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## Longtime Harvey's bar site to become Castro's newest nightclub & day bar



Image: Joshua J. Cook

Beaux nightclub's general manager and co-owner Joshua Cook (left), bar manager Alexis Lucero (center), and assistant manager Matthew Mello (right) are teaming with two silent investors to launch a new venue at 500 Castro St. dubbed Brut bar, bites & nightclub. When Brut opens sometime in 2024, it plans to operate a bites and bubbly menu during the daytime and an extra-wide dance floor and nightclub programming until as late as 2 a.m.

JOSHUA J. COOK



By **Alex Barreira** – Staff Reporter, San Francisco Business Times  
Aug 15, 2023

The historic site of gay bar Harvey's and restaurant Elephant Walk in the heart of San Francisco's Castro District will see new life come 2024 as the neighborhood's newest nighttime hangout spot from morning into the wee hours: Brut bar, bites & nightclub.

Joshua Cook, the general manager and co-founder of queer nightclub Beaux a few blocks away at 2344 Market St., has leased out 500 Castro St. with two longtime friends and club colleagues Alexis Lucero (Beaux bar manager) and Matthew Mello (Beaux assistant manager). Cook said Brut, their "love letter to the Castro," will pay homage to the venue's historic legacy while infusing new energy (and bubbly) to what may end up as the neighborhood's largest dance floor.

Brut could ultimately end up as one of the Castro's largest venues. The club is applying for special permission to extend the space to 3,172 square feet, according to recent planning applications – beyond the neighborhood's allowed size of 1,999 square feet. The layout would combine the storefronts of 500 Castro St. and 504 Castro St. and extend a second mezzanine level to club-goers for extra dancing and people-watching.



A new daytime bar-restaurant and nighttime club — Brut bar, bites & nightclub — is heading to 500 Castro St. in the heart of San Francisco's Castro District and at the former site of queer bar Harvey's and its predecessor restaurant Elephant Walk.

GOOGLE STREET VIEW

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While there still remains a lot of time for local approvals and construction, the club hopes to open sometime in late summer or early fall of 2024.

For Cook and co., the new venue is more than three friends (and two silent investors, Marco Carvajal and Garrett Beighton) coming together for a cool nightclub.

Harvey's **closed earlier this year after nearly three decades in business**. Its predecessor restaurant, Elephant Walk, was a well-loved touchstone of the queer community that was **famously invaded and brutalized by police during the 1979 White Night riots**, which broke out in response to lenient verdict against Dan White for assassinating San Francisco Supervisor and LGBTQ activist Harvey Milk.

The design of the club, led by local **Gi Paoletti Design Lab**, will feature tributes and the occasional hidden "easter egg" commemorating the history of the neighborhood and the restaurant's moments in the spotlight. Furthermore, Cook said that he's hoping to eventually secure historical landmark status for the building.

In this vein, Brut is also aiming for more of a community presence than your average nightclub. It plans to be open during the week starting at 11 a.m. offering bar bites, cocktails and an "extensive" bubbles program (as in, more than champagne).

Cook is working on extending the operating hours allowed in Harvey's liquor license so that the club can say open until 2 a.m., but during the early part of the week he's planning for "community-based" entertainment – for example, trivia or karaoke nights – that welcomes beyond the club-going set. He assured me as well that sound-proofing the space will be done thoroughly and seriously (after all, Cook lives next to Beaux down the street).

So that Brut is not competing with Beaux down the street, Cook plans to have programs that are complementary (but different) on any given night to broaden the appeal.

Cook added that he's aware of the Castro's reputation in some circles for token diversity – a haven for cis-white gay men, and less so for others. Through conscientious efforts in staffing as he's done at Beaux and a range of creative programming, he feels his team can make an inclusive space for everyone.

"We truly believe and intend we'll be changing the footprint of the Castro," Cook said. "We want this place to be around much longer than any of us are."

**T H E L I S T**

# Largest Bay Area BIPOC/Minority-Owned Businesses

2022 revenue

Rank	Prior Rank	Business name/Prior rank
1	1	ASI Computer Technologies Inc.
2	2	Novo Construction Inc.
3	3	Green Banker LLC
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