

// CHEFCETERA UP CLOSE WITH METRO NEW YORK'S CHEFS

Peter Darrow, Founder of Darrow's in NYC

Darrow's Farm Fresh Takeout, a new restaurant located in Union Square NYC aims to provide New Yorkers with better alternatives.

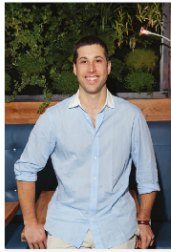
Founded by Peter Darrow and partnering with nutritionist Julie Starr and co-chefs David Kupperberg (Pure Food & Wine) and Taylor Thorne (Eleven Madison Park, Jean Georges), they have created nutrient-rich, high-quality recipes using local and organic ingredients (dependent on season). Darrow's believes food should be simple, nutritious, and more importantly delicious. We sat down with Peter Darrow to find out more about this new operation in this month's Meet the Newsmaker.

For those that don't know you, give our readers a little background about yourself, your culinary background, and how Darrow's NYC came to vision then reality?

Thanks for this wonderful opportunity! I grew up in New York City, attending the Bronx High School before heading to St. Paul's School for high school. I adopted a plant-based diet 3 years ago when my dad and mom were both diagnosed with cancer. I was pursuing my MBA in entrepreneurship at Babson College when my father passed away in May 2013, so I decided to follow his advice: "You will only be successful at things that which you are passionate." I am pas-

sionate about helping people. Eating with your friends or significant other shouldn't be such a challenge in New York City. We offer many plant-based and gluten-free options, but also have organic chicken and wild salmon on our menu. We believe in giving customers plenty of options.

How did planning go from the original business plan to the actual opening?



Peter Darrow is the owner of a new restaurant located in Union Square NYC aims to provide New Yorkers with better alternatives.

How did you meet up with your in-house nutritionist, Julie Starr and co-chefs David Kupperberg and Taylor Thorne and what do they bring to the table for Darrow's?

Julie actually was my personal nutritionist while I was in graduate school in Boston. I knew from the moment I met her that she had a special personality about her. I hired a top restaurant consultant in Manhattan, Andre Neyrey of Blackwood Hospitality, who introduced me to Taylor. After several iterations and tastings of the menu, we added David Kupperberg from Pure Food and Wine. He brought an incredible depth of natural cooking knowledge to our vision and made the menu what it is today! We are so thankful to have both of their contributions.

Does dessert, coffee or tea play a role at Darrow's? Do you want diners to stay and have dessert or do you look to turn tables quickly?

We offer a wide selection of teas, and we are equally excited to feature Grace Hightower & Co. Coffee of Rwanda by Grace Hightower De Niro. We want diners to be transformed in our beautiful upstairs space and relax from the daily hustle and bustle of New York City. That's why we spent so much attention to detail in constructing it.

What's Darrow's team building approach to better the business?

We are trying to build a unique culture at Darrow's based on support and family, rather than a "pressure-cooker" environment. I emphasize that this is a new family and there's more to life than simply a paycheck. If you're not having fun at work, then what are we doing here anyways?

Regarding finding the right real estate, what were you looking for in terms of space?

It had to be "airy", wide open, spa-

You work with a group of wonderful purveyors. Tell us how your research led you to them and what they've done for your menu and offerings.

Our whole concept was trying to source as much local as possible. There is a renaissance happening in the local food movement, and we are excited to play a role in moving away from large industrial farm complexes. As soon as we found a space near the Union Square Greenmarket, we knew it was a natural fit. We are always seeking to build new relationships with farms. It began by simply walking over and introducing ourselves. That's how meaningful relationships are built. In person, not email.

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acious, inviting. The beautiful part of our location is that we can serve lots of local businesses on Park Ave. South, while providing a daytime refuge for our local residents in Gramercy.

Let's face it, people still enjoy eating unhealthy. Who is Darrow's target audience?

Completely agree. And again, that's why we aren't about trying to preach how someone should eat or live their life. As someone who personally grew up eating lots of steak and poultry, I measure success by the ratio of "meat-heavy to plant-based eaters" we can serve in our restaurant. When some-



"We are 100% loyal to our initial suppliers for believing in our concept. As with any business, we are constantly searching for the best products available on the market."

one says, "wow, I had no idea that vegetables could taste so good!" that makes me happy.

When purchasing product, do you go to bid each week or is their loyalty to your suppliers?

We are 100% loyal to our initial suppliers for believing in our concept. As with any business, we are constantly searching for the best products available on the market.

What was the design approach to Darrow's? Work with any restaurant designers and consultants for the F&B and BOH?

I hired Andre Neyrey of Blackwood

Hospitality as my consultant. He helped me focus my vision as a hip, trendy, modern eatery/farm-to-table concept.

What online marketing tools is Darrow's using to spread the word?

Everything that we can! Word of mouth and social media are essential to our survival. We can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. @darrowsonyc.

As Darrow's employees are paid hourly a big topic right now in NYC is tipping. What are your thoughts on this issue, for it, against it?

We've actually had a wonderful surprise in our first week of operation, customers are so pleased with the product that they are leaving larger tips than we expected. We are definite-

ly using a fair tip-sharing program for all of our employees.

Crystal Ball...Where do you see yourself and Darrow's NYC in 2020?

I can't even imagine where Darrow's will be next year! We are so excited just to be a part of this movement and help people in any way possible. Hopefully opening many more Darrow's restaurants!

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