



GREG JANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric and Andrew Dayton hope to open Marvel Bar here in July.

Two SOGs walk into a bar ...

● Gov. Mark Dayton's sons Eric and Andrew finally are ready to talk about their enterprise in downtown Minneapolis.

NIGHTLIFE TOM HORGEN



Five blocks from Target Field, in the heart of downtown Minneapolis' North Loop, sits a century-old building. Its weathered two-story facade has been the subject of chatter for over a year, with downtown boosters anticipating some combination of bar, restaurant and retail shop.

The buzz makes sense — the building's owner is Eric Dayton, son of Minnesota's governor, grandson of the co-founder of Target Stores and a Rockefeller to boot.

Dayton, 30, is partnering with his brother Andrew, 27, on this long-rumored project that is nearing the finish line.

Located in the former Marvel Rack Manufacturing building at 200 N. 1st St., their basement cocktail den will be called the Marvel Bar. The first-floor restaurant is the Bachelor Farmer. Both are expected to open in mid-July. While the names have been known, the Brothers Dayton have let little else slip on the details of their hotly anticipated enterprise.

But last Thursday, they gave me a tour of the bar (while remaining mum on the restaurant's details). With sawdust swirling in the air and power tools buzzing throughout the building, Eric slowly guided me downstairs into Marvel Bar's intimate setting.

Nightlife continues on E3 ▶



Owen meets Woody at 'Midnight in Paris' E8

Memory Lanes Block Party: Take the punks bowling E3

night out



Eric Dayton, left, and Andrew Dayton, right, with head bartender Pip Hanson in the space that will be Marvel.

GREG JANSSEN

Two SOGs walk into a bar ...

• NIGHTLIFE FROM E1

Once inside he accidentally stepped onto wet flooring, leaving a footprint in the black epoxy.

"Oops, that's like a week's delay right there," he joked.

The Daytons are well-dressed, articulate and prone to looking you straight in the eye when making a point.

"The idea for the whole project is to preserve as much of the original building as possible," Andrew said.

The building features big windows on all sides, but Marvel Bar will act as more of a speakeasy, with its entrance in the back. The basement's limestone walls are intact, and the decor will be muted, dark tones with fashionable plywood (there is such a thing). "Overall, we're trying to keep it pretty humble," Andrew said.

While the Daytons didn't want to give away too much, Twin Cities cocktail connoisseurs and the scene's best mixologists are eagerly anticipating its opening.

"Everyone is pretty excited, and I think they'll give Bradstreet a good run for its money," said Bradstreet bartender Birk Stefan Grudem.

Like that downtown spot, Marvel will be a mixology-focused bar where

cocktails take center stage. The Daytons have hired Pip Hanson as head bartender. Hanson has made a name for himself at Cafe Maude as one of the scene's chief purveyors of classic cocktails. Eric said he was sold on Hanson after the bartender made him "the best Old Fashioned I'd ever had."

"This is Pip's stage. He's the star down here," Andrew said.

The long bar will have a marble top and seating for 14, with booths and lounge furniture filling out the rest of the small space. The cocktail emporium will most likely feature some fancy-schmantzy ice, including Hanson's method of Japanese-style chipped ice.

"It's going to be the kind of place where you don't have to be a cocktail geek to enjoy yourself, but if you are, you're going to get your socks knocked off," Hanson told me months ago.

Back to life

When Eric walked up to the warehouse building in 2008, it had been sitting dormant for at least 20 years. The building's original parcel was erected in 1881. Eric saw a sign on the door that said something like, "Not for sale and don't ask."

"One day the sign came down and

Eric was able to inquire," Andrew said.

While the brothers won't divulge the total cost of the project, records show Eric purchased the building for \$492,500. At the time, he was finishing an MBA at Stanford and told the Star Tribune he was planning "an anti-Block E." He hopes to open a boutique clothing store in the front of the building by September. Andrew, who recently graduated from the University of Michigan Law School, came onto the project in 2009.

The building's restoration was delayed several times, as the brothers committed to other high-profile endeavors, including hitting the campaign trail in 2010 for their father's gubernatorial bid.

In January, they began the build-out, with scaffolding covering the building's exterior for much of the winter.

After the Arctic

In 2006, Eric told the Star Tribune he wanted to stake his own claim, alluding to the pressure of being the product of two prominent American families. At the time he had just come off an Arctic exploration trip with Will Steger and a six-month stay in Chile, where he worked with or-

phans. "I went to Stanford not knowing exactly what I would do for a career, and I certainly wouldn't have predicted this, but I knew it would be something related to downtown Minneapolis," he said last week.

The brothers, who both live in nearby condos, said they want the bar (and first-level restaurant) to be neighborhood joints, not flashy party spots with lines out the door.

What will become of their finished product remains to be seen. However, if they follow through on their intentions, I would venture to say this is exactly what downtown Minneapolis needs. The bar scene is overrun by beer-guzzling party bars where any sense of sophistication is basically outlawed. The mixology trend — where bartenders treat cocktails like fine dining — continues to grow, but locally it's lacked destination bars, which is what Marvel is expected to be. A luxury casino in downtown sounds fine, but sipping a classic cocktail in a century-old basement sounds even better to me.

"The old brick and the beams and the floor — you can't re-create that for all the money in the world," Eric said.

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on the list

Hannibal is a monster

Chris Rock called him Mitch Hedberg in *Esquire* precisely "the illegitimate Mitch Hedberg." And it's Rock: A ton of comedianing **Hannibal Buress** is going to be the next big thing.

So catch him now for only \$15 when he starts a weeklong stand Tuesday at Acme. Buress' career is ramping up, as he moved from writing duties on "Saturday Night Live" last year to the merrier "30 Rock." Like the late New York-based comedian, Buress specializes in quick, everyday observations punctuated by hilarious sequiturs. The difference is Buress' knack for dissecting the absurdities of today's pop-culture phenomena like gangsta rap. In one bit, he questions why rap songs always end with "to be continued" but there's never a follow-up. "There's so much suspense, we know — are they going to give us champagne on these [words]?" **8 p.m. Tue.-Thu. and 8 and 10:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. Mpls. \$15. 612-338-6708 N. 1st St., Mpls. \$15. 612-338-6708. www.acmecomedycorpany.com.**

Dance movements

Two big dance nights move this week. **Bomp** Nick and Eddie and relocate **Nomad** on Friday. The music thing-goes party will take over two floors at the West Bank in Minneapolis, with DJs Wezz and Moon Goons, Shannon, and the Get Cryphy crew. **Fri. 501 Cedar Av. S., Mpls. \$5 with RSVP: moonbomp.com/**

Also this weekend, the **Crave** celebrates the opening of its rooftop with **Communitas** moves over from Solera. The lineup includes Ch DVS1, Jevne, Strangelove and more. **(2 p.m. 825 Henne St. Mpls. \$10 after 7 p.m. 612-338-6708. www.craveamerica.com.)**

A 'Security Ball'

In planning his second annual party dedicated to the big guys in the city, promoter Court made sure of one thing: **T-Ball** wouldn't be held on the same night as the Twins home game. Last year the party had a lower-than-expected turnout due to doormen being stuck at the game. The Twins are away during the party, which will feature **Bootleggers** in downtown Minneapolis. The bar will offer specials and Steele will honor the scene's most popular doo doo. **Kuha, who passed away last year, will be honored. \$10 for under 21. 612-338-6708. www.bootleggersmpls.net.**