

Gatto's Italian Restaurant and Bar

5123 Main Street



Summary

In 1940, Herb Karroll opened **Herbert's for Men and Boys** at this location. Herbert's was briefly owned by **Goldblatt's**. Laurie Handelsman acquired the store in 1945 and in 1964 expanded into the neighboring Sovereigns Bakery. Handelsman retired in 1990, selling the store to long-time employee Duane Baker. Baker continue to operate the store until 2007. In 2008, brothers Frank and Chuck Gatto remodeled the building and opened **Gatto's Italian Restaurant and Bar**.

Building History

Herbert's for Men and Boys (1940-2007)

In 1940, Herb Karroll opened Herbert's for Men and Boys. He only owned the self-named store for a few years. Herb Karroll was better known for Karoll's Red Hanger Shops which he also owned. His grandson, Albert Karroll continues in the family tradition as the owner of Richard Bennet Custom Tailors and Shirt Makers in Chicago.

In 1943, Herb Karroll sold the store to Goldblatt's, the department store chain.

By 1945, Laurie Handelsman purchased the business. He and his family ran the store for the next 45 years.

In 1964, the business expanded, taking over the neighboring Sovereigns Bakery store.

In 1953, Handelsman opened a new store, Lloyd's, on a property just south of the original store, on the site that National Tea had vacated. Lloyd's was a full-service department store focusing on women's clothes.

In 1971, a third store, Laurie's, opened and focused only boys clothing.

In 1990, Laurie Handelsman retired, selling the store to Duane Baker. Baker was a long-time employee, who had started at the store in 1977. He continued to operate the store until 2007.



Gatto's Italian Restaurant and Bar (2008-present)

[Gatto's Italian Restaurant and Bar](#) was opened by brothers Frank and Chuck Gatto in 2008. On its website, Gatto's states it "... takes great pride in what we do and strives to create a dining experience that is both relaxing and memorable. All of its offerings are prepared fresh daily, with the best ingredients available."

Gatto's has also hosted educational events of the [Downers Grove Historical Society](#).



Sources

1. Building pictures are courtesy of the Downers Grove Historical Society and the Downers Grove Museum.
2. Sanborn Maps. Earlier Sanborn Maps are available at Library of Congress website. <https://www.loc.gov/maps/?q=Downers+Grove>. Later maps for 1933 and 1947 are available on microfilm at Downers Grove Public Library.
3. "... And Baby Makes 3", The [Downers Grove] Reporter, 7 Nov 1973, p. 12, copy in Local Business Vertical Files, Downers Grove Museum
4. "Herbert's marks one half-century," *Downers Grove Reporter*, 28 Sep 1990, copy in Local Business Vertical Files, Downers Grove Museum
5. Richard Bennett Custom Tailors and Shirtmakers web site, <https://rbtailors.com/about/>
6. Sean Hastings, "Gatto's celebrating 20-year anniversary opening first location", *Shaw Local*, 20 Nov 2020, <https://www.shawlocal.com/2020/11/19/gattos-celebrating-20-year-anniversary-opening-first-location/axlzez3/>
7. Gatto's Web site, <https://www.gattosrestaurant.com/locations/downers-grove-il-gattos/>, accessed 10 November 2021

Written and researched by Marty Acks in 2021.