

A Man in His Office: Meatball Shop's Michael Chernow

In our new series on [The Style Blog](#), the co-owner of the popular meat Mecca shares the items (and ideas) he needs to cater to New York's most stylish carnivores
By Kurt Soller // Photographs by Mark Iantosca

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1 of 15

The Man: Michael Chernow

A month ago, if you would have asked Michael Chernow where his office was, he would have pointed to his laptop resting on bar at [The Meatball Shop](#), a mostly-meatball restaurant (and runaway success) since it opened on Manhattan's Lower East Side in 2010. This month, the concept expanded to Brooklyn's cooler-than-thou Williamsburg neighborhood. And with the larger dining room (and expanded drink menu) came an apartment above with room for the 30-year-old to get finally some work done. As he and his team prepare for a third location — this time, in New York's West Village — Chernow showed us the gadgets, gym clothes, and art that help him succeed, all while wearing his go-to work wardrobe. "In the winter, I wear the same flannel shirt everyday," he says. But when it's hot all summer, he sticks to cotton J. Crew button-ups — he wore this gingham one to opening night in Williamsburg, plus a friends and family test run — black Levi's, and Sperry Topsiders. And if he gets bored with that? He'll get a new tattoo.

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BACK NEXT

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2 of 15

The Art

"This was an office-warming gift from my grandpa, who's like 90-years-old. My family's really important — there's a picture of my grandmother as a pin-up downstairs, in the restaurant — and this collage is just perfect."

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BACK NEXT

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3 of 15

The Coffee

"There's this roaster in Seattle, [Caffé Vita](#), and we order from them for our restaurants. You can buy it online, too, and I do a French press at home. I really love their thermos, though: It keeps the coffee hot until, like, 9 p.m."

View Larger View Thumbnails

BACK NEXT

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4 of 15

The Inspiration

"On the computer screen, that's my wife — who gets me through each day. And [Daniel Holzman, the Meatball Shop co-owner]'s mom painted the pig. I like surrounding myself with pictures of farm animals. Even in my own apartment."

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BACK NEXT

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5 of 15

The Contraband

"When I was 23, I gave up alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes and started exercising all the time. I get these Partagas No. 4 Cuban cigars from a guy in town and sit down at the end of the week and have one. It's my own vice."

Mark Iantosca

View Larger View Thumbnails

BACK NEXT

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6 of 15

The Books

"This one book, *The E Myth Revisted*, changed the way I do business. It taught me to surround myself with people who are really good at what they do, and then just let them do their job. I had to let go. And Danny Meyer? He's my idol in the industry. I met him at the James Beard Awards — we did the food in the green room — and I was literally almost in tears."

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BACK NEXT

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7 of 15

The Extra Shoes

"Say I'm running six or eight miles? I wear my Nike Frees. They're super-duper light, and they really feel like there's nothing on my feet. The best."

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BACK NEXT

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8 of 15

The Gadget

"I carry my Canon G12 with me everywhere, just looking for ideas for the restaurants and photographing them. I think of myself as an artist, a lot of times, and my medium is restaurant design."

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BACK NEXT

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10 of 15

The Off-Duty Clothes

"I went to Thailand and got into Muay Thai Boxing. And the people there are pretty serious about their shorts. It's custom. I train at [Renzo Gracie Academy](#) in Manhattan, and these shorts are from [Five Points Academy](#), where they're like the authentic ones from Thailand."

View Larger View Thumbnails

BACK NEXT

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11 of 15

The Hobby

"I grew up in New York City and everybody I grew up with skateboarded. That's what you did — just went down to Washington Square Park all the time."

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12 of 15

The Sunglasses

"I've been wearing these Ray-Ban aviators my whole life. But I also love these things called Knockarounds, which you can buy online for \$14, and come in every color combination you can imagine."

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13 of 15

The Pen

"These Sharpies are incredibly important to the business. Because they're permanent. Whatever I write, it stays."

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BACK NEXT

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14 of 15

The Watch

"It's a Swiss Army one. My wife bought it for me two years ago. And it's helpful, since I tend to be up for too many hours working."

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BACK NEXT

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The Hair

"I get my haircut at [Tommy Guns](#), near our Stanton Street shop on the Lower East Side. They make their own products, too, so I use those."

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BACK NEXT