

Glendale Gaslight Inn is of a couple's fire-scarred dream

by [Rebekah L. Sanders](#) - Sept. 28, 2011 07:59 AM
 The Arizona Republic

A devastating fire in California nearly ruined their dream. But a small "For Sale" sign at the Gaslight Inn in downtown Glendale reignited it.

Now, real-estate brokers Teresa Outzen and Pete Gliniak have fulfilled their aspiration of owning a bed-and-breakfast.

They plan to reopen the 1926-era hotel, at 5747 W. Glendale Ave., next month and launch a wine and beer bar next door. In another six to eight months, they hope to have a steakhouse and coffee shop running on the inn's first floor.

The couple say getting the Gaslight going again, after a 2 1/2-year vacancy, and adding new dining choices will give a shot of energy to the area.

"That's how little old downtowns rejuvenate themselves," the 55-year-old Gliniak said. He pointed to the example of Pasadena, Calif., which reinvented its downtown and now bustles with visitors. The city became a model for Glendale officials wanting to do the same thing.

Glendale leaders in partnership with downtown [businessowners](#) three years ago began a revitalization campaign for the Glendale Avenue corridor called the Centerline project, aiming to attract more shops, restaurants and living spaces to

ratchet up an urban vibe. The Gaslight Inn takes one empty building off the market.

"We're moving the needle on Centerline forward," Glendale economic-development director Brian Friedman said. "One success begets another."

Friedman noted three other large buildings that were priorities have been filled in the past year: The Beet Sugar Factory, which will become a distillery and tasting room; the former Maricopa County Superior Court satellite branch; and retail space at the bottom of the city-owned parking garage Promenade at Paltaire, both occupied by Southwest Ambulance.

The last large vacant building in downtown is the city-owned Bead Museum, Friedman said. Once that is filled, it should be easier to find tenants for smaller closed shops on the blocks off of Glendale Avenue, he said.

The Gaslight wouldn't have come back to life under Outzen and Gliniak if a similar project hadn't turned to ashes.

The couple were in the midst of renovating a 1911 Craftsman house in their hometown of C

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ovina, Calif., in 2009 when a fire broke out. It burned the planned bed-and-breakfast to the ground, taking with it thousands of dollars' worth of restoration work and city permits.

"Everything was lost," Gliniak said.

"It took us a solid year to get over that (emotionally)," Outzen, 45, said.

They weren't sure if they would ever try again.

But last winter, on a vacation to Arizona, they stopped to visit downtown Glendale. The city's annual holiday festival Glendale Glitters was in full swing, so they strolled down the quaint streets lined with historic red-brick buildings and were reminded of Covina.

Then, they spotted the "For Sale" sign in the window of the Gaslight Inn. It "rekindled the dream all over again," Gliniak said.

In the past few months at the inn, they've painted over pink shades in the 10 bedrooms, stained the wood floors dark, trucked in loads of beds, draperies and vintage armoires and made plans to install an elevator. For the wine bar, Gliniak found an 1890 carved mahogany bar with etched mirrors imported from England. Wine barrels will serve as planters outside.

The couple's plans are ambitious.

Outzen and Gliniak haven't run a bed-and-breakfast before. And they don't plan to **live** in Glendale full time, but instead will hire a staff of 10 or so to run the inn and wine bar.

The previous owners also were a California couple, successful financially, who dreamed

of operating a bed-and-breakfast and fell in love with the building on a visit to Arizona. They bought the inn near the height of the market in 2005, embarked on major renovations and ran a wine bar and coffee shop inside the inn, with frequent jazz nights.

In 2009, the owners lost the two-story building to foreclosure and later declared personal bankruptcy.

But Outzen and Gliniak say their endeavor will be different.

The previous owners paid \$1.15 million for the inn. Outzen, with partial investment from her father, paid less than half, at \$550,000.

"They were overleveraged, and it crushed them," Gliniak said. "All (our) work is being paid for. It's not financed. This is **playtime**."

Bed-and-breakfasts rarely run several eateries, but the arrangement could provide a valuable source of income to the operation, said Paul Hedger, a Tucson innkeeper and president of the Arizona Association of Bed and Breakfast Inns.

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"If they do it well, people that stay at the bed-and-breakfast will also enjoy going to the restaurant," Hedger said. "The two do mesh together."

He said inns are assets, especially to historic downtowns aiming for a revival, because of the clientele they draw.

Guests eat at local restaurants and buy **gifts for family** and friends at local stores, Hedger said.

"They're not just coming for a football game or going to a casino to blow their \$200 or \$300," he said. "They're plowing real money into the community."

Brett Hoffman, owner of the German restaurant and bar Haus Murphy's, said he welcomes the idea of a wine bar, steakhouse, coffee shop and revived Gaslight Inn on the same block.

"The more we can get, the better for everyone down here," he said.

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