

New Rochelle's new restaurant district reflects downtown growth

By Ryan Deffenbaugh

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Anthony Russo, owner of Modern Restaurant and Lounge. Photo by Ryan Deffenbaugh.

The growth of New Rochelle has been mirrored by one of its new downtown anchors: Modern Restaurant and Lounge. When it opened in 1987, it was called Modern Restaurant and Pizzeria and offered mostly pizza, with a few sandwiches and salad options, out of a small spot on Russell Avenue outside New Rochelle's downtown. As it shifted its menu toward more traditional Italian, owner Anthony Russo said it was starting to outgrow the space. So, in 2012, the restaurant moved downtown to a fully renovated 8,500-square-foot space on Huguenot Street. The space, a former car showroom, features high ceilings and seating for up to 300 across three separate rooms.

"It had everything we were looking for, just super-sized," Russo said.

Russo said the business has grown immensely since they made the jump four years ago.

"New Rochelle has always treated us well," Russo said. "It's nice we've been able to stay in the same area, but now reap the benefits of a downtown."