

Michael Chernow and Daniel Holzman Talk the Upper East

The Meatball Shop guys share their favorite restaurants on the UES



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Illustration: Kim Graziano/Tasting Table

The Upper East Side: a northern land of quiet avenues, museums and one measly subway line (although we still like to say we're "on the 6," à la Jennifer Lopez).

It's also home to two very well-known restaurateurs. Although they made their names (and balls) downtown, Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow, co-owners of mini empire *The Meatball Shop*, are both proud Upper East Side natives. Their original Lower East Side shop is set to celebrate five years of meat grinding in February, but these guys didn't forget to give a little love to the neighborhood where they met as kids, setting up shop on Second Avenue in 2013.

"The UES is where I grew up, where I made all my first friends and where I got my first job in the restaurant business," Chernow says. "Opening up *The Meatball Shop* on the UES was a dream for Daniel and I—being able to offer something to the community we grew up in was a real feat."

Holzman adds, "New York is constantly evolving. It's hard to recognize the city I grew up in, but there's something timeless about the UES."

And it seems that being in the meatball business (because that's a thing) means being an expert on all things comfort food. It's no surprise that their favorites in the neighborhood are nostalgic—bagels with cream cheese, eggplant Parm and Indian takeout.

These boys have the UES diet down pat. Learn it. Love it. Then head up and east.



Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow; the bar at The Penrose | Photos: Courtesy of The Meatball Shop, The Penrose

Coffee: *Oren's Daily Roast*

Holzman's order: Nothing fancy here, just a medium black coffee (\$2.50). "It's on my walk to the 79th Street crosstown."

Chernow's order: Earl Grey tea (\$2.50) with milk and sugar, for nostalgia's sake. "That's what I drank in elementary school on the way in."

Breakfast: *H&H Bagels*

Holzman's order: In total New York fashion, a light everything bagel with salmon cream cheese (\$3.75). "Some of the best bagels in NYC are baked right there in the back. The place has been an UES staple forever, and they pile the toppings on the bagels like no other."

Chernow's order: Also an everything bagel, but with plain cream cheese and tomato (\$3). "Cream cheese with tomatoes make for a great marriage."

Lunch: *E.A.T. on Madison*

Holzman's order: Quite simply, Jewish comfort food defined—matzo ball soup (\$8) and a meatloaf sandwich (\$10). "E.A.T. is Eli Zabar's first place, and it still has that special energy. It reminds me of our Stanton Street shop. There's just something special about that first place."

Chernow's order: Another order of comfort, this one Italian American—eggplant Parmesan (\$18). "I always use to stop by E.A.T. with my family on the way home from my aunt's house. We would pick up dinner, and the eggplant Parm always did me well."

Quick bite: *Gino's Pizza*

Holzman's order: Eggplant slice. "It's the pizza place right across the street from my childhood home. I made my first tips delivering pizzas for them when I was 12 years old. Plus, the pizza is delicious."

Chernow's order: Good old chicken Parm. "Gino's is across the street from Daniel's apartment. We would eat there regularly; the chicken Parm still sings to my belly."

Dinner: *Daniel*

Holzman's order: "Whatever Daniel Boulud is cooking. [The restaurant] is hands down the best fine dining in NYC. You step through the door, and everything is always perfect—a true experience worth having."

Chernow's order: "I second Daniel [Holzman] here. The most incredible meal I've had in NYC was when Daniel [Boulud] cooked a meal for Daniel, chef Scotty and I around four years ago. Daniel delivered each course for us and finished with a tableside duck *à la presse*—truly epic experience."

Takeout: *Tandoor Oven*

Holzman's order: Reliably creamy chicken tikka masala (\$15). "It's been there forever, and it's still good. [There's] nothing like a little chicken tikki to end your evening."

Chernow's order: Still more poultry love, with tandoori chicken (\$14). "[It's] a neighborhood institution, and they are known for the best tandoori in the hood."

Drinks: *The Penrose*

Holzman's order: A Brown Derby (\$8 and up) to satisfy a thirst for bourbon. "Great drinks that draw a crowd."

Chernow's order: He plays the good-boy role and quaffs a seltzer with a splash of cranberry juice. "I am not much of a drinker these days, but the guys at *The Penrose* really know how to throw a party."