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Restaurants blossoming in Old Fourth Ward

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Douglas Sams](#) Staff writer

Amid the recession, several city boosters and local entrepreneurs quietly planted the seeds for a thriving restaurant district to blossom along Edgewood Avenue in the Old Fourth Ward.

Now, it's starting to pay off.

As the city begins to show some early signs of breaking free of the downturn, the restaurant district along Edgewood is coming to life, with Soundtable, a new restaurant and bar involving the owners of Top Flr, becoming the latest addition.

Set to open this month, it joins other restaurants launched along Edgewood Avenue in the past year, including Sauced (opened by owner of Ria's Bluebird), Pizzeria Vesuvius, and cult burger joint Grindhouse Killer Burgers. The area still has its fixtures, including Thumbs Up Diner, which has been drawing locals, suburbanites and tourists since the 1990s.

"This district really attracts just about everyone," said Dillon Baynes, a principal with **Orinda Corp.**, one of the investors behind StudioPlex, a mixed-use loft and retail project within the Old Fourth Ward. "You'll see Gwinnett tags in the parking lots, the couples from the suburbs on a Friday night that feel like they want to go somewhere with a little edge."

The Old Fourth Ward does have an edge.

It's still marked with vacant lots and rusty buildings, the ruins of an industrial and commercial area that once prospered during the city's segregated past.

In more recent years, the area, along with nearby Inman Park, has boasted a few of the city's best restaurants, including acclaimed steak house Rathbun's and the Inman Park bistro Shaun's. Old Fourth Ward boosters see Edgewood and surrounding commercial districts potentially becoming something akin to U Street in Washington, a concentration of businesses and entertainment that was the cultural heart of the African-American community.

“We have had a tremendous amount of investment to continue to occur despite the downturn in the economy,” said Atlanta City Councilman Kwanza Hall, who has been marketing the area to entrepreneurs for years.

Abundance of offerings

Old Fourth Ward/Inman Park area restaurants include: Shaun’s Restaurant, Sauced, Thumbs Up Diner, Corner Tavern, Café Circa, Rolling Bones BBQ, Dynamic Dish, Grindhouse Killer Burgers, Pizzeria Vesuvius, Soundtable, Café 458, Danneman’s Coffee, Miso Izakaya, Rathbun’s, Kevin Rathbun Steak, Krog Bar and Serpas.