



## Press – Hotel Business – The New Look – Spring 2004

### Niles Restaurant

**Concept:** Think trendy, sophisticated and high-profile and thoughts turn to the new Niles Restaurant, located on the ground level of The Southgate Tower Hotel, an Affinia Hospitality property, on Seventh Avenue in New York City. Strategically positioned diagonally across the street from Madison Square Garden, the task facing owner Connie O'Reilly was to transform an older food and beverage location into an exciting and innovative dining and social setting. The restaurant, as well as the adjacent three-star, 528-suite property needed to be more than able to hold its own in terms of attracting celebrities, corporate executives, native New Yorkers and first-time visitors to The Big Apple.

- *Michael Billig*

**Execution:** Under the direction of Warwick, RI-based design company DiLeonardo International, the restaurant underwent a four-month, \$2 million transformation in mid-2003, resulting in the total closing of the facility for just a brief five-week period. Re-opened in September of last year, the new Niles Restaurant is veritable medley of brightly lit glass and metal, making for a lively setting to its 5,000 square feet of floor space accented by nearly three-dozen comfortably positioned tables. Moreover, clean iridescent finishes accentuate the oversized bar, anchored by a lit glass decorative column greeting visitors upon their entrance. The bold use of metal – and other reflective surfaces- exponentially adds to the visual perimeter of space surrounding the bar area. Additionally, the accompanying light display serves to continually change the facility's ambiance and environment.

**Result:** The restaurant is a perfect backdrop for young shakers-and-movers to enjoy a meal or a snack anytime of the day, against a background of playful artwork as reflected by comical renditions of city events. The Niles has similarly evolved into a noteworthy social and cocktail setting, ratcheting up a few notches among many of Manhattan's "glitterati." A palette of primary colors set against a white backdrop allows this prime midtown location to function equally well either as a place to get an early-morning start or to cap off a late evening. But the real proof to owner O'Reilly of how well the new Niles Restaurant works is that the facility has posted a "significant increase in business" since its re-birth.

