

# East Coast company heads west with DIA restaurant

New York-based OTG will bring a full-service bar and grill and Starbucks to Concourse B in 2024.



Image: OTG

Scheduled to open at Concourse B in 2024, the Sunset Loop Bar & Grill will be the first DIA restaurant open by OTG, a New York-based hospitality group. OTG opened a temporary market at the concourse last month.



By **Bob Mook** – Senior Reporter, Denver Business Journal

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OTG, a company that develops and operates more than 350 restaurants and retail markets in 22 terminals in 10 airports across the United States, is posting a stake in its westward expansion at Denver International Airport (DIA).

In 2024, the New York-based hospitality group will open two food and beverage concepts within DIA's expanding United Airlines Concourse B-East, joining a flurry of other restaurants slated to roll out in the airport this year and beyond.

With a locally sourced menu overseen by the Denver Nuggets' personal chef **Daniel Young** (known as "Chef D"), OTG plans to open the Sunset Loop Bar & Grill next year with an adjacent Starbucks. Company CEO **Rick Blatstein** said the "locally sourced" restaurant will offer health-conscious cuisine and traditional American fare that will reflect Colorado and the Rocky Mountains.

DIA will be OTG's 11th airport and the furthest one west. Founded by Blatstein in 1996 with a handful of locations at Philadelphia International Airport, the company proliferated on the East Coast over the past three decades. OTG was a pioneer in "flo tablet" technology at restaurants and gate lounges to give travelers the ability to order food and drink quickly and conveniently. In recent years, OTG has been

working to advance a more mobile-friendly and contact-free airport experience with mobile apps, which will factor into its DIA operations.

Blatstein said the company's move to DIA is part of its strategy to branch out.

"We are currently more concentrated in the east, but we're making a very conscious effort to move west right at this point," he told the Denver Business Journal. "Normally, when we go into an airport we would go in a little bigger way than we're starting in Denver, but we will be definitely bidding on many more locations in Denver and hope to grow Denver into a beautiful, wonderful piece of business for us. It's a great start."

Though the full Sunset Loop Bar & Grill won't open until the spring of 2024, OTG opened a temporary market in Concourse B that serves sandwiches, wraps and beverages about one month ago.



CEO founded the New York-based hospitality group in 1996.

"DIA asked us to open up as quick as we could in a temporary operation in order to get more service in the Concourse and we were very, very happy to oblige," Blatstein said.

In early 2022, DIA announced what was called its **largest concessions development** since the airport opened in 1995, bringing several new airport concessions options to the travel hub. DIA CEO **Phil Washington** said the expansion will develop 60,000 square feet of new space for the airport's concessions, including local options like Rosenberg's Bagels & Delicatessen, Maria Empanada and Tocabe.

**Ashley Forest**, a spokeswoman for DIA, said many of the projects — including Rosenberg's in Concourse B's mezzanine, Plaza Premium Lounge and Dazbog Coffee in Concourse A will open later in 2023. Forest said some options outlined in the plan will be delayed until early 2024 due to construction and permitting issues.

Blatstein said once the full-scale Sunset Loop Bar & Grill opens in 2024, it will have a local feel that would evoke the spirit of Denver, with menu items named after the city's former mayors (such as the Wellington Webb Steak). Renderings of the restaurant include hand-painted tile and natural light streaming through the lounge area.

"We operate restaurants that happen to be in airports," he said. "We don't operate airport restaurants."

Blatstein said Chef D is still in the process of tweaking Sunset's menu but he has a few personal favorites in mind.

"Let me tell you. If we don't have great lamb chops, shame on me," he said.