

Royal Poinciana Plaza's rebirth sees outdoor events, new store openings

BUSINESS By John Nelander - Special to the Daily News



Amber Johnson, right, tries to pose her children Dayton, 3, and Nora, 1, for a photo during the Royal Poinciana Plaza Easter Egg Hunt March 31. (Meghan McCarthy / Daily News)

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Royal Poinciana Plaza's scrappy comeback managed to impress both town officials and residents this season, with a flood of upscale shops and outdoor activities that attracted a new batch of shoppers.

The classic 1950s shopping center, designed by architect John L. Volk, has been given a fresh lease on life with the new Flagler Memorial Bridge in place and other construction kicking off on Royal Poinciana Way, the town's original Main Street.

"I think the community was delighted," said Mayor Gail Coniglio.

She credited the Up Markets management team with "taking a vision and making it a dream come true, not only for the Royal Poinciana Plaza but the Royal Poinciana corridor.

"It's the gateway to the entire community, so we're thrilled. The shops and the restaurants they have brought forward are top quality, and certainly there has been a new energy," she said. "They've done a great job of appealing to both a high-end and a medium-end clientele in both the clothing and the restaurant price points, so there's something for everyone. They've attracted new customers and clientele with the outdoor events that they had planned."

There have been a couple bumps along the road.

Plaza managers are still searching a tenant for the Royal Poinciana Playhouse. "We continue our efforts to find the best operator of the Playhouse, and we remain optimistic that we will find the best group," Development Project Manager Alexandra Patterson said.

And there was some concern about the scheduled outdoor activities, which were launched this season and are slated to continue through the summer months.

"We have a big summer strategy," said Brittany Mundarain, marketing manager for the plaza.

The Town Council approved a special exception in February to allow the events, which included outdoor yoga, an Easter egg hunt, fashion shows and wine tastings. The plaza exhibited its first art installation in March.

In August, the council will review the special exception.

"I've had a few people call me to complain, but for the most part it's been successful," said Councilwoman Julie Araskog, who voted against the exception because she felt issues should be brought to the council as soon as they come up – and not wait six months. "They complained about the amplified music and that it's being turned into a shopping mall.

"I was concerned with the amplified music and the activities on the grass while people were having dinner. But their events have been pretty elegant. You can't satisfy everyone, but I always listen."

Araskog said she thought Up Markets management has done "a stellar job" with the plaza.

"They've breathed new life into it. Every time you go there it's filled, and it hasn't been like that in a long time."

Coniglio said she's heard no complaints about the outdoor events but hopes they strike a balance between "bringing in new people to enjoy the Town of Palm Beach while protecting the residents and the traditions we've enjoyed."

A case in point is the Virginia Philip Wine Spirits & Academy, which opened its plaza shop on Nov. 20 — a second store in addition to the location on Clematis Street in West Palm Beach.

The island location has generated a lot of traffic, said Veronica Litton, general manager, and Virginia Philip closed the Clematis store March 30. That was due, in part, she said, to impending construction plans in downtown West Palm Beach.

"We've been very well received here and I think we're making a lot of new customers," Litton said. "We have an additional 300-400 new people that we added to our mailing list. Our experience has been pretty good so far."

The plaza events have been helpful to all of the businesses, Litton said.

"We haven't missed a beat," she said. "They're always working to promote all of our stores and get us all to work together. That's part of the reason the residents had so much fun coming back this year and seeing the shops reinvented."

Other new businesses that opened in the plaza over the season included Collective, a fashion and lifestyle store that sells resort wear, jewelry and accessories; Joey Wölffer, which features new and vintage jewelry; Paul Labrecque Salon and Spa; Saint Laurent, which sells women's and men's ready-to-wear products, leather goods, shoes, jewelry and eyewear; and Theory, a New York-based fashion and accessories store.

Nail Lab, a "hand-and-foot spa," was still under construction at the end of April but Lori Berg, general manager of plaza, said it would open early this month.

And 100% Capri, a luxury clothing and homeware boutique, was scheduled to open in late May, she said. In all, Royal Poinciana Plaza has 52 tenants.

As for summer activities, Berg said, "We are looking forward to expanding our courtyard event series with music, backgammon, art classes, Wee Royal Hour, fitness and more."

Royal Poinciana Plaza rundown

Tenants opened prior to Nov. 2017

- Assouline
- Beach
- Bogнар & Piccolini
- Celis Produce
- Cremieux
- Cynthia Rowley
- Hermès
- Magasin
- Odile de Changy
- Orlebar Brown
- Palm Beach Bicycle Trail Shop
- RANI ARABELLA
- Serenella
- St. Frank
- Valentina Kova
- Vespa Palm Beach
- Virginia Philip Wine, Spirits & Academy

Tenants opened since November 2017

- Collective
- Coyo Taco
- Flying Lizard at Haute Yoga
- Fritz Gallery
- Joey Wölffer
- Kirna Zabête
- Nail Lab
- Paul Labrecque Salon and Spa
- POOL LabShow at Odile de Changy
- Saint Laurent
- The Honor Bar
- Theory

Upcoming opening

- 100% Capri – May 2018

Existing tenants

- Alley, Maass, Rogers & Lindsay
- Angelo's Jewelers
- Bioage MD and Dr. Dadurian
- Douglas Elliman
- Dr. Francis Conroy
- Edward Fleming Salon
- Edward Jones Investments
- Florida Consultation
- Haute Yoga
- Holistic Integrative Health
- Palm Beach Grill
- SAMTEX, USA
- Sant Ambroeus
- Sidney Kohl Company
- Sotheby's International Realty
- Squeeze Pilates Palm Beach
- Sterling Organization
- The Corcoran Group Real Estate
- The UPS Store
- TooJay's Gourmet Deli
- US Postal Service
- Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming

Source: UP Markets