

The announcement was made Friday by owner John Dye, who has operated the venue since 2016. Dye, known for his work in preserving historic Milwaukee hospitality spaces, also owns Bryant's Cocktail Lounge, At Random, and Von Trier.

In a poignant statement posted to social media, Dye cited a combination of post-pandemic shifts in consumer behavior and the unsustainable rise in operating costs as the primary drivers behind the decision.

"COVID changed things in ways that didn't show up all at once," Dye wrote. "Habits have shifted. People go out differently now; earlier, less often, and in smaller numbers. At the same time, thanks to forces beyond our control, the cost of running a place like this has climbed in ways that are hard to describe... Many of our costs have more than doubled."

Dye admitted that while he and his team attempted to pivot and adapt, "the math has caught up with us."

The Jazz Estate has long served as a vital stage for Milwaukee's jazz community. Beyond its musical significance, the venue underwent extensive restoration under Dye's ownership, reflecting his commitment to preserving the city's architectural and social history.

"Preserving and restoring historic spaces in Milwaukee is at the core of who I am," Dye stated. "Letting go of the Jazz Estate feels like it runs against everything I stand for."

Despite the closure, there may be a glimmer of hope for the venue's future. Dye emphasized that throughout its long history, the Jazz Estate has transitioned through eight different owners, each leaving their own legacy. He expressed a desire to find a successor who shares his passion for live music and historic preservation.

"I've come to believe that the most honest way I can honor that mission... is to find the right next person to carry it forward," he said, inviting interested parties to reach out to [estate@historiccocktails.com](mailto:estate@historiccocktails.com).

For now, the focus is on the final nights of operation. Dye confirmed that staff have been offered positions at his other Milwaukee establishments and encouraged patrons to visit one last time to celebrate the venue's history.

"This institution means a lot to so many people," Dye wrote. "Come hear some music. Come have a drink. Come say goodbye."