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## HEARD & SCENE

### Taking to the South Asian Streets

BY REBECCA BRATBURD

When it comes to exploring Southeast Asian food, restaurateur Danny Meyer (North End Grill, Gramercy Tavern and Shake Shack, among others) said he doesn't really go

beyond sausage and mushroom pizza. "I'll have Chinese sausage and Chinese mushrooms, but put those two together and I'm a happy guy," he said.

On Wednesday night, he was surrounded by sweet, sour and spicy street snacks at the Viet-

nam-based nonprofit Streets International's seventh annual fundraising and tasting event. His business partner, Mark Maynard-Parisi (Blue Smoke), was honored for his involvement with the overseas hospitality school and restaurant,

which offers financial support for disadvantaged youth in Southeast Asia.

On the other side of the spectrum, Chef Daniel Boulud, who was immersed in Asian cuisine for two decades, served up lemon grass and red curry sausage similar to a menu item served at one of his restaurants, DBGB.

"What's beautiful is where the fragrance is taking you," he said. "You can close your eyes and feel you are on the street eating hot sausage."

Chefs Jamie Bissonette (Toro NYC), Anita Lo (Annisa), Jean-Paul Bourgeois (Blue Smoke), Brendan Newell (Pok Pok) and the Meatball Shop's Michael Chernow and Daniel Holzman all brought hot, tangy treats to the table.

The Meatball Shop's team infused the tropical and vibrant flavors of Vietnamese street food into the restaurant's signature meatballs for a fun, nontraditional bite.

The secret ingredient? Heinz tomato ketchup, which apparently accounts for the red color in Chinese sweet-and-sour sauce.

"Our rule is that our restaurant is 100% natural; we make everything from scratch, unless there's an iconic ingredient that everybody would recognize as a part of a dish's heritage," Mr. Holzman said.

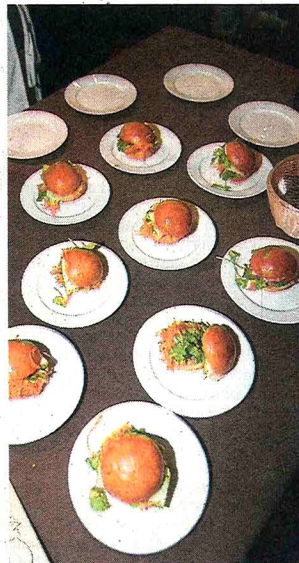
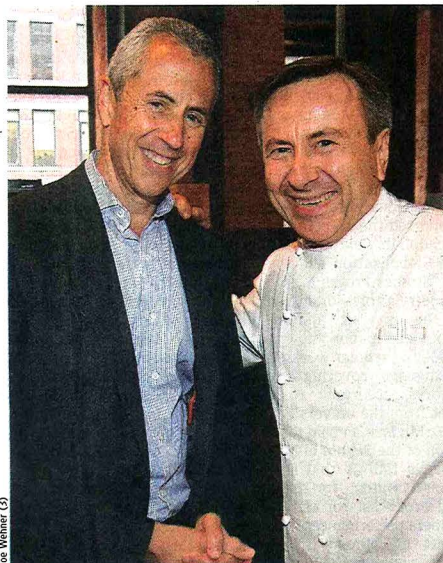
The hot-and-spicy theme carried over to the bar. The Streetini, a vodka cocktail mixed with cognac, ginger and lime, usually offered at Streets Restaurant Café in Hoi An, Vietnam, appeared alongside a King of Birds drink, which Krissy Harris (the Wren) made with tequila, lime, honey, basil and spiced with bird's eye chili.

Streets International founder Neal Bermas, a Vietnam-via-New York City hospitality consultant, said his biggest challenge is growing the group. "If you have a great restaurant, and you want to have another one, or three more, whether it's meatballs or cuisine with Daniel [Boulud], the challenge is how to fund it," Mr. Bermas said. "Where's the capital? Where do we find investment, and where's the return on that investment?"

But, as a step in the right direction, Streets International this year joined the Clinton Global Initiative, a branch of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation that works on global challenges.



Clockwise from above: the chefs who created the menu for Streets International's seventh annual tasting event; plates of Num Pang's Duroc pork sliders; and Danny Meyer with Daniel Boulud.



Joe Whelan (3)

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