



# Preferred Caterer Series

It's January 20th, 1966 and on King Street is the opening night of a different kind of show for theatre impresario and entrepreneur Ed Mirvish, who only three years prior had saved from demolition and lavishly restored the "the most beautiful theatre on the continent" — the Royal Alexandra Theatre, which had been built in 1907 and had since been the crowning jewel of Toronto theatres.

This opening night is of a new restaurant located next to the Royal Alex that would cater to theatregoers. Seating 192 guests and furnished with dazzling items that Ed had collected over the years from antique stores and private auctions, this unique restaurant is called Ed's Warehouse.

Like the Royal Alex, Ed's Warehouse gave renewed life to the King Street neighbourhood, which was originally a park before becoming a light industrial area in the 1920s, only to be abandoned after WWII as Toronto grew and industry migrated to the suburbs. King Street lay empty for decades with the Royal Alex as its only attraction.

Now with the Royal Alex offering a year-round playbill of dramas, comedies and musicals, and Ed's Warehouse in full swing the neighbourhood was beginning to come alive again.

The restaurant was so successful that Ed soon opened others in the warehouse building next to the theatre. There was Ed's Folly, Ed's Italian, Old Ed's, Ed's Seafood and Most Honourable Ed's (Chinese cuisine). In total, Ed's restaurants could hold 2,600 diners at any one time. It was a dining empire that catered not just theatregoers but to anyone looking for a special night out on the town.

Through this revitalization of King Street, many other restaurants and businesses began to open and reap the successes of the vibrant neighbourhood that Ed had created. In 1976, the CN Tower was erected only a few blocks south King Street. Soon, a sparkling new symphony hall, Roy Thomson Hall, opened across the street from the Royal Alex. Then the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation headquarters was built. The SkyDome, a major 50,000-seat sports and entertainment arena was the final element that made this the city's most visited neighbourhood.

By the 1990s, the area was renamed the Entertainment District — and that's what it is now known as.

Eventually though, one by one, Ed's restaurants closed. They had more than accomplished what they set out to do: make the area a destination for dining and entertainment. The last restaurant, Old Ed's, closed down in 2000.

Today, almost 60 years since the Mirvish family reopened the Royal Alex and opened their many restaurants, Mirvish Productions offers a new kind of dining experience for theatregoers by bringing together some of the best caterers in the city to host your special evenings at the theatre.

We present to you the Mirvish Preferred Caterers. Take a look at our list of carefully selected caterers. Each has a specialty and each can create something unique to your group's tastes, making your night out an easy and seamless combination of culinary delights and theatrical entertainment, all under one roof.

*"If you like home cooking, eat at home!"*

– Ed Mirvish

