

Next Up Taking the spotlight at the Levitt—a newly designed venue



URBAN RETREAT

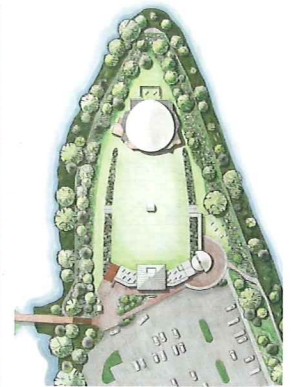
To kick off Fashion Week, the **Surrey Hotel** in NYC is offering our readers an exclusive deal—stay and indulge in the newly opened Cornelia Spa at 76th and Madison. The sophisticated spa promises a transcendent experience; we love thinking about what that means and hope you'll tell us afterward! Here's what we're told: You'll stay in a Deluxe Salon with upgrade to Grand Deluxe, based on availability; two Signature treatments; spa treatment for two; two cocktails on the Private Roof Garden; the Spa Bath Kit as a departure gift from Cornelia Spa; and two VIP passes to Flywheel spinning class. \$895 per night. When booking, mention you are staying as part of the Urban Retreat package. And, remember, email me a postcard! —D.T.S.

FOOD STOP: WILTON

A family-owned Mexican restaurant is pulling into the Wilton train station. The location is as convenient as the take-home offerings: rotisserie



chicken, burritos, enchiladas, quesadillas, among others. The owners swear that the meat will be slow cooked and pulled, never diced. Don't miss the homemade, chunk-free "Vintage Salsa," made with all-natural, preservative-free ingredients. It comes in many varieties, including a gluten-free option, and is also available at local food shops. 7 Station Rd., Wilton, 203-957-3200; vintage-salsa.com —Kate McNee



Plans for the new Levitt Pavilion; scheduled for the next summer season

As the curtain closes on another season of entertainment under the stars at the Levitt Pavilion, the nonprofit faces the challenge of promoting its biggest star: itself. The amphitheater has impressive plans for a new stage and venue to showcase its fifty nights of free entertainment each summer.

The reconstruction will open up the river views and feature a number of new amenities, such as a ticket area, concession stand, and bathrooms. The stage, the focal point of the entertainment, will be larger and luminously roofed. And when you lay out your picnic blanket, it will be on a sloped ground, all the better to see the action on stage.

The renovation is the Levitt's campaign to improve the site's facilities, which, in turn, will also buoy Westport's downtown. Architect Peter Cadoux hopes that by creating a state-of-the-art sound arena, the site will attract high-caliber entertainment and become a vibrant town destination. The construction is LEED-certified, meaning it will be completely eco-friendly.

He also hopes that by thinning the trees, installing picnic tables, and furnishing a river walk, the Levitt peninsula will provide better access to the Saugatuck River: Enjoy a lunch by the river at noon; come back at sunset for a show.

"Each and every component is fantastic, so I'm biased," says Freda Welsh, executive

director of the pavilion. "What will have the most impact is the signature roof that Peter has designed. It will serve as a beacon, encouraging people to come and enjoy each performance."

Levitt board member and spokesman for the campaign Kenneth Bernhard points to the project's potential capacity to spur economic activity. He cites statistics that nonresident Levitt visitors spend an average \$39 downtown per visit, while residents spend on average \$17 downtown per visit. Bottom line: more people, more local business. "It's an investment with ensured payback," Cadoux says.

Despite the heftiness of the project, the Levitt firmly contends to stand by its original promise to bring free entertainment. The town has donated a \$1.1 million provision, but remains true to its founding principles: free entertainment and to remain an independent nonprofit. The \$6.7 million renovation depends on private donations.

The project is scheduled to be completed in time for the opening of the 2013 season. More at levittpavilion.com. —Kate McNee