

DAILY NEWS

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NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Sunday, November 14, 2010

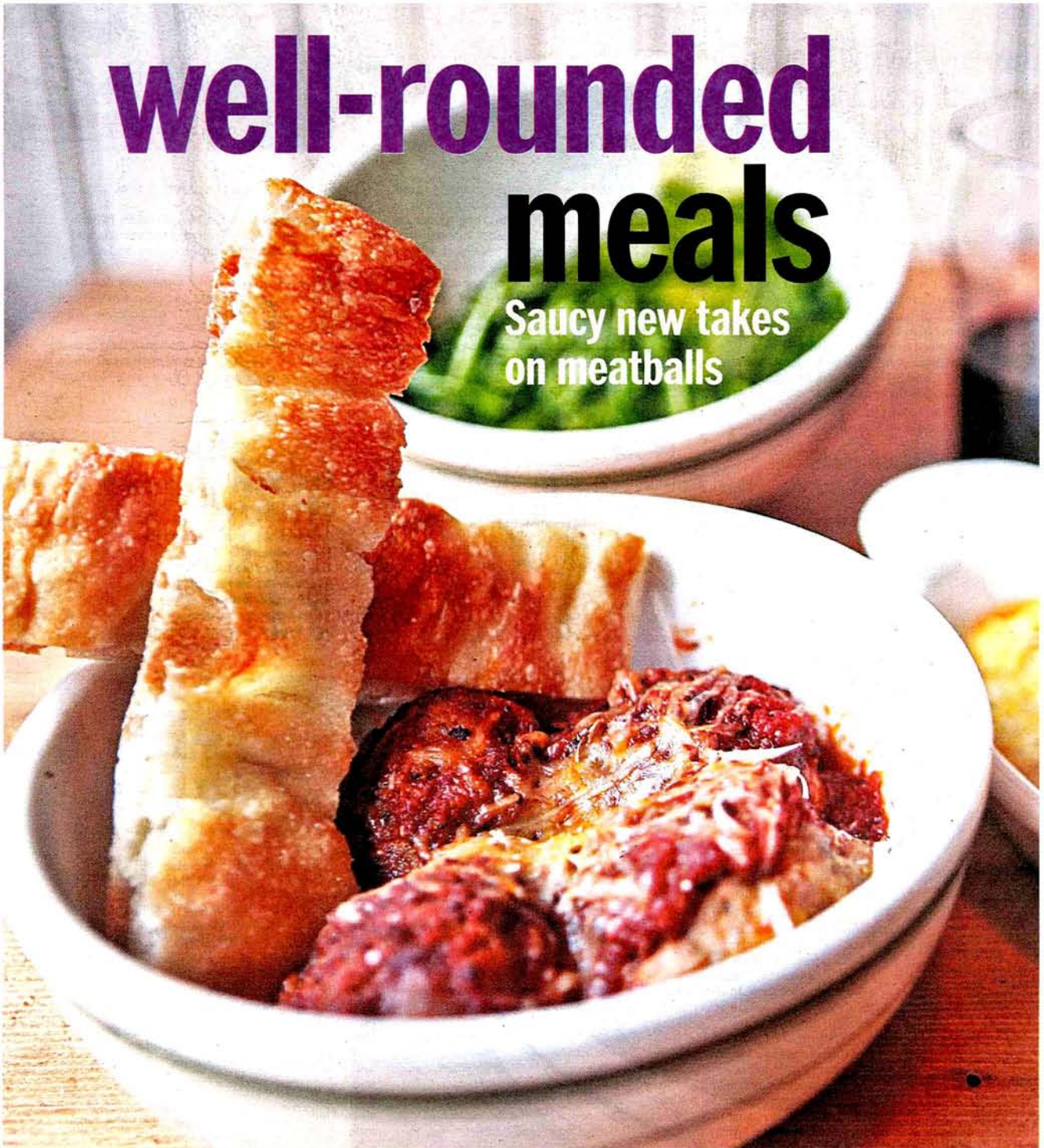
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new york EATS

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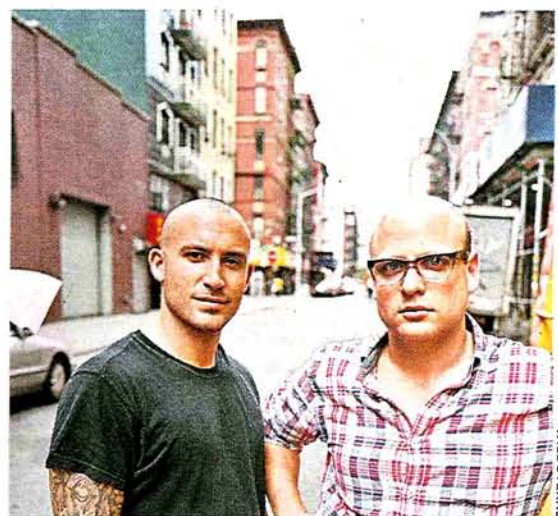
well-rounded meals

Saucy new takes
on meatballs



they're rolling

Two guys behind a lower East Side shop are betting we love meatballs as much as they do (they may be right) **BY AMANDA P. SIDMAN**



WILL STERNIS

Dan Holzman and Mike Chernow love meatballs so much, they devoted a restaurant — and their lives — to making the best of them.

But first, they had some practice: The high school buddies (they met at LaGuardia HS on Amsterdam Ave.) paid their culinary-industry dues. At 15, Holzman (at r. in photo above) worked at Le Bernardin, then received a degree from the Culinary Institute of America before stints at Paladin in NYC and SQPR in San Francisco; Chernow (l. in photo) is the bar manager at Second Ave. staple

Frank and a French Culinary Institute grad.

But there was always something about meatballs. So this past February, they opened the Meatball Shop, a restaurant completely devoted to just that: chicken, vegetable, pork and beef meatballs, made as sliders, heros, “smashes” (on a brioche bun) or just alone, all with farm-fresh ingredients.

“We were canvassing the lower East Side and trying to find what was missing from the food scene, especially after hours,” says Chernow.

“Meatballs aren’t only delicious, they’re bet-

ter for you than pizza and French fries,” says Holzman.

These days, their Stanton St. eatery (which is open until 4 a.m. Thursday to Saturday, and 2 a.m. Sunday to Wednesday) is packed at all hours.

“The response from the community down here has been overwhelming,” says Chernow. “People come from all over the city to eat here, too. We’re flattered.”

Although they say they can’t pick their favorite meatball, they agree that their pork meatballs in spicy meat sauce are pretty darn tasty. For those recipes and more, read on.

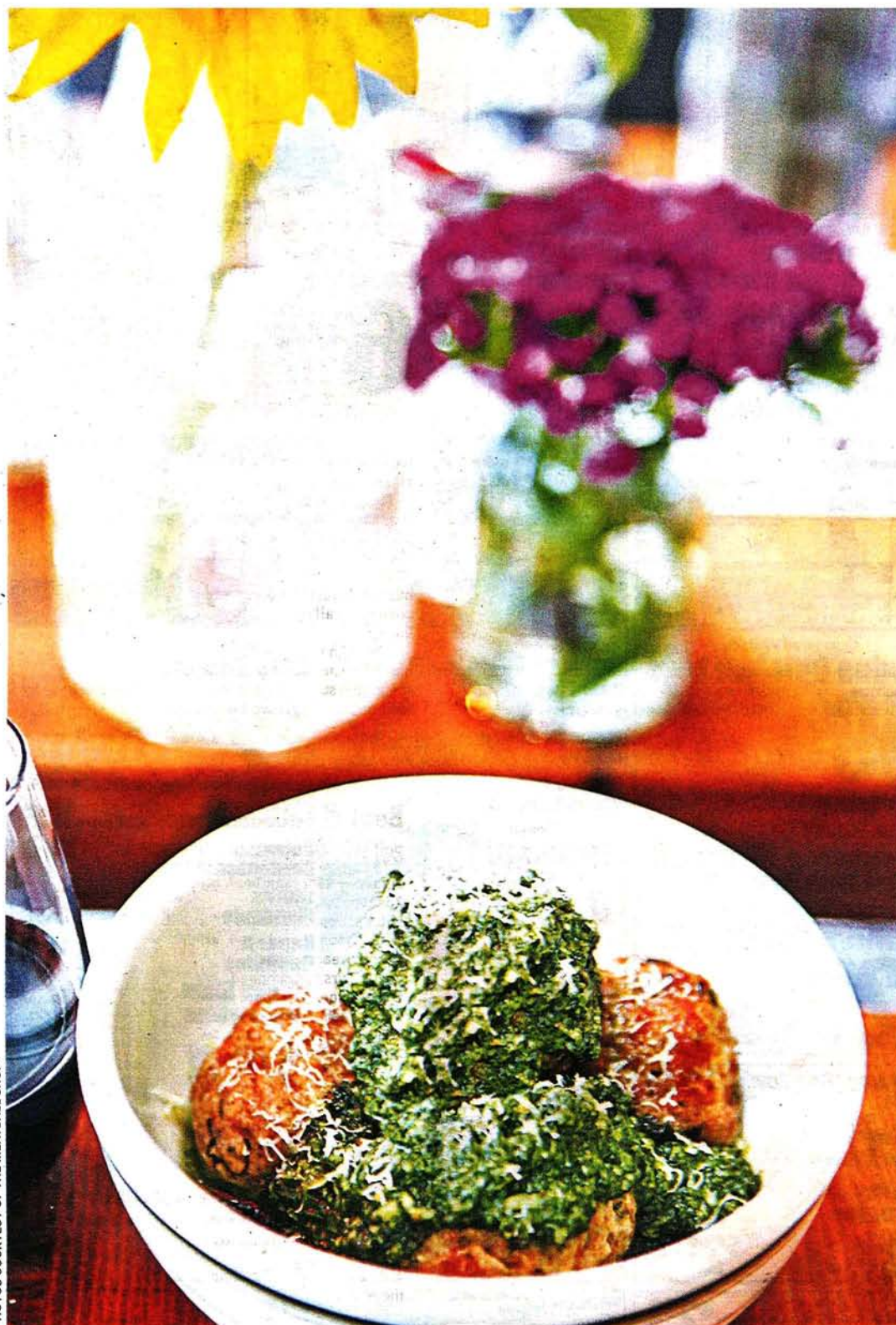
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Beef Meatballs Yield: about 24 golf ball-size meatballs

2 pounds 80% lean beef, ground
2 teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon chili flakes
½ teaspoon fennel seed, ground
½ cup breadcrumbs
¼ cup parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon oregano, chopped
1 cup fresh ricotta cheese
2 eggs
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 450.
2. Combine all of the ingredients except for the olive oil in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated.
3. Drizzle the olive oil into a large baking dish (9 x 12), making sure to evenly coat the entire surface (use your hand to help spread the oil).
4. Roll the mixture into round, golf ball-size meatballs, making sure to pack the meat firmly.
5. Place balls into the oiled baking dish so that all are lined up evenly in rows and are touching each of their neighbors in a grid.
6. Roast until firm and cooked through (about 20 minutes).
7. While the meatballs are roasting, heat 4 cups of your favorite tomato sauce (such as meat sauce, opposite page) in a small pot over a medium-high flame, stirring constantly.
8. When the meatballs are firm and fully cooked, drain the excess grease from the pan, then pour the tomato sauce over them and continue roasting for another 14 minutes.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MEATBALL SHOP

Chicken Meatballs Yield: about 24 golf ball-size meatballs

2 pounds ground chicken thigh
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon fennel seed, ground
1 teaspoon black peppercorns, ground
¼ cup white wine
½ cup parsley, chopped
½ cup breadcrumbs
2 eggs
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 450.

2. Combine all of the ingredients except for the olive oil in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated.

3. Drizzle the olive oil into a large baking dish (10 x 17) making sure to evenly coat the entire surface (use your hand to help spread the oil).

4. Roll the mixture into round, golf ball-size meatballs making sure to pack the meat firmly. (Chicken meatballs can be a pain to roll, so a great trick is to use a #24 disher — ice cream scoop — rounded over and dropped into the pan.)

5. Place the balls into the oiled baking dish so that all of the meatballs are

lined up evenly in rows and are touching each of their neighbors in a grid.

6. Roast until firm and cooked through (about 14 minutes).

7. Allow the meatballs to cool for five minutes before removing from the tray.

Pork Meatballs Yield: about 24 golf ball-size meatballs

2 pounds pork shoulder, ground
1½ tablespoons salt
4 hot cherry peppers, minced (about ½ cup)
¼ cup pepper pickling liquid
4 slices white bread, minced (about 3½ cups)
3 eggs
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 450.

2. Combine all of the ingredients except for the olive oil in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated.

3. Drizzle the olive oil into a large baking dish (9 x 13), making sure to evenly coat the entire surface (use your hand to help spread the oil).

4. Roll the mixture into round, golf ball-size meatballs, making sure to pack the meat firmly.

5. Place the balls into the oiled baking dish so that all of the meatballs are lined up evenly in rows and are touching each of their neighbors in a grid.

6. Roast until firm and cooked through (about 14 minutes).

7. Allow the meatballs to cool for five minutes before removing from the tray.

Spicy Meat Sauce

Yield: 8 cups

1 large yellow onion, small dice (about 2 cups)
1 pound pork shoulder, ground
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons chili flakes
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 28-ounce cans tomatoes, chopped (preferably San Marzano)

1. Cook the onions and pork with the olive oil, chili and salt over a medium heat in a large pot (6 quarts), stirring constantly until the meat is thoroughly cooked and the onions are soft and beginning to brown (about 15 minutes).

2. Add the tomato paste and continue cooking for five minutes.

3. Add the canned tomatoes and stir constantly until sauce begins to boil.

4. Continue cooking for 35 minutes, stirring every four or five minutes so that the sauce does not burn.



Jambalaya Balls

Yield: about 40 golf ball-size meatballs

1 cup long-grain white rice
1 pound ground pork
1 pound ground chicken
8 ounces Andouille sausage,
minced
8 ounces shrimp, deveined and
minced
1 red onion, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 clove garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and
minced
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon chili flakes
1 pinch cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
½ cup breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 450.
2. Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a small pot with a tight fitting lid. Stir in the rice, cover and reduce the flame to low. Cook until the rice is tender (about 20 minutes) and allow to cool.
3. Combine all of the ingredients except for the olive oil in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated.
4. Drizzle the olive oil into a large baking dish (9 x 13), making sure to evenly coat the entire surface (use your hand).
5. Roll the mixture into round, golf ball-size meatballs making sure to pack the meat firmly.
6. Place the balls into the oiled baking dish so that all of the meatballs are lined up evenly in rows and are touching each of their neighbors in a grid.
7. Roast until firm and cooked through (about 20 minutes).
8. Allow the meatballs to cool for five minutes before removing from the tray.

