

# Darryl Settles - The Hospitality of Jazz



*Darryl Settles*



You see the handiwork of Darryl Settles everywhere you go in Boston's South End.

The entrepreneur, born and raised in South Carolina, first came to the neighborhood in 1990, when he bought Bob the Chef's Restaurant, an iconic local eatery that served authentic southern cooking, or soul food as original owner/chef Bob Morgan called it.

Settles renamed it Bob's Southern Bistro, and continued the tradition of southern cooking while adding live jazz. He also showed a commitment to the well-being of the neighborhood. As the South End got transformed by new housing and business, Bob's remained a neighborhood fixture that welcomed old-timers and newcomers to the area.

Then in 2001 Settles started the BeanTown Jazz Festival, a street party for jazz and food lovers held on Columbus Ave. Residents, students, and visitors swayed by the music made it an instant success. In 2008, long-time festival supporter Berklee College of Music stepped up with the resources to make the festival a permanent fixture in the life of the city.

"I greatly admire the vision of festival founder Darryl Settles," wrote Berklee provost Dr. Lawrence J. Simpson in the 2008 festival program. "We would not be here if not for his great love of music and his dedication."

Next on Settles' dance card: the Beehive, which opened at Boston Center for the Arts in 2007. As founder and one-time co-owner (he's no longer involved in the club), Settles gave the Beehive its Bohemian charm alongside nightly jazz. It was hailed as one of

the "Top 100 Jazz Clubs in the World" by Downbeat Magazine, and won 'Best of' awards from The Boston Globe and Boston Phoenix.

Settles' latest masterpiece is Darryl's Corner Bar & Kitchen, a hip new restaurant that opened in 2010. Built on the site of Bob Southern Bistro, it has all the hallmarks of a Darryl Settles joint: elegant cuisine with a southern flair; live jazz in the evening; and a special ambiance that makes everyone – tourists and residents alike – feel at home.

It's no wonder that Settles draws praise not just from jazz fans but from cultural and hospitality leaders too.

"Darryl is an important part of the jazz scene in Boston," says Lisa Simmons, Director of the Roxbury International Film Festival. "He supports the work of local and national jazz artists by providing venues for the musicians to play and be seen. And that for an artist is a great opportunity."

"Darryl sees the hospitality and tourism industry from a very broad perspective, and knows that it not only feeds our guests but our city and state's economic engines as well," says Jim Rooney, executive director of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, where Settles serves on the board of directors.

"Darryl's commitment to revitalizing the South End is his way of showing the city and all our guests that all of Boston's neighborhoods are as important and interesting as Faneuil Hall and the Freedom Trail," Rooney says.

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- by Michael P. Quinlin