

## A Chat with New York Restaurant Entrepreneur Abraham Merchant

The Daily Meal sat down with the Lower Manhattan restaurant entrepreneur to discuss his latest venture: Industry Kitchen



**Industry Kitchen is housed in an angular glass and steel structure with floor-to-ceiling doors that open to the outside patio in nice weather.**

The Daily Meal recently sat down with Lower Manhattan restaurant entrepreneur Abraham Merchant to discuss **his latest venture**; working closely with chefs; and how what they say about **New York** is true: location, location, location.

**The Daily Meal: What would you say sets Industry Kitchen apart from your other restaurants?**

**Abraham Merchant:** Our pizza press. It presses pizza in less than three seconds and brings the dough out at 80 degrees, so the dough is not shocked when it goes into the oven. This is unique to Industry Kitchen thanks to the Woodstone oven with a grill inside, specially made for us.

**Can you explain the ways in which you worked with your chef to establish the menu?**

I wanted a no-nonsense menu with seasonal, very flavorful ingredients, and for the dishes to be simply presented on a plate. The goal was to have the ingredients and flavors to be the star of the show, not necessarily the presentation. I also wanted to bring in a chef that has worked all over the world to bring some unique flavors to the plate, and chef Marco Arnold was a perfect match. We intentionally kept the menu small—26 items only—so we can execute it perfectly each time and change it often.

**Tell me about the interior—there's a very fine line between inside and outside!**

In keeping with the industrial setting, our vision was an industrial,

raw, and authentic approach. Viewed from the outside, passersby see an intriguing, angular glass and steel structure with floor-to-ceiling doors that open to the outside patio in nice weather. Massive

custom pendant fixtures inspired by industrial gears hang from the ceiling, and floor-to-ceiling windows seamlessly separate the indoor and outdoor areas, framing a picturesque view of the waterfront.

**Your location is unique, and very specific.**

All that existed before Industry Kitchen was a shell structure under the FDR Drive that was built for the single purpose, to operate a restaurant. Without the city's investment to develop the promenade, this type of structure may well have remained derelict.

**In your experience, have people's expectations changed about food over the years?**

People are starting to care about what they put in their body, and are educating themselves on quality food. People expect farm-to-table and we wanted to make sure all the offerings at Industry Kitchen use only the freshest seasonal ingredients.

**What would you say makes for the perfect meal here in terms of appetizer, salad, entree, and dessert?**

Split a couple of pizzas for the table for appetizer: the oyster mushroom and soppressata picante are my favorites. Then I'd have the grilled tomato for salad, and the vegetable gratin is my favorite entrée, or the Black Angus sirloin steak. The burrata is also a favorite appetizer of mine, so if I couldn't fit in the pizza anywhere in the meal, I'll order the chocolate pizza for dessert. Next go-to for dessert is the beignet basket—so delicious.

**The beignets were fluffy and delightful. Do you have a special pastry chef?**

No, chef Marco has many talents, including pastry. Beignets are actually his favorite dessert—he has one with his coffee every morning!