

## It's wall to wall balls in Williamsburg

BY AARON SHORT

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Have a ball, Williamsburg!

Meatball mavens Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow are bringing their love of hot balls of meat and veggies to Bedford Avenue this spring — cramming another inexpensive option to the neighborhood's burgeoning snack food corridor.

Foodies have been flocking to Holzman and Chernow's Meatball Shop on the Lower East Side for a year, but the Williamsburg-based restaurateurs have always had their hearts set on opening in the neighborhood.

It took a year of testing dozens of recipes of meatballs and sauce combinations on Chernow's roof deck off Havemeyer Street before the duo settled on four basic balls — chicken, beef, pork, and veggie — and it's been meatballs to the wall ever since.

Each meatball comes slathered in sauce of your choosing, such as classic tomato, mushroom, cream, or pesto, and cheese on either a baguette or brioche bun and a salad (starting at \$9).

"People aren't willing to spend \$50 to \$100 for a meal in the neighborhood, and Williamsburg is already saturated with lower-end food concepts," said Holzman. "We want you to leave here with your stomach full and your wallet also full."

The chicken meatball, which we tried with parmesan cream and a side of black trumpet risotto, was juicy, tender and flavorful, while the beef and marinara conjured intense memories of the Graham Avenue Italian childhood we never had.

But the veggie balls, made with lentils, carrots, celery, walnuts, tomato paste and bread crumbs, and pesto sauce really got our attention because the dish was just as good as its meat-based brethren.

Holzman and Chernow sell 2,000 meatballs a day — and expect similar volume on Bedford Avenue near N. Seventh Street, where they have the balls to say open until 4 am if weekend throngs are hungry.

"If people are eating, we'll stay open," said Chernow.

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Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Daniel Holzman (left) and Michael Chernow will open a branch of their Manhattan-based Meatball Shop in Williamsburg.