

## FOOD

# Villanelle, Serving Vegetable-Forward Fare, Opens in the East Village

Off the Menu

By FLORENCE FABRICANT FEB. 28, 2017



Catherine Manning, the owner of Villanelle, and the restaurant's executive chef, Nick Licata. Michael Tulipan

## Headliner

**VILLANELLE** Catherine Manning, a novice restaurateur, assembled a fine team for her first venture. She tapped Nick Licata, the executive chef at Degustation, because, as a regular customer, she admired his work. And she hired James Shields, a Betony alumnus, who is managing the restaurant and taking care of drinks. The restaurant, which has 44 seats and another 10 at the bar in an airy room with tall windows, draws a certain laid-back elegance from natural materials like bare wood and rope. And proximity to the Union Square Greenmarket is a boon, Mr. Licata says, given his vegetable-forward menu. "I'm familiar with the purveyors," he said. Grilled beets with radicchio, cauliflower with capers and raisins, and brussels sprouts with Cheddar and cashews are listed alongside Icelandic char with dill and sorrel, and beef with polenta, horseradish and mustard greens. Even the desserts emphasize vegetables, with one featuring parsnips. He ultimately wants 19 dishes on his menu, as the restaurant's name, Villanelle, refers to a 16th-century Neapolitan style of melodic poetry consisting of 19 lines. (Opens Wednesday): 15 East 12th Street, 212-989-2474.

## Opening

**ALTA CALIDAD** The chef, Akhtar Nawab, who worked with Tom Colicchio and went on to start Indie Fresh and Choza Taqueria in the Gotham West Market and elsewhere, is opening this new Mexican restaurant demonstrating his inventive approach. The menu features pig's foot carnitas; fried shrimp tacos; tamales filled with cheese, potatoes, broccoli and bacon; and family-style grilled rib-eye steaks. Inside, swaths of color soften the black-and-white décor. (Wednesday): 552 Vanderbilt Avenue (Dean Street), Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, 718-622-1111, [altacalidadbk.com](http://altacalidadbk.com).

**THE ARMORY SHOW** The major art show and sale has teamed up with Hospitality House, a consulting company, to increase the number of options from well-known New York restaurants at the event. It opens Wednesday to V.I.P. ticket holders, and to the public Thursday through Sunday. Specialties from Il Buco Alimentari e Vineria, By Chloe, Colonia Verde, Black Seed Bagels, Juice Press and Mile End deli will be available from various sites on the Hudson River Piers. There will be cocktails by Grand Army and a full-service restaurant by Hotel Americano in Chelsea, which were at last year's show: Pier 92 and 94, Hudson River at 53rd Street, [thearmoryshow.com](http://thearmoryshow.com).

**CHOUCHOU** This new Moroccan restaurant from Mario Carta, the owner of Pardon My French, and its executive chef, David Pegoli, has a romantic, brick-walled setting. Mr. Pegoli, who also worked at Luksus, has created a menu of six couscous preparations, as well as four tagines, including a lobster version, served in a collection of the elegantly embossed ceramic vessels of the same name. (Wednesday): 215 East Fourth Street (Avenue B), 646-869-1423, [chouchounyc.com](http://chouchounyc.com).

**GRANO** A fourth generation of the Cipriani family is behind this informal cafe in a bright Midtown atrium. Ignazio Cipriani, the 29-year-old son of Giuseppe Cipriani, who runs the Cipriani enterprises internationally, offers a menu that starts with breakfast pastries, frittatas and toasts, then moves to salads, soups, a couple of pastas, pizzas and more than a dozen sandwiches, and juices and smoothies, all featuring organic ingredients and available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.: Olympic Tower, 645 Fifth Avenue (51st Street), 212-699-4097, [granousa.com](http://granousa.com).

**SIDEPIECE** A bar serving food is an adjunct to the new Meatball Shop in Hell's Kitchen. Playful items like meatball fondue, nacho meatballs and meatball sliders will be served along with drinks. (Wednesday): 798 Ninth Avenue (53rd Street), 212-230-5860, [themeatballshop.com](http://themeatballshop.com).