

## A Tasty Historic Landmark, *the incarnations of 1427 West Avenue*

Barton G Restaurant has been a fixture in the neighborhood since 2002, but the story about this property goes much further back; it is a restaurant with three incarnations.

Featuring Northern Italian cuisine with an emphasis on seafood, the original landmark dining venue, Gatti's Restaurant, opened in 1925, and remained until 1992. It was built by Oreste Gatti, who passed it down to his son Joe, who passed it down to his son Michael. According to folklore, it was a speakeasy during the roaring



Gatti is shown with his wife in photograph from the late 1940s

twenties and later was the frequent hangout of FBI Director, J Edgar Hoover. Hoover often dined right next to known gangsters, but he allowed them to dine in peace because they had “blackmail worthy” information on the famous Hoover.

In keeping with the cultural flavor of that time, an ambitious entrepreneur, Debbie Ohanian, opened Starfish in 1997, a small nightclub whose most popular feature was a Friday-night salsa party. An advertisement gave this description; *where you can take lessons and not feel too self-conscious. For a slower start try salsa classes on Monday and Wednesday.*

As the neighborhood became more chic, a new creative businessman took over and updated the space. It is not difficult to imagine how the successful Barton G concept came about given its owner's colorful history. Barton G Weiss, a former professional ice skater, costume designer, and professional caterer, is the genius behind the Barton G dining experience. Weiss, who was born in Philadelphia, visited Miami Beach frequently during the 1990s. When he decided to open his first restaurant, Miami Beach was a natural choice. And we are very happy he did!