



Tony's brings Riverbender.com in for look at expansion areas

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Tony's is expanding its business with an addition in the next-door 20,000-square-foot building at 100 W. Third St. in Alton.

Leonard Ventimiglia, owner of Tony's in Downtown Alton, let Riverbender.com in for a glimpse of the building interior today and explained his hopes of what to do with the facility in the near future. He plans to retain and restore much of the brick and beams presently in place from the past.

"We have an entire block and a half a block deep," Tony's owner Leonard Ventimiglia said. "I have wanted to do something with it for a long time. Alton has been good to us over the years and it is great to be next to Frew Bridal."

The Hive was located in the facility previously, but it has moved for the Tony's additions. The new addition will give Tony's a combined total of 60,000 square feet; the old building is 40,000 square feet and the expanded building will add 20,000 square feet.

For years, people have had Tony's cater special events and now it will be easier with space right next door for banquets or meetings. Special events from weddings, wedding rehearsals, and much more will be possible in the new banquet center. In the basement of the addition will be what Ventimiglia calls a "speakeasy" in 1920s style.

"We are going to leave it stone with the brick walls downstairs," Ventimiglia said. "It will be a throwback of the roaring 20s. People will need a password to get in."

Ventimiglia said he will bring people back in time in what he calls the Vogue banquet center and it will seat up to 300 people. It will have exposed brick within the setting. Paul Ventimiglia and wife, Erin, will be part of the management team of the Tony's additions. Annette Albani, a New York native, will join the management team in the addition, starting handmade jewelry and jewelry design upstairs.

Leonard is looking to lease out some of the upper area of the new building. Leonard hopes to have the vogue space ready for June weddings.

The banquet center next door to the present Prohibition Lounge in Tony's will sometimes be used for entertainment, including bands. The Tony's owner put a request out saying he would like to see a convenience store/drug store downtown because there is a need.

Overall, Leonard is excited about the different places opening in Alton and progress being made downtown.

"Russ Smith is opening his new bar across the street from us in a big 10,000-square foot building," he said. "There is plenty here for everybody. We hope to attract people from Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, St. Louis and all the surrounding area to downtown."





