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September 30, 2010



Adam Oliensis of Blauvelt and Jamie Rosen of Tarrytown, founders of LoHud HiDef Comedy, outside of The Turning Point in Piermont. (Mark Vergari/The Journal News)

Hoping for laughs and a club atmosphere

Comedy's a funny business. Especially in the suburbs, where getting a good crowd out for a couple of hours of honest laughs can be a daunting challenge. On the one hand, there's a definite demand for city-caliber comedians. On the other hand, try finding a good local comedy club.

"Having a place for comedy is huge," says Blauvelt's Adam Oliensis, a Broadway producer turned stand-up comic. "The ideal for comedy is to find a sacred space, a profane space, actually," he says. "It has to be a profane space for crossing taboos to feel right. To me that's a large part of it."

So joining 100 other people in a converted hotel



And it would be an easy commute for Rosen, who lives just over the bridge in Tarrytown in an apartment complex where, even with her striking red hair and funny personality, she goes unnoticed among her neighbors.

"I never see my neighbors, so they don't know I'm a comedian," she says. "But when I tell people I did hair and now I do stand-up, you'd think I'd gone to NASA."

Like Oliensis, she works her personal life — "I'm married to a much older man with two grown sons" — for laughs.

"I was a hairstylist for 13 years, and then unfortunately, I had a joint condition and had to quit doing hair. I was depressed, but I new I loved to write," she says, "and I think a lot of things are funny."

Even if it sometimes embarrasses her husband, Don, who plays Edgar to her modern-day Joan Rivers (although Rosen's delivery is more Steven Wright than Rivers' acerbic rattle). "He's OK with it usually," she says. "It's funny at home but maybe a little different when I take it to a club."

There are hysterical bits in her act about growing up an only child of divorced parents ("do you know how hard it is to raise a single mother?") and the downside of being a Brazilian hair waxer.

Oliensis, an actor, writer, and Tony-nominated producer, who co-authored "The Pompatus of Love" with Jon Cryer, started doing stand-up when he turned 50. "I'd never done it, always wanted to, and I have a pathological attraction to risk," he laughs. "

A married father of four kids, his act is all about, "the slow chipping away of self-esteem that comes from being a husband and father," with lots of local references tossed in. One bit involved a 38-year-old Russian spy who lived in his parents' Yonkers basement — "What, did the KGB salary get hit by recession?"

Rosen and Oliensis met doing stand-up and they clicked.

ballroom just doesn't cut it for Oliensis. "You go to see comedy in a hotel ballroom and it doesn't feel right. Is someone getting married, are they taking their SATs?"

Oliensis has hopes to jump-start interest in live comedy with LoHud HiDef Comedy, which opens on Saturday at The Turning Point in Piermont. "Last Comic Standing's" Jessica Kirson is the headliner. Kirson is a regular at the Comedy Club, Caroline's and the Improv, and has appeared on [The Tonight Show](#) with Jay Leno. (A typical line local audiences might hear from Kirson: "People are wondering, where the hell am I? Is that Rosie O'Donnell up there?").

Oliensis' partner in LoHud HiDef comedy is hairstylist turned Vegas stand-up Jamie Rosen.

They hope Saturday night's showcase, which will also feature headliner Adrienne Iapalucci and up-and-coming comedians Mick Di Flo and Jose Vega, will be the first of many.

"We keep our eyes open for what we think are really great talents and that's what we want to bring here," says Rosen. "The people who have blown our socks off, that's who we want to showcase."

Eventually, the pair would like to open a local comedy club.

"It would be really cool that maybe if this did evolve, and there were comics that people wanted to see on a regular basis, that maybe we could do a club, or make a troupe," she says. "We're open."

"He's a good stand-up; very funny, if you're married with kids, over the age of 40, and that's a pretty large audience, especially out here," Rosen says.

If you can find them. When the idea for a showcase came up, Oliensis says he started looking in the phone book for clubs. "Every number I found was closed, and maybe there was a good reason for that," he says, "or maybe it's just an underserved market."

They're hoping LoHud HiDef Comedy can fill that void, especially, they say, because there's nothing like seeing comedy live, as opposed to watching it on Comedy Central or clips on YouTube.

"In comedy, the fun part is trying to assess the moment," says Oliensis. So when you bomb, live and onstage, "audiences can't fake their reaction, like, 'Oh, they are laughing on the inside,'" he says. "It's the ultimate interactive experience."

If you go

What: LoHud HiDef Comedy with Last Comic Standing's Jessica Kirson (above)

When: 9 p.m. Oct. 2

Where: The Turning Point, 468 Piermont Ave., Piermont.

Tickets: \$15 online, \$20 at the door, available at store.turningpointtickets.com or call 845-359-1089. There is no drink minimum.

Also appearing: Adrienne Iapalucci, Adam Oliensis, Jamie Rosen, Mick DiFlo and Jose Vega.

More info: Check it out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/LoHud-HiDef-Comedy.