



Firefighters attacked blaze from every angle.

Kevin Hooks

NEWS

Fire Destroys Ocean View, Historic Oak Bluffs Bar and Eatery

Aidan Pollard Thursday, March 3, 2022 - 10:41am UPDATED Thursday, March 3, 2022 - 5:30pm

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The Ocean View restaurant, a long-established Oak Bluffs eatery and bar, was destroyed in a fire Thursday morning that drew a comprehensive response from Island fire departments.

Speaking to the Gazette by phone late Thursday, Oak Bluffs fire chief Nelson Wirtz said the state fire marshal was on the scene, and that an investigation was under way.

"It looks like it'll be a total loss," said the chief, who was off-Island attending a conference but had monitored the work of firefighters from afar.

The two-alarm call went out just after 10 a.m. Thursday for the fire at 16 Chapman avenue. Heavy smoke filled the air and was visible across the harbor. Flames could be seen shooting from the roof of the restaurant. A third alarm went out just after 10:30 a.m. calling for all fire department heads and requesting an ambulance on the scene.

Chief Wirtz said crews arrived to a building engulfed in flames.

"When they got there, they had a nearly fully involved fire," the chief said.

Firefighters from every Island town converged at the scene to knock down the blaze with a full array of apparatus. The Oak Bluffs ladder truck was at the forefront of the response effort, while trucks from other towns and fully clad firefighters crowded the pavement around the restaurant, their hoses snaking in every direction around the burning building.

Chief Wirtz said firefighters used two pipes flowing 1,500 gallons of water per minute as well as hoses to contain the fire. He was unsure the total amount of water used.

"I would say a lot," he said.

No one was believed to be in the building at the time, and there were no reports of injuries.

Roads surrounding the restaurant and nearby park remained were closed off during the response.

At dusk Thursday, crews were still at the scene. "They're still really busy down there," Chief Wirtz said.

The restaurant has been closed for maintenance work and was due to open next week, according to owner Mike Santoro, who spoke to the Gazette by phone from Florida Thursday.

"It's just a shock right now," Mr. Santoro said. "It's crazy." He said he did not think there was anyone in the building at the time.

Mr. Santoro also said he had already received a flood of calls and messages from people offering their condolences.

"It makes it a little easier when the community reaches out," he said.

He said the top priority at the moment is his employees.

"My thoughts are with my employees right now," Mr. Santoro said.

Mr. Santoro bought the business from the Jackson family, former longtime owners, in 2015. The building is owned by Charles C. Hajjar, an Island real estate developer and businessman who owns several hotels and other properties.

Mr. Santoro, who leases the building from Mr. Hajjar, said he had contacted him to inform him about the fire.

The restaurant sits on the site of the old Ocean View Hotel, which was destroyed by fire on a bitterly cold night in January 1965. That fire too saw an all-out response from Island firefighters, who battled the blaze for hours.

Only one wall was left standing.

More pictures.



Firefighters from every Island town converged on the scene. — Kevin Hooks

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Comments (15)

Tony, Plymouth
Our favorite! Please make sure to post any donation sites for us. The Derby is great but not without our beloved Ocean View.
March 3, 2022 - 4:53pm
REPLY

Sean S., Oak Bluffs
Agreed Tony. If anyone knows of a donation site launching, please share link.
March 3, 2022 - 8:38pm
REPLY

Derek B
An annual favorite for my kids and I. HEARTBREAKING!! All the BEST for a speedy and safe turnaround
March 3, 2022 - 6:58pm
REPLY

Julie, Greenwich CT / Katama
Very sorry for the loss of your restaurant, great staff, good laughs with the locals and Great burgers!
March 3, 2022 - 8:40pm
REPLY

Barbara Peckham, Omaha, NE
Lived on the Vineyard for 20 years. This was always our favorite go-to restaurant. I am devastated. Sure hope the insurance allows it to be rebuilt!
March 4, 2022 - 12:43am
REPLY

Jim, Edgartown
Thankfully no one was hurt or killed... you can always rebuild... Thank you all first responders for all you do...
March 4, 2022 - 6:06am
REPLY

Islander Too
Very sorry to hear this. I hope that the owners are fully insured, and that the Ocean View (one that looks like the old one!) returns.
March 4, 2022 - 8:06am
REPLY

The Bergquist Family of Connecticut, West Hartford, Ohio, Atlanta and Vineyard Haven
We have loved the Ocean View Restaurant every year for forty years and are heart broken at the loss or this famous restaurant. Please re-build it as soon as you can but just the same as it always has been and we will be there from April to November for the next forty years! We will be checking to watch you with love and luck for your progress.
March 4, 2022 - 11:00am
REPLY

Mark, Hampstead NH
A true icon of oak bluffs and the island as a whole and a great place for family and friends to gather year round. I hope they can rebuild.
March 4, 2022 - 11:48am
REPLY

David Wilson, OB
On another note, I see you are from Hempstead. My great grandparents moved to the Vineyard from there around 1900. Been here ever since! The old family home still stands on Main Street where my great great grandfather, George W. Baker, had a general store. Cheers.
March 4, 2022 - 3:03pm
REPLY

Bob Klein, Oak Bluffs/NYC
Everyone above has nailed it. I do hope we can all pitch in and help to pay any portion of the rebuild that is not covered by insurance. My memories of the Ocean View go back to the late 1950s when I worked for Northeast Airlines and the owners (Grace + ?) (who was her spouse? Gene?) welcomed us after work and we spent many an evening relaxing after a busy day. Bill Shannon, Donny Smith, and others. The Ocean View was part of the social fabric of my younger Vineyard years, and I hope with everyone's help we can get it back.
March 4, 2022 - 1:02pm
REPLY

Mark Porta, West Falmouth, MA
Great memory Bob Klein! My grandparents Gene and Grace Porta owned the hotel when it burned down in January 1965. I was 8 months old, so I never got to enjoy being there when it was a hotel. Below is a link to the original Gazette article from 1965. <https://vineyardgazette.com/news/1965/01/15/ocean-view-hotel-destroyed-fire-night>
March 4, 2022 - 2:44pm
REPLY

Jim Reidy, 14 Chapman Ave
Hello Mark My wife and I own the house next door now. Just wondering if you had stayed here or the house between ours and the hotel. We have an old picture of a horse and buggy's in front of the hotel
March 6, 2022 - 10:45am

Andrew T., Boston
A place that made good memories. I have a few myself and hope it can be resurrected.
March 5, 2022 - 3:52pm
REPLY

Jim and Deborah Reidy, 14 Chapman Ave
We are very sad to lose our second kitchen and so many good friends for now. We hope we can rebuild for Mike and his team. Thanks to the great job done by the fire fighters and associates and for saving our home of the past 25 years. We are in Costa Rica but heard of the fire as the first fire crews arrived. I hope to buy every fire personal a beer at the new Ocean View very soon. Thanks
March 6, 2022 - 9:40am
REPLY

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