 people. The owners have taken the club in a couple of different directions in recent years (at one point the venue was called the E Spot Lounge when Sheila E got involved) but now it seems to be zeroing in on a more refined mission. In mid-June, the venue will debut as Feinstein’s at Vitello’s, bringing in singer and pianist Michael Feinstein as a partner.

The multi-platinum-selling, five-time Grammy-nominated recording artist also helms Feinstein’s at the Nikko in San Francisco and Feinstein’s/54 Below in New York.

“We will bring many of the performers who have played in my other clubs in San Francisco and New York as well as push the envelope of what a nightclub experience is about. These days there is so much interesting talent and performance art and unusual kinds of presentations that we want to make part of our room,” Michael explains.

The alliance comes after a serendipitous meeting with Vitello’s managing partner Brad Roen. Last September Brad went with a friend to a show at 54 Below and Michael was on stage and “I just fell in love with his style. I kept thinking, what if we could create something like the experience at 54 Below with Michael at Vitello’s? A few weeks later, Michael Feinstein walks in the door as a guest at Vitello’s. ‘What are the chances of that?’ he laughs. Brad introduced himself and the discussions took off.

Brad says the style of music won’t change overall. Feinstein’s at Vitello’s patrons will still see jazz and comedy acts, for example; there will just be more cabaret and Broadway. Tickets for shows will be priced between $75 and $100. Michael himself is expected to take the stage three to four times a year.

Along with the name change is a facelift. The upstairs loft area in the front is being transformed into a 1930s-style speakeasy. And the larger performance room will resemble a 1930s “Kit Kat or Moulin Rouge-style club complete with red velvet and chandeliers. It will be more of an experience when you walk up those stairs,” says Brad.

Michael is currently remodeling a home in Pasadena, where he has served as Principal Pops Conductor for the Pasadena POPS since 2012.

The entertainer says he started his career in piano bars and nightclubs, where he learned that people crave personal contact and connection—and that, in part, is what attracted him to Vitello’s.

“When people can really see your eyes and feel your presence only a few feet away, it totally changes the connection and bonds us deeper to the songs and to each other. With the enhancements we’re adding to the space, I feel that it has the potential to become the premier nightclub in Los Angeles, and that is something we will work hard to achieve.”
Feinstein’s at Vitello’s Debuts in Studio City

It’s a groundbreaker.

Fans of jazz and live performance have been patronizing Upstairs at Vitello’s since 1984. The venue, perched above Vitello’s Restaurant in Studio City, is known for its intimate performance room, which holds just 125 people. The owners have taken the club in a couple of different directions in recent years (at one point the venue was called the E Spot Lounge when Sheila E got involved) but now it seems to be zeroing in on a more refined mission. In mid-June, the venue will debut as Feinstein’s at Vitello’s, bringing in singer and pianist Michael Feinstein as a partner.

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For more info visit Feinstein’s at Vitello’s.