

CARBONE

Mario Carbone

Mario was born and raised in Queens, New York and has spent the majority of his life studying the culinary arts.

At fifteen years old Mario was cooking fried calamari and red sauce in neighborhood restaurants in Queens rather than foie gras and caviar in Manhattan. This humble start to his culinary career seems to fit him just fine.

After two years of working weekends and summers in local eateries, Mario attended The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. He did his apprenticeship at Babbo, and following his graduation from CIA Mario returned to Batali & Bastianich to join the opening team at Lupa Osteria Romana in Greenwich Village. He joined a crew that was led by Mark Ladner as head chef. Chef Ladner would prove to be one of the most influential people in Mario's career for the next decade. It would only take one year before a young, anxious, cook would look for more and leave Lupa.

Italy was calling, and at twenty-two years old, Mario went to work at a small family run restaurant on the western coast of Tuscany called La Dogana. It was here Mario would learn to understand and appreciate the history and culture of Italians and their food.

Upon returning home and feeling the need to broaden his abilities, Mario went to work for two masters with very different approaches. First was Daniel Boulud teaching precise, classic French cuisine at the highest level. Then an opportunity to work for Chef Wylie Dufresne, the man leading the progressive culinary charge in America, came along. The discipline and creativity learned over the next three years with these chefs would prove to be invaluable in his next venture.

The call came from Chef Batali to once again team up with Mark Ladner in a new project called Del Posto. It was to be the most opulent Italian restaurant ever seen in the country. This time Mario was the Executive Sous Chef, a huge role that he embraced with great care. When the 2007 Michelin Guide was released the award of two stars was given to the restaurant. It was the first Italian restaurant in America with such a high honor. Feeling the urge to spawn off on his own, Mario left the restaurant after two and a half years to pursue his dream of being an Executive Chef.

In 2009, with partner Rich Torrisi, he opened a deli on Mulberry Street called Torrisi Italian Specialties where they served their own take on classic Italian-American sandwiches. The deli quickly evolved and began serving an innovative prix fixe dinner in the evenings. Torrisi Italian Specialties received two stars from The New York Times and was nominated by the James Beard Foundation as one of the Best New Restaurants in America.

In 2010, he and partner Rich Torrisi, teamed up with Jeff Zalaznick, a fellow restaurant visionary who shared their passion. They formed a restaurant group, called Major Food Group (MFG), and have not looked back.

Since then, they have spun off the initial Torrisi Italian Specialties deli concept into its own restaurant called Parm. Parm is a casual restaurant and sandwich shop that celebrates classic Italian-American food. Upon opening, Parm received two stars from The New York Times and was named as one of the

101 Best Places to Eat in North America by Newsweek. Since opening Parm in 2011, MFG has opened an outpost of Parm in Yankee Stadium, on the Upper West Side and, most recently, in Battery Park.

After opening the first Parm on Mulberry Street, they closed and renovated Torrissi Italian Specialties, and reopened it as a boutique tasting room, focusing on a nine-course chef's tasting menu. The restaurant takes its cues from Italian-American heritage, but draws inspiration from every corner of New York City. Amongst many accolades, in 2011, it was ranked the #1 Italian restaurant in New York by New York Magazine. At the end of 2014, Torrissi Italian Specialties closed for an extensive renovation with plans to reopen as a new restaurant in Fall 2015.

Major Food then set their sights on another ambitious venture: resurrecting Italian-American fine dining. In March 2013, they opened Carbone, an homage to the great Italian-American fine dining establishments of mid-century New York in the historic Rocco's Restaurant space on Thompson Street. Upon opening, Carbone received a dazzling five out five stars from Time Out New York and four and a half stars from Bloomberg, was nominated as Best New Restaurant in America by the James Beard Foundation, and its greatest honor, three stars from The New York Times. A second location of Carbone, representing Major Food Group's first international venture, opened in Hong Kong in August 2014.

Located on the same block as Carbone in Greenwich Village, ZZ's Clam Bar opened in June 2013 and reflects a passion for raw fish and well-crafted cocktails. ZZ's Clam Bar received three stars from GQ Magazine and Bloomberg and was credited by The New York Times for ushering in a new age of raw eating in New York City. ZZ's serves as the hub of cocktail creativity for the group and in 2014 was nominated as the Best New Bar in America by Tales of the Cocktail.

In September 2014, Major Food Group opened Dirty French in The Ludlow hotel on the Lower East Side. Dirty French, MFG's first foray into French cuisine, is an edgy New York bistro that takes its cues from the great legacy of the neighborhood and relevant worldly influences. In addition to Dirty French, Major Food Group opened the Lobby Bar, a 100-seat indoor/outdoor cocktail bar and lounge. MFG also manages all food and beverage operations, including special events and 24-hour room service, for The Ludlow hotel.

In January of 2015, Major Food opened Santina, a coastal Italian restaurant located underneath the High Line in a structure designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano. It received a glowing two-star review from The New York Times and was named one of GQ's Most Outstanding Restaurants of 2015.

Upcoming projects for Mario and Major Food include Sadelle's, a bagel-centric bakery and restaurant, Parm locations in Williamsburg and Park Slope and a Carbone in Las Vegas. While MFG grows it continues to take inspiration from and celebrate the history of New York, and in 2016 will be taking over the city's iconic Four Seasons Restaurant and brasserie space in the historic Seagram's Building to launch a concept of its own.

To date, both Torrissi and Carbone restaurants have been nominated as one of the Best New Restaurants in America by the James Beard Foundation; Torrissi, Carbone, and ZZ's Clam all hold Michelin stars, as well.

In addition to the restaurants' numerous accolades, Mario has been awarded Best New Chef in America by Food & Wine Magazine and nominated for several James Beard Awards. Mario currently lives in the Tribeca.