

**The first cut:**  
Olympic panel to  
take at least one city  
from contention. **B2**

# Local News Philadelphia & the Region

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## For Victor, the essentials: Sports bar and food shop

With leases signed,  
the Camden lofts plan to  
give residents a hangout  
and a convenience store.

By Troy Graham  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Three years after the Victor Lofts opened in downtown Camden with much fanfare and promise, the building will finally get two things residents have been clamoring for — a place to shop and a place to hang out.

A sports bar, the Victor's Pub, and a convenience store, Miss G's at the Victor, have signed leases and plan to open on the first floor this fall.

The Victor, which turned the abandoned RCA Nipper building into 341 luxury apartments, has been one of the few bright spots in the perpetual reinvention of Camden.

Even with the lofts near capacity, the retail space has remained largely empty. Exceptions include a Subway and a New England Soup Factory.

National retailers were reluctant to be the first to take a chance on a city that for decades has fought crime, poverty and a bad reputation, said Carl Dranoff, the building's developer.

"The demand is there," he said. "It's just a matter of the first person going in ... and proving all the naysayers wrong."

Dranoff called the sports bar, in particular, "the missing ingredient."

"On the Camden waterfront we have everything, but we didn't have the retail and the nightlife," he said. "It's long overdue."

The sports bar will cover 6,000 square feet, with more than 80 bar stools facing a wall of mirrors that reflect the Philadelphia skyline.

Sam Sarin, who co-owns Sam's Bar & Grille in Blackwood with longtime friend Michael Romano, said Dranoff had "bent over backwards" to entice them to Camden.



CLEM MURRAY / Inquirer Staff Photographer  
**The Victor Lofts in Camden opened** as luxury apartments three years ago, but retailers shied from setting up in the building. The bar and the convenience store are to open on the first floor in the fall.

"He had been shopping this around, and all the big boys passed on it. It's not like I needed this," Sarin said. "We feel good, but you never know. It's a chance."

Joe Papa, who will manage the convenience store, lives in the Victor and said he knew how important Miss G's would be to a neighborhood.

"I know what it's like to need something and have to get in the car — or not get it at all," said Papa, who drives to Cherry Hill for groceries. "Believe me, the majority of people in this building are not shopping in

Camden."  
He said he would not have opened the store three years ago, when he moved into the Victor. But with Dranoff planning more lofts and waterfront homes and some businesses eyeing Camden, the timing was right, Papa said.

"I did enough research ... and it works, by the numbers," he said. "You've got to be patient with Camden, but at least you can see things happening."

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## Inside

**Safe Haven law:** The state's program for unwanted babies needs to be better publicized, some say. **B3.**

**Going private:** Public art projects are finding new homes — in area homes. **B5.**

**Loft living:** Camden's luxury apartments add a pub and a store. **B8.**

## A City's Deadly Toll

Homicides in Philadelphia through 11:59 p.m. Sunday:

# 221

Total through the same period last year: **205**

**Body found:** A man who had been fatally shot is found in Tacony. **B3.**