

Palm Beach's north entrance revamped with new bridge, Royal Poinciana Plaza

NEWS

By Matt Morgan - Daily News Staff Writer



The Royal Poinciana Plaza is undergoing construction and renovations to the shops and businesses in the strip on Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2017, in Palm Beach in Florida. (Calla Kessler / Palm Beach Daily News)

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The northern entrance to Palm Beach has gotten a face-lift.

It was nearly five years ago that work began to build a new Flagler Memorial Bridge, kicking off a series of seasons featuring ugly construction, bad traffic and foundering area businesses. The historic Royal Poinciana Plaza stayed open but didn't flourish.

By the end of January, it's going to look a whole lot different.

[More on the Royal Poinciana Plaza](#)

Bradley Park renovations are underway, bridge construction is finished — creating a smooth two-lane entrance into the town — and the plaza will have its grand opening to showcase its now 50 businesses in what could be another booming home for shopping on the island along with Worth Avenue and other corridors.



A ribbon-cutting for the plaza is set for Nov. 29 followed by a Jan. 20th grand-opening celebration.
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"The opening of the Royal Poinciana Plaza will strengthen the Town of Palm Beach with yet another venue for building community, making connections and creating experiences for both longtime residents of Palm Beach and those just discovering it," said plaza General Manager Lori Berg.

The plaza — or just *The Royal*, as some have taken to calling it — announced a dozen incoming businesses in August, including [Celis Produce](#) and [Virginia Philip Wine, Spirits & Academy](#).



A sign announces the upcoming arrival of Celis to the Royal Poinciana Plaza.

Management of Up Markets, the owner of the plaza, envision a place where people can go to yoga classes in the morning, have brunch in the afternoon, shop all day and then come back for dinner.

The other 10 businesses announced in the most recent wave are Saint Laurent, Magasin, Collective, Valentina Kova, Cynthia Rowley, St. Frank, Vespa, Paul Labrecque Salon and Spa, Big Flower and Theory.

Nearby on the town's historic main street, Cucina restaurant will have a new look, new food and new ambiance, and such businesses as Peterbrooke Chocolatier, Sprinkles, RSVP and Mildred Hoyt have survived the years of bridge work.

"Whoever comes and whatever they are selling, I think it's a great sign and endorsement of the town that they believe in the town and are going to do well," said Laurel Baker, Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce president. "It's always fun to go poking around and see what's new and what they have."

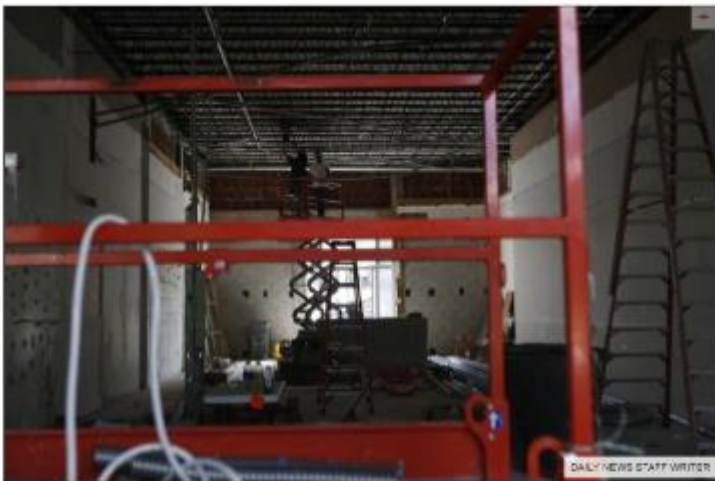
A ribbon-cutting for the plaza is set for Nov. 29, followed by a grand opening celebration in January. A reveal of the holiday decor is set for Dec. 1.



"They took a space, or a property, that was in need of a face-lift and did a fantastic job." Town Manager [Read More](#)

The changes are a welcome sight for Town Manager Tom Bradford, who thinks the plaza could be the new anchor for shopping in the area.

"They took a space, or a property, that was in need of a face-lift and did a fantastic job," Bradford said of Up Markets, which manages the plaza.



Construction continues inside one of the spaces inside Royal Poinciana Plaza.

The mix of businesses and high-profile brands should make it a destination for tourists and residents outside of the island, he added.

Bradford also is pleased with the variety of businesses, but he says one still needs to be added — the arts center at the shuttered Royal Poinciana Playhouse.

Up Markets has urged patience on the Playhouse. The company has a possible tenant, but the deal has been delayed while the possible tenant focuses on another acquisition, Up Markets head Samantha David said at a recent Town Council meeting.

Renovations at Bradley Park also will wrap up by the end of the year, and work at the Testa's site is under way, although it won't be finished for more than two years.

Town Councilwoman Julie Araskog called the work at Testa's and Cucina, in particular, "evolution and change."

"All of these renovations and this rebirth is expected to bring elegance, vitality and a new spirit to (the area)," Araskog wrote in an email. "We cannot wait for the day it is all finished and to see if these changes do indeed bring a lost vitality to Royal Poinciana Plaza and our northern gateway."

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Staff writers William Kelly and Betty Nelander contributed to this story.