

# The Legend Returns:

## BB's Jazz Blues & Soups Reclaims Its Place on Broadway Under New Ownership



PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

**St. Louis, MO** — [Monday, May 18th, ] — A special pre-opening event for the press and public is set for Wednesday, May 20th, 2026 at 12:00 PM with music by The Funky Butt Brass Band and St. Louis blues artist, Marquise Knox. Local officials are expected to be in attendance; Steve Sullivan and Marquise Knox will offer remarks and be available for questions, a sampling of the new BB's menu items provided.

This rebirth is happening at 700 South Broadway near Downtown St. Louis as **BB's Jazz Blues & Soups** returns to the local music scene. Prior to closing in 2023 the legendary venue had been a defining force in St Louis blues and jazz for five decades. It returns to its roots with live music, historically authentic charm, and a renewed vision for the future. Located in a historic mid-1800s building, BB's has long been known as a gathering place for generations of music lovers. As a cornerstone of the city's blues and jazz scene, BB's returns with a renewed commitment to honoring its past while embracing the future.

The venue is under contract to Steve Sullivan and Mark Goldenberg, who have owned the nearby **Broadway Oyster Bar** since 2019. "BB's has always been more than a club – it's a living piece of St. Louis history," said Sullivan and Goldenberg in a joint statement. "We're re-opening not just to bring back live music, but to preserve a space where culture, community, and creativity have always thrived and bring it forward to a new era in St. Louis. This is St. Louis at its best."

The reopening will mean the return of live music, spotlighting local and touring blues, jazz, soul, and R&B artists, as well as a new menu with a Memphis soul flair. The building's historic interior, and its signature intimate atmosphere will be preserved to retain its layered character. Tracing its history from a 19th-century Frenchtown hotel to a legendary blues landmark, BB's will remain a vital hub for gathering and storytelling. The venue is dedicated to showcasing traditional American music as both a cultural touchstone and a testament to the enduring power of live performance.

Special thanks to Mike Ermer for keeping the dream of BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups alive! Your stewardship of this historic building ensures that its rich musical legacy and vibrant history continue to thrive for the next generation of blues and jazz fans.

For information and interview requests, please contact **Steve Sullivan** via email at [steve@broadwayoysterbar.com](mailto:steve@broadwayoysterbar.com) or by phone at 314-494-4027.

Additional briefs are available for download at <https://bbsblues.com> ###



700 S. BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS, MO 63102

## The Future of BB's Jazz Blues & Soups

### Our Vision

BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups stands as the heartbeat of Broadway, dedicated to preserving and propelling the soulful sounds that define St. Louis. We are more than a venue; we are a living monument to the city's musical heritage and a vibrant sanctuary where the past, present, and future of the music converge.

### The Pillars of Our Future

- **A Living Legacy:** We serve as a premiere destination to celebrate the profound history of St. Louis music. By honoring the legends who paved the way, we ensure that St. Louis jazz and blues remains a global cornerstone of cultural identity.
- **The Artist's Stage:** BB's is a home for the masters of the craft. We provide a world-class stage for local icons to showcase their artistry and a vital tour stop for national blues legends, fostering a dynamic exchange of talent that keeps the genre evolving.
- **A Classroom for the Next Generation:** We are committed to the youth of St. Louis. Through performance and storytelling, we offer a space for young people to discover the significance of jazz and blues, ensuring the rhythm of our city is carried forward by new hands.
- **A Global Cultural Hub:** For visitors from across the globe, BB's is a gateway to the American South's musical soul. We provide an immersive educational experience that translates the language of the blues for an international audience.
- **The Soul of the Kitchen:** We believe the music is best served alongside the flavors that birthed it. Our mission is to provide a genuine culinary experience, pairing world-class music with authentic soul and Southern cuisine that warms the spirit.

At BB's, every note played and every meal served is a testament to the enduring power of St. Louis culture.

We invite the world to sit down, listen, and become part of the story.



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## The History of BB's Jazz Blues & Soups

By the time of its closure in 2023, **BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups** had long been recognized as a St. Louis cultural landmark where music, nightlife, and urban history would intersect in an architectural artifact from the mid-1800s. Built in what was then known as Frenchtown, what began as a private residence was rapidly expanded to meet the needs of a growing St. Louis as a boarding house for travelers brought to town on the river that helped build the city. It later became a reception hall, a general mercantile and a millinery in a time when hats were the rule. It was known as Phil's boarding house as late as 1969. The building that long served as a gathering spot took on new cultural significance in 1976, when Mark O'Shaughnessy founded BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups inside the historic space. Instead of modernizing the rustic interior, O'Shaughnessy embraced the building's worn textures and intimate layout, creating a live music venue that felt both authentic and timeless. Its narrow stature, wooden floors, and balcony levels offered an atmosphere ideally suited to the raw immediacy of blues and jazz.

Over subsequent years, BB's developed into a cornerstone of St. Louis music life. Forming a point on the South Broadway "Blues Triangle," it prioritized regional talent and the traditional American music forms of blues, jazz, soul, and rhythm and blues. What began as a 19th-century hub of lodging and social life evolved into a 20th-century cultural institution, still dedicated to gathering people together – only now through the shared experience of live music. Henry Townsend, a true St. Louis legend, was the first performance on the BB's stage. Other artists soon followed such as Roosevelt Sykes and Albert King, with a later slate of regulars including Oliver Sain, Johnnie Johnson, Tommy Bankhead, Big George Brock, Patti & The Hit Men, Kim Massie and Marquise Knox. In so doing, the walls slowly filled with photographs and memorabilia that effectively turned the interior into a living archive of local musical heritage.

When the club closed in 2023, there was a hole left in the city's cultural soul; the shuttered BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups endured as a physical reminder and symbol of the urban center's downturn. This loss was further magnified when the St. Louis Blues Museum abruptly closed its doors on March 27, 2026, highlighting the loss of another piece of St. Louis music identity. Rather than allowing that legacy to disappear, Steve Sullivan and Mark Goldenburg, owners of the nearby Broadway Oyster Bar, purchased the club with the goal of a reborn BB's as not only a piece of St. Louis' early architectural history but a club with a musical tradition integral to St. Louis itself. Plans are currently underway to bring back BB's as a space where local jazz, blues and gospel artists will perform, interspersed with talent from across the country. This commitment to the music goes beyond just hosting performances; it aims to provide a venue to teach St. Louisans of all ages about the vital role of the jazz and blues music genres to the history of the St. Louis area.



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## **The History of Broadway Oyster Bar**

**The Broadway Oyster Bar**, located at the intersection of South Broadway, Gratiot, and 4th streets – a nexus of Cajun-inspired cuisine and local music – has deep roots in St. Louis. As one of the oldest structures in the city, it has had a long and storied life as changeable as the city around it. Built around 1845, the building has a colorful history that includes periods as a boarding house, a record shop, and a bordello. In the early 20th century, the area was known as “Hop Alley” (St. Louis’ version of Chinatown), and the building functioned as a Chinese laundry. Unlike many neighboring buildings, it managed to survive the massive clearing that took place for the construction of Busch Stadium, Interstate 55, and the Poplar Street Bridge during the 1950s and 1960s.

The seeds for this world-renowned music venue and New Orleans–inspired restaurant were planted in 1978, when Bob Burkhardt and a small group of dedicated patrons first made themselves at home in this "cathedral" to St. Louis’ grittier side. One of those patrons, John Johnson, purchased the unassuming bar in the late 1990s. It was John’s love of all things New Orleans that led him to transform it from a "grungy dive bar" into the premier Cajun restaurant and nightspot it is today. Johnson’s frequent trips to iconic NOLA watering holes enabled him to bring an eclectic blend of performers to St. Louis. He wove together a musical tapestry of blues, funk, R&B, reggae, rock, bluegrass, and jam bands, featuring both local talent and touring acts. Artists as diverse as Gatemouth Brown, Chuck Berry, Devon Allman, Trombone Shorty, Jake’s Leg, the Funky Butt Brass Band, Sean Canan and the Voodoo Players, and Dick Dale (the King of the Surf Guitar) have all appeared on the unassuming stage.

The interior of the Broadway Oyster Bar is as historic as the talent that has performed there. From its original wooden door (now repurposed as a wall hanging) to the plethora of vintage album covers on the ceiling to the hammered copper bar top, the décor reveals a unique story at every turn. Many visitors agree that “Even the Dust is Authentic.” A major mid-2010s renovation added a second covered patio to the north side and nearly doubled the kitchen and dining area.

In 2019, Steve Sullivan and Mark Goldenberg purchased the establishment. Also, Executive Chef Michael Trares has been added to the ownership team. Together, they continue to preserve its authentic, eclectic charm, as evidenced by the continuation of “The Longest Running Blues Jam Session in the Nation,” hosted by the Soulard Blues Band, a longtime staple of the local music scene. The latest addition to the weekly lineup is Soul Sunday, a dedicated evening series highlighting powerhouse vocalists and deep, soulful grooves. These sessions feature a rotating cast of renowned St. Louis artists who evoke the spirit of the beloved local icon, Kim Massie.

You are invited to “Leave Your Attitude at Home” and experience this legendary “Party Palace.”



## *A Sampling of our Menu*

### **APPETIZERS**

JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR CORN BREAD DRIZZLED WITH HOT HONEY AND RHUBARB JAM  
BRISKET JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR CORN BREAD DIPPERS  
SMOKED DEVILED EGGS TOPPED WITH CRISPY BRISKET BITS  
LOADED FRIES, RIPLETS SEASONING  
MOZZARELLA STICKS, TOSSED IN HOT HONEY AND MEMPHIS SEASONING  
SWEET POTATO FRIES WITH SOUR CREAM AND SWEET CHILI  
WINGS: HOT HONEY, MEMPHIS, BLACK CHERRY BBQ  
DRY RUB CRAYFISH SMOKED WITH SPICED BUTTER  
SMOKED CRAB AND PIMENTO DIP

### **SOUPS**

BLACK EYED PEA SOUP  
HAM AND SMOKED BEAN SOUP  
CAJUN POTATO SOUP

### **SALAD**

SMOKED GOLDEN BEET, SALAD WITH  
DUTCH CARROTS AND HOT HONEY DRIZZLE  
HEIRLOOM TOMATO AND BARATTA SALAD  
WITH A BALSAMIC GLAZE

### **SIDES**

MAC AND CHEESE  
COLLARD GREENS  
BAKED BEANS WITH DRIPPINGS

JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR CORN BREAD  
DIRTY RICE  
BLACK EYED PEAS

### **PASTA**

SMOKED POMODORO PASTA  
BRISKET PASTA WITH FARFALLE PASTA, RED ONION, BLACK EYED PEAS, COLLARD GREENS  
TOPPED WITH SMOKED GOUDA

### **SANDWICHES**

MEMPHIS BURGER TOPPED WITH PULLED PORK DRIZZLED WITH HOUSE MADE BBQ SAUCE, CHEDDAR CHEESE  
MAC AND CHEESE GRILLED SANDWICH  
MEMPHIS STYLE CUBAN  
PICKLE FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICH, HOT HONEY, PICKLES, RED ONION

### **ENTRÉES**

HALF-SMOKED CHICKEN OVER GARLIC BROCCOLI AND BLACK EYED PEAS WITH A BLACK CHERRY GLAZE  
BRAISED SHORT RIBS OVER COLLARD GREENS AND DIRTY RICE WITH AU JUS  
BABY BACK RIBS WITH 2 SIDES AND CORN BREAD  
FRIED CHICKEN WITH 2 SIDES AND CORN BREAD  
SMOKED DUCK FRIED RICE WITH BRISKET BITS

### **DESSERTS**

DEEP FRIED PECAN PIE. SERVED WITH HOUSE MADE BOURBON CARAMEL AND WHIPPED CREAM  
COCA COLA CHOCOLATE CAKE TOPPED WITH COCA COLA REDUCTION AND WHIPPED CREAM  
APPLE PIE WITH SMOKED WHIPPED CREAM

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