



Urban Flats' curved bar features several flat-screen TVs. The restaurant recently opened at the Icon in the Gulch and features gourmet flatbread pizzas baked in the stone-hearth oven. PHOTOS BY SHELLEY MAYS / THE TENNESSEAN

# Watermark's clientele grows

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entertainment venue was a better fit, especially during

these tough financial times. The bar took over the space formerly occupied by Lot 7. "We feel entertainment is not that much affected by the recession," he said. "When people go out, it's more expensive to pay for a meal than it is for cocktails. That's why they are much more affected than we are."

## Watermark stays steady

Since Jerry Brown launched his restaurant in The Gulch a little over three years ago, he's watched the area undergo a transformation. When Watermark opened, there was no sign of high-rise condominium towers or even streetlights and paved sidewalks.



Urban Flats restaurant operations manager John Sotero cooks flatbread pizzas in the stone-hearth oven.

While Radius 10 and Agave Tequila Lounge recently shut down, nearby Watermark has built up a steady clientele, which

Brown believes is allowing it to weather the economic decline.

"Like everyone in industry, we felt a downturn in

the fourth quarter, but February has started off well," he said. "We are doing things to remain competitive and meet and exceed customer expectations."

And as some businesses move out, Brown's confident about the continued success of the area.

"We may be seeing a slowdown in the development process, but that hasn't in any way limited The Gulch," he said.

"It's just taking a bit more time to absorb all the space, but they are definitely on track. They're doing a good job to create a lifestyle portion of The Gulch, and I think only better days are ahead."

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