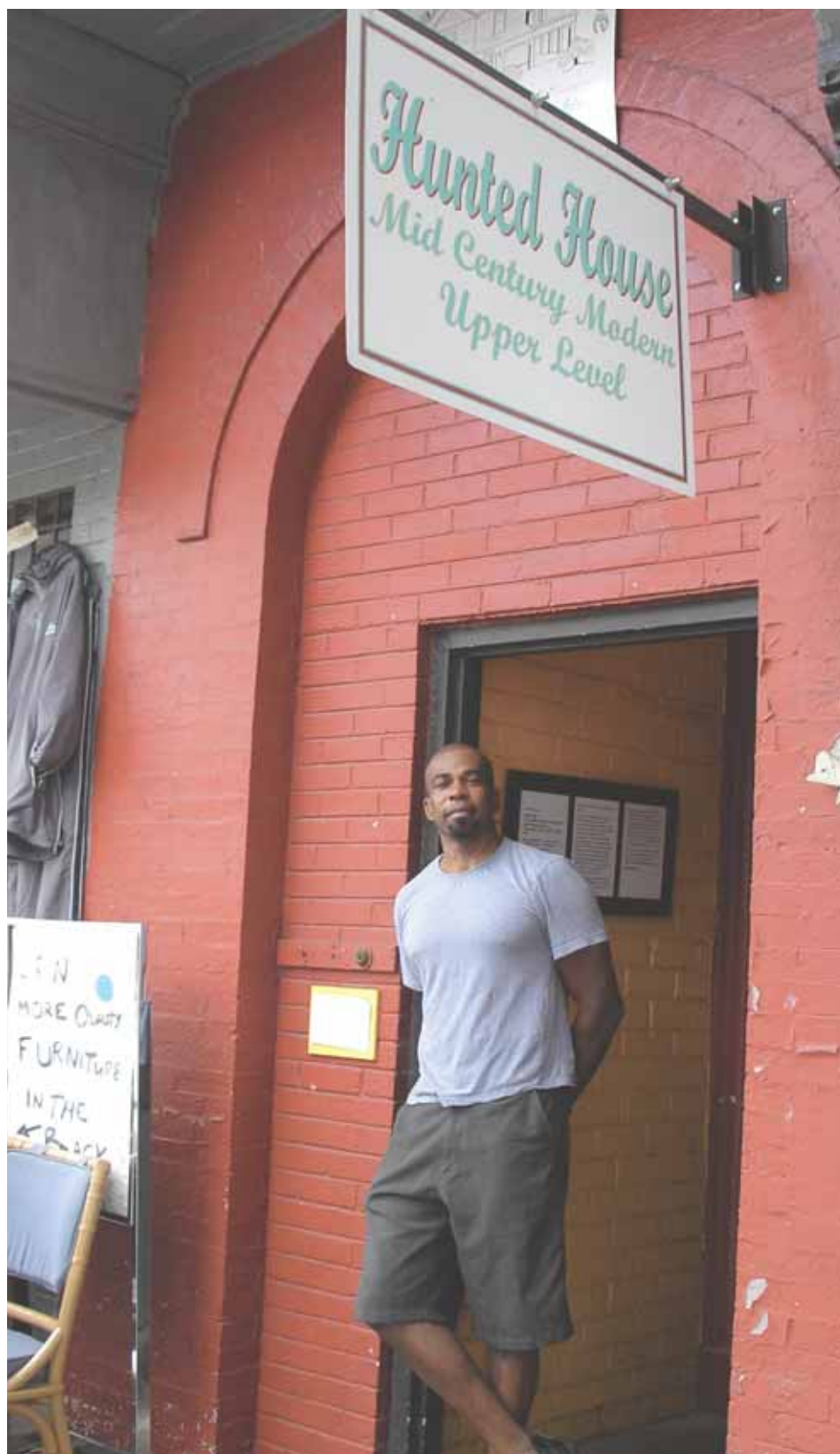


Walkabout

BY CELESTE MCCALL



Hunted House proprietor Mark Johnson relaxes in front of his funky furniture store. Photo: Celeste McCall

Logan Lowdown

Looks like 14th Street NW is becoming Washington's new vintage furniture row. We've just checked out the funky, moderately priced Hunted House, upstairs at 1830 14th St. NW. We were greeted by the strong aroma of incense as we entered the circa 1900, unrestored structure. "It's part of the coolness of the space," said the hip proprietor, Mark Johnson, adding that the building used to be an apartment complex. When I mentioned that Johnson looked familiar, he told me he used to sell his vintage furniture at Eastern Market's Sunday flea market. After a stint as press secretary to former DC Councilmember Linda Cropp, he launched Hunted House in June, 2007. He lives in Columbia Heights.

Each Hunted House room contains period furniture, all from the 1950s to 1970s. Instead of sitting in a sterile showroom, the pieces are arranged much like they would be in a real home: A 1960's glass coffee table; a pat-

terned love seat; a "classic" tripod lamp with a fiberglass shade; a Dansk fondue pot; pastel-hued ashtrays; a wicker picnic basket; nifty 1950s ice chest; 1970s highball glasses; an old transistor radio (which worked), and an RCA TV (which doesn't). "We hunt for everything," Johnson said, explaining the store's clever name. "We buy furniture from estate sales and auctions, and people bring us pieces which we sell on consignment.

"I've seen a lot of changes in the neighborhood, which is why these [furniture] businesses are surviving," Mark said. "Most of our customers are local; they live within walking distance. Most of them are 25 to 55, and many of them don't even remember these things. However, the Emmy award-winning AMC show 'Mad Men' has generated new interest in vintage furniture, he said. Johnson's enterprise will soon have company; opening soon next door: Room & Board, the Minneapolis-based furniture retailer.



A living room at Hunted House



Omar Miskinyar pauses between customers at his stylish restaurant/nightspot, Policy.
Photo: Celeste McCall

Hunted House is at 1830 14th St. NW (upper level). Open Thursday 1-7 p.m.; Friday noon - 6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., Tuesday by appointment only; closed Monday and Wednesday. Call 202-549-7493 or www.huntedhouse.com

Good Policy

Down the street from Hunted House is Logan Circle's latest hot spot: Policy, 1904 14th St. NW. Created by Afghan-born Omar Miskinyar, Policy debuted last March. Designed by Peter F. Hapstak III of Core, the high profile Washington architectural firm, the interior is a dramatic vision of red and black: Chairs are red vinyl; pencil-thin red pendant lights dangle over the sleek bar. Sparkly chandeliers add yet more pizzazz.

Policy's downstairs is cutting-edge, while the upper level, reached by a hot pink-painted stairwell, is more personal. A graffiti-style mural depicts Omar's wife, Imren; another

shows his beloved dog who died last year. Not surprisingly "Obama's corner," decorated with an image of the president, is Policy's most popular spot. (Although the Obamas have not yet visited, the club is a favorite of White House staffers.)

Omar described his family's harrowing escape from Afghanistan after the 1979 Russian invasion, when Omar was only five. "We fled Kabul dressed as farmers," he recalled. "We walked across the desert to Iran at night. When the Russians threw lights on the desert, we had to drop and hide. The Russians were after my father (who now owns the California-based Farsi-language TV Station Ariana), because he was a journalist. The Shah of Iran was about to be overthrown, so we obtained fake passports and went to Germany."

Sponsored by an uncle, the Miskinyars eventually arrived in Miami and finally, the Washington area. (Washington's Afghan population of

approximately 40,000, is second only to San Francisco's.)

Presiding over Policy's kitchen is Brian Murphy, a Johnson & Wales grad who has wielded his whisk at L'Auberge chez Francois, Ruppert's, Palena and Le Relais. The menu includes such gems as ahi tuna tartare, Georgia white shrimp with Thai chilis, sauteed forest mushrooms, braised short ribs, crispy pork belly with mustard glaze; veal sweetbreads with capers. Located at 1904 14th St. NW, Policy is open for dinner only; closed Sunday and Monday. www.policydc.com.

East Meets West

After leaving Policy, we walked across the street to view the progress of Masa 14, where Asian and Mexican cuisine will soon meet at 1825 14th St. NW. In this 100-seat restaurant, Japanese-born Kaz Okochi, who operates downtown's stylish Kaz Sushi Bistro, joins with Richard Sandoval

(Modern Mexican Group and SULA LLC) and chef de Cuisine Antonio Burrell. You might remember Burrell, former top toque at CommonWealth, from the British-inspired gastropub in Columbia Heights.

At Masa 14, Burrell's menu will showcase small plates (doesn't anyone ever do large plates any more?) created in his wood-fired, oven-quipped, display kitchen.

Masa will serve dinner nightly (plus weekend brunch), and will stay open until 2 a.m. weeknights and 3 a.m. Friday and Saturday. For updates, call 202-328-1414 or visit www.masa14.com.

New at Mount Vernon Square

An historic, 19th century market has been reincarnated on the grounds of the former Carnegie Library, which houses the Historical Society of Washington DC. On Tuesdays from 3 - 7 p.m., Liberty Farmers Market hawks fresh produce from 3 to 7 p.m. Sponsored by Diverse Markets Management in cooperation with the Historical Society of Washington DC, the market will operate "as long as long as weather permits," says executive director Mike Berman. When fresh produce is gone, vendors will offer items like coffee and tea, jams, jellies, honey, breads and soaps. So far, the market has eight or 10 vendors, with more expected.

Starting early next year if not sooner: a Saturday market with arts and crafts, live music, prepared foods and beverages will operate from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Located at Seventh and K Streets NW, Liberty Market is named after the 1846 predecessor which served the neighborhood, then called Northern Liberties. Closest Metro is Gallery Place/Chinatown (Seventh and H street exit). For more information call Mike Berman at 202-543-3370. ★