

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Comedy Venue to Open in Armory Building This Fall

Burlington Locale to Offer Shows, Classes, Food & Drink

Those looking for a laugh in Vermont will soon have a place to get their fix.

It was announced today that renovations have begun on the brand new “**Vermont Comedy Club**,” which will launch in Burlington this November. The comedy venue and training center will feature an upscale lounge, an intimate 175-seat theater with cabaret tables, and a dedicated classroom.

Business partners/married couple **Nathan Hartswick** and **Natalie Miller** are spearheading the project. The two are native Vermonters who have been producing comedy throughout the state – and teaching it at their studio, **Spark Arts** – for several years.

“The scene here has exploded recently, and it’s time for Vermont comedy to have a home base,” states Miller. “Fans need a go-to spot to find quality comedy entertainment.”

Hartswick says the venue will be a hybrid between a standup comedy club and an improv theater. “We’ll be offering improv and standup shows five nights per week,” he says. “We’ll also expand our comedy education program, offering more comedy classes for kids and adults.”

To develop the nightspot’s limited menu, Hartswick and Miller have engaged the culinary expertise of **Kortnee Bush** and **Narin Phanthakhot**. Bush and Phanthakhot are the owner and chef of **Butch + Babe’s** restaurant in the Old North End, which Seven Days recently called “**the best restaurant to open in town in years**.” Butch + Babe’s is a Daysie Award finalist this year for “Best New Restaurant in Chittenden County.”

“We’re extremely excited about this project,” Bush stated. “We’re working closely with Nathan and Natalie to develop a menu of creative, small dishes that are tasty as well as fun to eat.” The venue will also offer a variety of specialty cocktails, local beers and wines.

Longtime Burlington residents may remember the venue’s location, in the **Armory building at 101 Main Street**, as the former home of Hunt’s (and later, Sha-Na-Na’s) nightclub.

“We’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback about returning this historic building to its former glory as a performing arts center,” said Hartswick. “And it’s a great location: a block from City Hall Park, at the mouth of the South End Arts District, and steps from the waterfront.”

The area surrounding 101 Main Street has been under development for over a decade. **Redstone** and **Nedde Real Estate** recently opened the doors on the new **Hilton Garden Inn**, a 139-room hotel with a lobby and lounge on the upper floor of the Armory building.

Redstone Development Manager **Erik Hoekstra** is enthusiastic about the hotel's new downstairs neighbors.

"This is a unique attraction that fits perfectly into Burlington's entertainment landscape," Hoekstra states. "It will be a great way for residents and visitors alike to spend a fun night out in Burlington."

As for the venue's programming, Hartswick and Miller say the Wednesday–Sunday schedule will include a mix of local, regional and national standup and improv acts.

"In the past we've brought in performers like Fred Armisen, Tig Notaro and Wyatt Cenac," Miller says, "and we are looking forward to giving people the opportunity to see more of these exceptional acts in an intimate environment."

At the same time, the partners are focused on the development of a thriving local comedy scene. "We have two professional improv troupes and over 100 standup comedians right here in Vermont," says Hartswick, "so we'll be featuring them as well."

The venue plans to open with the annual "Vermont's Funniest Comedian Contest" the third week in November.

About Vermont Comedy Club

Vermont Comedy Club produces standup and improv comedy events throughout the Green Mountain State, including Vermont's two biggest comedy events, the Vermont's Funniest Comedian contest in November and the Green Mountain Comedy Festival in May. In November 2015 Vermont Comedy Club will launch a dedicated comedy venue in downtown Burlington, Vermont in the beautiful, historic Armory building at 101 Main Street. It is the goal of the Vermont Comedy Club to support and foster the growth of a vibrant comedy community in Vermont and beyond, through workshops, classes, and public and private comedy events. A full schedule of upcoming events can be found at www.vtcomedy.com.