

EATING

‘Like the Copacabana meets ‘Goodfellas’’: Fort Lauderdale’s Anthony’s Runway 84 to shut down in May for \$3 million transformation

By Phillip Valys
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Restaurateur Anthony Bruno will shut down his Anthony's Runway 84 restaurant on May 12 in a multimillion transformation to turn the 40-year-old Italian eatery from an old-school dining room with airplane motifs into a sleek supper club. (Susan Stocker / South Florida Sun Sentinel)

Picture the new Anthony's Runway 84 in Fort Lauderdale: oval booths, a live music stage, tableside service and an overhauled cocktail program with Italian spirits and 250 wines.

Restaurateur Anthony Bruno (Andy's Live Fire Grill, Anthony's Pronto Kitchen) will shut down his Italian restaurant on May 12 for a \$3 million transformation to turn Anthony's from an old-school dining room with airplane motifs into a sleek supper club. (Yes, the fuselage-themed dining room is going away.) To pull off the makeover, Bruno has again partnered with Marc Falsetto, with whom he's [expanded the Tacocraft taqueria chain](#), and Pat Marzano, Bruno's longtime partner who co-founded – and eventually sold – Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza.

The timing of Anthony's closing – the end of tourism season – puts it on track to reopen by late October, just ahead of the returning Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, Falsetto says.

Describing the redesign as “like the Copacabana meets ‘Goodfellas,’” Falsetto says he wanted Anthony's makeover to evoke the nostalgia of 1960s and 1970s supper clubs.

“The restaurant's had an amazing 40-year run, but yeah, we're going backwards in time to reinvent the space,” he says. “My dad's Italian, and I grew up working in Italian restaurants my whole life, and Anthony's is my favorite Italian restaurant in all of America.”

The revamp is a solo passion project for Falsetto and not part of his Handcrafted Hospitality portfolio, which also includes Pizzacraft, cocktail den Apothecary 330 and Henry's Sandwich Station. But he'll use some of Apothecary's mixology muscle to program Anthony's new drink menu, which will include classic cocktails, digestifs like amaro liqueur, more martinis and 250 wines from Italy and California's Napa Valley.

The \$3 million redo is likewise [timed to the 40th anniversary of Anthony's](#), which Bruno opened with his father in August 1982. Bruno says he also has some buy-in from public and private investors, including from Miami Dolphins icon Dan Marino.

“We all compliment each other's strengths,” Bruno says. “And it makes things a little easier on myself. I'm getting old. But I want people to count on the restaurant always being there for them. It's nice to have a new environment once in a while.”

Anthony's closing day, May 12 – which will be billed “The Last Supper,” Bruno says – will fall on Anthony's popular Thursday Meatballs-and-Martini's night. The next day, workers will start clearing out Runway 84's red booths, chairs and airplane paintings. Bruno knows that will [upset some longtime customers accustomed to aviation décor](#), but it will be preserved in framed historical photos that will hang in the upgraded dining room.

“Yeah, I think people will be a little disappointed to see the airplane stuff go away,” Bruno says. “But I've been looking at it for 40 years. It needs to go.”

In its place will be oval-shaped tufted banquette booths – the “kinds you see in gangster movies, with the back against the wall,” Bruno adds – as well as a new wine room, private dining room and live-music stage. About “95 percent of the food menu” will stay the same, he says.

Even while Anthony's Runway is closed, the restaurant's belly-filling Italian fare won't disappear completely. Similar versions of Runway 84's famous dishes (such as rigatoni cauliflower and meatballs) still appear on the menu of Anthony's Pronto Kitchen, Bruno and Falsetto's downtown grab-and-go eatery that moved from Victoria Park to Pizzacraft in Himmarshee Village (330 SW Second St., Fort Lauderdale) in 2021.

After the remodel, Falsetto and Bruno plan to keep expanding their Tacocraft chain. In April, they signed a lease to open a location within Coral Springs' [under-construction Cornerstone plaza](#), a live-work-play complex that will include Coral Springs' rebuilt City Hall.

Anthony's Runway 84, at 330 W. State Road 84, in Fort Lauderdale, expects to close in early 2022 for a major makeover. Call 954-467-8484 or go to [Runway-84.com](#).