



## The Meatball Shop Opens on the UES Tonight

By Laura Shunk Mon., Aug. 12 2013 at 12:45 PM  
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Courtesy The Meatball Shop

When Michael Chernow and Daniel Holzman opened their first Meatball Shop on the Lower East Side in 2010, they were focused, above all, on running that restaurant as well as they could. But it had certainly crossed their minds that the concept could eventually spawn additional locations. "We kept the fixtures, menu, and systems simple so we could grow," says Chernow. "Very quickly, we found out that it was a popular place. A year later, we opened two restaurants back-to-back. We feel like the two luckiest guys on the planet."

And now the guys are getting ready to debut the fifth member of their growing family: The Meatball Shop at 1462 Second Avenue opens its doors tonight.

While the guys say their decision to open in that area was influenced by requests from a number of Upper East Siders who didn't want to trek to one of the downtown locations with their families, the neighborhood is also personally meaningful. "We're from there," says Chernow. "Daniel grew up seven blocks away; I grew up 10 blocks away. It's really special for us to bring it back to the neighborhood."

As with the other Meatball Shops, this address will showcase a menu of staple balls--like the spicy pork and classic beef--in tomato, pesto, and spicy meat sauces, served on sliders, polenta, or smashed on a brioche bun. The location will also roll out daily specials, and, as with its siblings, debut a few features unique to this address, including a private dining room, reservations for parties of eight or more, and a pitcher list, featuring the guys' famous sangria as well as other combinations like local gin and coconut water.

The biggest unique detail, though, is the brunch menu since, says Holzman, the Upper East Side is a brunch-loving crowd. "We've talked about doing brunch for awhile, but Daniel's a bit of a pussy," says Chernow. Holzman retorts, "Mike never had to wake up and cook brunch at 7 a.m." They pulled the trigger here because they wanted to give the denizens living on their home turf another reason to come out, which means this restaurant will open at 11 a.m. on weekends, an hour earlier than the other outlets. And while they'll consider adding brunch at other locations if it goes well, there are no immediate plans to replicate the menu elsewhere. "We don't want to lose what we do by thinking of the future right now," says Holzman. "But if it's a smash success and amazing, well ..."

The guys are also clear that even with this fifth location, this is not exactly the beginning of a national roll-out. "A lot of people that get into having multiple restaurants have an agenda and more money," says Holzman. "We're growing as it's reasonable for us to grow."

Adds Chernow, "We like to be a presence in the restaurants and have a relationship with the people in the restaurants. We don't have a 100-restaurant plan in place."

Check it out when it opens for dinner tonight at 6 p.m.