

off duty chef

## THE MEATBALL SHOP GUYS TALK LATE NIGHT BITES AND OLIVE OIL MESSAGES

By Abby Schreiber



Each week in our new *Off Duty* series, we'll talk to some of our favorite chefs and industry folk around the country to find out their secret late-night spots where they like to grab a bite and a pint when their kitchens are finally closed. Next up: **Michael Chernow** and **Daniel Holzman**, the dapper dudes behind the wildly successful *The Meatball Shop*.

### Michael Chernow:

#### What places do you like to go to when your kitchen is closed?

I love Frank Restaurant on Second Ave. between Fifth and Sixth St. -- it's got to be one of my top five favorite restaurants in New York. I used to work there, too. They are open til four o'clock in the morning on the weekends and until 1 o'clock on the weekdays. It's an Italian restaurant and they do a dish called the rigatoni ragu that inspired the Meatball Shop, actually. It's an incredible dish. It's very simple -- just meatballs and pork sausage in a red sauce with ragu. In my opinion, it doesn't really get any better than that.

#### What's your favorite thing to order?

I worked there for years and now that I don't work there anymore, I always get the rigatoni ragu but when I ate there on a regular basis, they have a dish there called Fava e Cicoria and it's a fava bean soup with roasted vegetables and you kind of dip the vegetables in the soup. It's a classic Pugliese dish and spectacular. I used to eat that regularly.

#### How did you first discover Frank? Did you go there to eat before you started working there?

I was working at other restaurants and nightclubs and it was this under-the-radar hot spot in the East Village. I really wanted to work there. I was 20 when I got hired and stayed there for about eight years.



#### Do you have any fun memories or anecdotes from nights spent there?

Do you want me to be totally honest with you or keep it PG-13?

#### Be honest!

When I first started working at Frank, it was definitely a late-night spot and I was also a bit of a maniac at that stage in my life. The first year I worked there when I was about 21-years-old, we all got drunk after work and I got a full-body massage in olive oil on the big community table.

### Daniel Holzman:

#### What's your favorite spot, Daniel?

I definitely like Barrio Chino. I literally have no idea when I first went there or who brought me there. I actually have no memory of most of the times I've gone to or left Barrio Chino. It's a tiny little restaurant on Broome St. Great little Mexican joint. The margaritas are really delicious, the people who work there are really cool, and the food's tasty and cheap.

#### What are your favorite things to order?

The calamari salad. The margaritas are also pretty special. They have about eight different types of margaritas and I happen to like the elderflower version.



#### Any fun anecdotes?

I'm so sorry to do this to you and normally I would have stories but I'm completely drawing a blank.

**Michael:** The last time we were at Barrio Chino, it was definitely an experience.

**Daniel:** I was more drunk than I've ever been in my life. We brought the Jägermeister with us. I don't suggest that.

*Frank, 88 Second Ave., NY; Mon-Thurs, 10:30am-1am; Fri-Sat, 10:30am-2am; Sun, 10:30am-midnight*

*Barrio Chino, 253 Broome St., NY; Mon-Fri, 11:30am-1am; Sat-Sun, 10am-1am*