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# Bella Sera sold; buyers add Matthew Porco

**Premium content from Pittsburgh Business Times by Tim Schooley, Reporter**

Date: Friday, January 20, 2012, 6:00am EST

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Pittsburgh's first green restaurant has quietly been sold in the new year and will soon be overseen by one of the city's best chefs.

[Jason Capps](#), one of the first newcomers into the revitalized Market Square when he opened Bella Sera two years ago, sold the restaurant to an ownership group led by local entrepreneur [Tom Certo](#).

Capps said he wasn't looking to sell a restaurant, but the offer came his way and he realized he wasn't able to devote the time he wanted to Bella Sera in Market Square while operating his Bella Sera banquet facility in Canonsburg and maintaining a family life.

"It was just the right time and an offer I couldn't refuse," said Capps, who has long touted the Market Square restaurant as Pittsburgh's first to achieve a green designation from the Green Restaurant Association. "I'm able to focus better on what I do best, which is catering and special events."

A liquor license transfer application with the state lists Certo as the new president of the restaurant. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Certo is a principal of the Circulatory Centers, a vein care business with 23 locations, among other

holdings.

The new operators plan to keep the Bella Sera name under a licensing agreement with Capps for the next few months, said [Jamie Patrick](#), the restaurant's new general manager and wife of [Craig Patrick](#), the former general manager of the **Pittsburgh Penguins**.

The idea of buying the restaurant stemmed in part from a trip the Patricks took to Italy with the Certos, [Jamie Patrick](#) said. She said the restaurant will continue to maintain its green standards as they decide how to rebrand and rename the restaurant in the coming months.

One big decision already has been made: [Matthew Porco](#), the 2010 chef of the year in **Pittsburgh magazine**, will join the restaurant in February. Porco operated the restaurant Mio in Aspinwall for three years before selling it in 2010.

"We're excited," said [Jamie Patrick](#), of the chance to have an accomplished chef such as Porco build on the Bella Sera's success.

[Terri Sokoloff](#), a principal with Ross-based **Specialty Group**, a restaurant services firm who represented Porco in the sale of Mio, said a strong chef can help a Downtown restaurant succeed in the evening and not just at lunch time, when the area is full of midday office workers.

Tim Schooley covers retail, real estate, small business, hospitality and media. Contact him at [tschooley@bizjournals.com](mailto:tschooley@bizjournals.com) or (412) 208-3826.