



Man with a plan:
Highland Park Village
owner, general partner
and president Ray
Washburne

The second coming of Highland Park Village

BY CHRISTOPHER WYNN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN CLEMONS

WHAT DO TRE WILCOX, STELLA McCARTNEY AND THE LATEST HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER HAVE IN COMMON? THEY'RE ALL PART OF RAY WASHBURNE'S VISION FOR SHOPPING CENTER AS URBAN TOWN SQUARE.

AS DALLAS' MOST CHI-CHI ENCLAVE TURNS 80, ITS OWNER IS DIRECTING A VERY STRATEGIC NIP-TUCK.

Ray Washburne stands atop the movie marquee at Highland Park Village. It's a sunny weekday; the breeze keeps mussing his hair. Shoppers race by below with bags from Hermès, Scoop and Jimmy Choo, too busy to look up.

Washburne is used to a commanding view. He points out where the new live oaks were planted to help shade the parking lot, and where the bell tower will rise. "You've got to create a sense of arrival," he says, more edict than comment.



Hermès



Rugby's
Jasmond
Harrison

“You’ll see someone in a track suit running into Tom Thumb, while somebody else in a coat and tie is coming out of Café Pacific. The Village is a story. Everybody’s got their own story of why they’re coming here.”

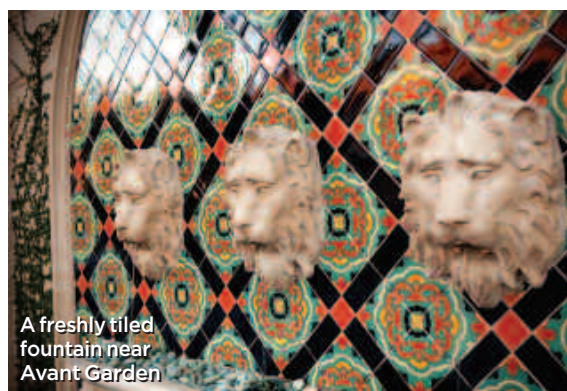
RAY WASHBURNE



Scoop



Chanel



A freshly tiled fountain near Avant Garden



Patrizio



Hot spot Starbucks

The center's owner, still boyishly handsome at 50, has just led us upstairs through the construction mess of what this month becomes the Marquee Grill & Bar — the game-changing restaurant headed by former *Top Chef* star Tre Wilcox that adjoins the new Village Theatre movie house. The business mogul doesn't appear to notice that his suit is dusty from stepping over a heap of power cords; we're pretty sure he wouldn't care.

The man is fanatical about Highland Park Village. Washburne's family bought the landmark property two years ago for a gasp-worthy \$170 million. *The Wall Street Journal* declared it the largest sum paid that year for U.S. retail property, and the \$680 per-square-foot price is thought to be the highest ever paid for a piece of Dallas shopping. But Washburne, a former Eagle Scout who co-founded the MCrowd Restaurant Group (as in Mi Cocina, Taco Diner), isn't focused on numbers.

He has a vision.

"I want this to feel like a town square," he says. "Not just for Highland Park, but for all of inner Dallas and our customers coming from neighborhoods such as Lakewood, Preston Hollow and Kessler Park."

Washburne also wants the historic Spanish Mediterranean center to become even more visually dazzling. To that end, he's assembled a local team, including architect Dale E. Selzer, design firms Omniplan and Zero3, and the Lighting Practice, which did a 2009 high-tech (and energy-efficient) update to the U.S. Capitol dome. Improvements range from minuscule (new flowerpots, repainting the parking stripes) to maximal: Construction began last month on a two-story clock tower in the center fountain courtyard. The tower will house an elevator to whoosh shoppers to an extended balcony, enabling



Construction has begun on a new elevator clock-tower near the Village fountain.



"We want to continue the evolution of Highland Park Village while respecting its history. What works here are best-in-class retailers that offer something unique. If you can buy it at 23 other points of sale in Dallas, it's probably not for us."

STEPHEN SUMMERS, PARTNER, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF LEASING

NAME DROPPING

Coming soon

Stella! Yes, the biggest name shifting from whispered rumor to actual concrete is **Stella McCartney**, scheduled to occupy the former Noble Boutique. (William Noble Rare Jewels is staying put. The bauble guru is simply consolidating collections into a single showroom.) Stella's Dallas digs will be the designer's fourth shop in the country, following New York, LA and Las Vegas.

More names on the roster include women's designer **Trina Turk**, next door to Vince, and a pop-up from Italian fashion house **Emilio Pucci**, going into the former E. 61st store. Dallas favorite **Billy Reid** will relocate from NorthPark Center into the former Menchie's Frozen Yogurt space in May.

As for rumor control, we can confirm that a major Italian luxury name is planning a two-story emporium for men's, women's and children's fashion, home furnishings and glassware near the fountain plaza. Two other extremely high-profile designer names are in conversations to open here as well. Our lips are sealed (for now).



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INSIDER TRADING: HPV INSTITUTIONS

Village Barber Shop

Tucked upstairs by Patrizio, this time-warped favorite is the best spot to swap stories and bump into Dallas power players such as Charles Wily, SMU business school founder Ed Cox and Super Bowl Host Committee president Bill Lively. Owner Dale Sinclair has been snipping locks for the past 30 years. "I started right here, and I haven't even moved spots," he says. When asked what he did prior to barbering, Sinclair answers: "High school."



Mi Cocina valet David "Elvis" Ward

You've seen him outside Mi Cocina, sporting pork-chop sideburns and a valet-stand boom-box tuned to country hits. Ward is a 19-year veteran of Jack Boles Parking who routinely gets hugs from his regulars. (Some keep driving if he's not on duty.) He's parked the likes of Jerry Jones, Troy Aikman, Larry Hagman, George Michael and U2's Bono. "I talk to everybody," Ward says. "I treat them like family, not customers." He's happiest parking classic cars such as a recent 1936 Duesenberg and a black 1957 T-Bird with "a whole lotta chrome."



Christian Louboutin pumps to someone's beloved house shoes in for a tune-up. Guess that explains the shop's tagline: "We have seen and fixed just about every problem you can encounter."

Chanel

Socialite Heidi Dillon once called Highland Park Village the crossroads of "Preston Road and Chanel!" The fabled Parisian luxury boutique is a big deal here and will celebrate 25 years at



Clockwise from left: Valet David Ward mans the stand outside Mi Cocina; the Chanel store; a repair-in-progress at Deno's of Highland Park; Village Barber Shop owner Dale Sinclair (left) gives a cut

Deno's of Highland Park

Deno's is so delightfully old school, you can still get a busy signal when you call. The unassuming bag and shoe repair shop has been a Village staple (and socialite's best friend) since the '60s. You can buy ready-made wallets, sterling belt buckles and alligator belts, or repurpose one of your old bags into just about anything. In the repair shop, you'll spy everything from \$900

HPV in September. The Dallas store was the fourth built in the U.S., preceded by New York, Beverly Hills and Palm Beach. Store manager Pilar Hubbard says the Chanel name evokes

"a life you are either enjoying or aspire to enjoy." For achievement-obsessed Dallas, having Chanel in Highland Park meant reaching "the highest rung on a very glitzy ladder"

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them to stroll from Hadleigh's to Alberto Lombardi's new restaurant, coming this summer.

"On every corner, there will be something architectural that grabs your attention and makes you say, 'Wow, look at that,'" Washburne says.

The pricy landscaping, sexy new restaurants and bevy of high-profile store openings (Stella McCartney has signed a lease) will elevate Dallas' most sacred shopping ground to full-blown divinity status. Cue the tambourine-smacking gospel choir.

Washburne surveys the scene from our marquee perch, likening the activity below to a play: "You'll see someone in a track suit running into Tom Thumb, while somebody else in a coat and tie is coming out of Café Pacific. The Village is a story. Everybody's got their own story of why they're coming here."

He remembers well when his own storyline first crossed the Village in the 1960s. His parents had taken 8-year-old Ray to the opening of Park Cities Bank and Trust Co. (He still has the promotional ruler.) The block had previously been the site of two gas stations. Now it's home to a different sort of fueling station — a never-empty Starbucks, serving caffeine to some 1,500 customers a day. (It also serves as unofficial office and popular pit stop.)

Before he was out of high school, Washburne had earned a real estate license, and was juggling rental properties and other entrepreneurial ventures while studying history at Southern Methodist University. At age 26, he was the youngest person to serve on the Dallas City Plan Commission.

Washburne scored big with his Charter Holdings real estate and MCrowd ventures, and dabbled in everything from *The Met* tabloid to Phil's Natural Foods Grocery on the side.

Nobody who knows Washburne is surprised he managed to pull together the financing to buy Highland Park Village from Henry S. Miller Interests in 2009. His family, including co-owner, brother-in-law and Village leasing agent Stephen Summers (sporting blue suede Billy Reid loafers and no socks the day we met), is only the fourth owner in the center's history.

Put that in perspective: The Village turned 80 this year.

We head downstairs and onto the busy sidewalk. A passing shopper greets Washburne by name. He's become something akin to the pope of Highland Park Village.

"People stop me all the time to say, 'We love the Village,' or, 'Please don't lose Deno's!' They are passionate about this place, and so am I," Washburne affirms.

"This isn't a snooty high-end shopping center, it's a community." ■



Clockwise from above: Village Theatre and Marquee Grill & Bar mastermind Brian Twomey; the theater's staircase mural re-creates the 1930s original; a private screening suite, cake balls and gourmet concession bites; the theater bar



DINNER AND A MOVIE

The lights are finally flashing at the **Village Theatre** after a multimillion-dollar renovation of the historic movie house. Plenty of vintage charm remains. (Check out the art deco mural on your way up the escalator; it re-creates the '30s original.) You'll also find modern upgrades such as leather stadium seating and sound that will ruffle your bangs. The theater is significantly more luxe than past incarnations: Turkish marble floors, a sleek bar, tricked-out private viewing suites. Although you can still get Milk Duds and popcorn, we'll opt for fresh-baked cake balls and a glass of Veuve, thanks.

The theater and attached restaurant is the handiwork of **Brian Twomey**, go-getter behind projects such as Fairmount Street's Common Table restaurant. "This has been about a year-and-a-half in the works, and I'm still so busy I've yet to sit through an entire movie we're showing," Twomey admits. Now comes **Marquee Grill & Bar**, his global-fusion restaurant headed by a dinner-and-drinks dream team: former *Top Chef* **Tre Wilcox**, acclaimed cocktail guru **Jason Kosmas** (most recently of *Bolsa*), former Abacus GM **Jeff Yergler** as restaurant manager, and Fearing's alum **Justin Beam** in the GM post.

The ground-floor dining room and a killer patio are adjacent to the theater box office. Stairs inside lead to the lounge and an all-fresco bar-patio directly atop the marquee —



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Across the street, **Alberto Lombardi** (Toulouse, Taverna, La Fiorentina) plans a summer opening for his two-story Mediterranean eatery in the original Robert Talbott's space. The downstairs vibe will be "ladies who lunch" — light fish entrées, salads and the like — with a cocktail lounge above. Lombardi also plans an upscale kiosk serving cappuccinos, gelato and paninis near the new clock tower.



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