

The Spot UVA

1407 University Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22903

<https://www.thespotuva.com>

434-295-9899

Hours: Mon - Sat 8am - 2:30am

Closed Sunday

As an undergraduate, Bert Ellis (Col '75, Darden '79) enjoyed the stroll from his room on The Lawn to 1407 University Avenue, where he tied on his apron and took his turn at the grill preparing Gus Burgers to feed a hungry university.

The White Spot opened in 1953 and has served quick, delicious meals in a bustling diner atmosphere to a growing fan base ever since. Many alumni fondly remember late-night visits to The Spot during their undergraduate years. Likewise, townies have long enjoyed the collegial atmosphere and delicious fare, including the world-famous Gus Burger.

In January 2021, Bert acted on an idea that's been with him for nearly 50 years when he organized a cadre of Cavaliers to acquire The Spot for the fun of the business and the challenge of making a good thing even better. Celebrated alumni like Ralph Sampson and Ryan Zimmerman have joined the cause, and early progress such as fresh paint, new floors, a new website, the introduction of The Gus Bus, and The Legacy Room, for private parties, are a few indications that serial entrepreneur Bert Ellis is on the job on The Corner.

See Bert Ellis interview on next page.



Above: The Gus Bus was introduced to Charlottesville in Fall 2021.

Bert Ellis addresses the crowd at The Gus Bus Launch Party.

Interview with Bert Ellis

Here's a brief interview with The Head Gus himself, Bert Ellis:

What was it like to work at The Spot as an undergraduate?

Back in the '70s when I was a student, the team that ran The White Spot was Henry and Robert. Henry ran the flat top and Robert served drinks, bean soup, and fries. When Robert could not make it in to work, Henry would call me (on very short notice) while I was living on the Lawn and tell me to get down to The Spot and fill in for Robert. When I did so, I served drinks, fries, and bean soup. Then as now, we had a fiercely loyal following from students, alum, and townsfolk. The work was fun and we were open very late. Early classes were a challenge after a shift at The Spot.

How did your UVA experience prepare you for leadership of The Spot?

UVA taught me the value of loyalty and tradition, which are hallmarks of The Spot. Moreover, UVA taught me the value of a community of honor. If a student came in for food and did not bring enough cash (very few had credit cards back then), we simply asked them to come back another night and make it good. It was never a problem for The Spot..not then, not now.

How did your subsequent business career prepare you for this?

The Spot may appear to be a simple business - a small diner - but it faces all the same problems that my other companies must manage through: inventory management, forecasting, staffing. The Spot may be one of the best real-world uses of Queuing theory and some of the other operations concepts I learned from John



Bert Ellis is here pictured beside the 2021 Gus Burger Champion, Jack Murphy UVA '24, who consumed 6 Gus Burgers in 5 minutes in Mad Bowl.

Colley at Darden. He would actually be proud of me in this regard. And this is a hands-on business. One cannot run The Spot if you cannot cook a Gus, make a sub, or make great fries.

How would you describe The Spot's brand magic?

The Spot's brand magic is a combination of The Gus Burger, tradition, location, honor, and loyalty. All are key to what we have and what I shall strive to maintain. And now we have added the Gus Bus which has become a huge hit in just one football season.

What ambitions do you have for the enterprise?

My goals for The Spot: To maintain all of the above and be right here on The Corner for another 75 years and many more generations of Wahoos.