



Eataly in New York. An Italian Mecca for Real Gourmets

M. M. (August 26, 2010)



After the successes in Piedmont and Japan, on August 31 the Italian “patron of high quality foods” Oscar Farinetti will open a 50,000 sqf wine&food megastore in New York named “Eataly”. “More than offering 100% Italian products, Eataly is more about the spirit of Italy, so it will also offer great local things coming from the surrounding areas”, said Joe Bastianich who, together with his long-time partner and renowned chef Mario Batali, is one of the main sponsors of the initiative

“Life is a mixture of magic and pasta”, said Federico Fellini many years ago.

On August 31, Oscar Farinetti, the patron of “high quality foods”, as he is defined in Italy, will bring these two essential ingredients of the Italian dolce vita right in the heart of Manhattan. His [Eataly](#) [2], a gigantic, 50,000 square feet food&wine shopping hall, will be located on 200 5th



Avenue, right at the corner with Broadway, a few steps away from the famous Flatiron Building. The New York location will be the third fruit of the project that Mr. Farinetti has been carrying on for several years, the first two locations having been opened in Piedmont, Italy, and Japan.

The goal behind Eataly, as Farinetti himself explained, is to offer a wide variety of high quality products to conscious consumers who have made of a correct diet an integral part of their everyday life. In order to reach it, Eataly also organizes educational events, such as cooking classes, tastings, and lessons focused on the preservation of foods. Moreover, since “eating well helps you to live better”, there also are a number of courses addressed exclusively to children, future adults who need to develop “a sense of taste that make them distinguish quality foods from the rest so to live their life in a more satisfying and happy way”.

The label gathers small and medium-sized Italian companies that operate in the many different divisions of the Italian wine and food sector: from Gragnano pasta to the water of the Maritime Alps; from Venetian wine to Ligurian oil and Piedmontese meats and cheeses, the consumers can find in every Eataly location all the necessary ingredients to prepare a healthy and tasty Mediterranean diet meal.

The New York project was first conceived by Mr. Farinetti about 2 years ago, but it could not be realized due to the contingent economic crisis and the consequent cut off of major investments. It was only in April 2010 that he finally managed to rent at a “bargain price” (for New York standards) the building located between 23rd and 24th Street and renovation works could begin.

Among his main partners in this 25 million dollars investment, the high-standard restaurant chain “B&B”, owned by TV-star chef [Mario Batali](#) [3] and renowned sommelier Joe Bastianich, with his mother [Lidia](#) [4].

Batali and Bastianich already own fifteen restaurants, three of which are in Los Angeles, three in Las Vegas, one in Port Chester, NY, and the rest in Manhattan. “If we’re as successful as we want to be, we’ve created the culinary destination in New York that each of the 45 million people who visit the city would stop and visit before they leave. New York doesn’t have that. Maybe it used to be Windows on the World, but there’s not one go-to. (...) There are so many different ways of experiencing Eataly—from shopping to eating, to noshing to just being there, to passing time. People need to waste time; tourists need something to do. This becomes a culinary tourist destination.”, said Joe Bastianich in [an interview to Capital New York](#) [5] early this year.

Eataly in fact is not only a shopping experience, but a real Luna Park for all of the Italofiles, from gourmets to ordinary people who enjoy testing their skills in the kitchen every once in a while. On the ground floor of the building, that will also host Tiffani’s headquarters, visitors will find over 5,000 sqf of food aisles, featuring products imported from Italy

Produce and fresh products, including some cheeses, however, will be coming from local green markets and small local companies: “More than offering 100% Italian products, Eataly is about the spirit of Italy, so it’s also great local things”, pointed out Mr. Bastianich.

A controversial opinion to many, but one that nevertheless reflects the historical fact that Italians tend to cook with what they can find and cultivate “in their backyard” and according to the season. Moreover, importing from Italy highly perishable products would not only overstep the philosophy of sustainable consumption supported by Eataly, but would also impose greater import and transportation costs that the consumer would ultimately have to pay for.

This way of thinking has also guaranteed Eataly the support of the Slow Food Movement founded and guided by Carlo Petrini, and on which Mr. Farinetti could count right from the moment he first opened Eataly’s first location in Piedmont.

[Slow Food](#) [6] collaborates with Eataly as a consulting team which helps verifying that the quality of the products offered corresponds to the expectations of the consumers and that the producers do not lower the quality of their goods in view of a growing market demand. Its certification of quality is given only if a product is proven to be sustainable both from an ecological and a social point of view -- or in other words if it can be part of a diet that is affordable and environmentally respectful.



All the shoppers visiting Eataly will also have an opportunity to taste products right on the spot. Not only in fact the ground floor of the building will host six different restaurants, but several tasting corners will also be set up all around the area.

There will also be a coffee corner run by the Italian brand [Lavazza](#) [7], a library, and a winery. In the cellar, a kitchen, a pastry shop, an ice-cream shop and a bakery will cover a 1,000 square feet area and will be open since early in the morning to guarantee the costumers fresh products at every hour of the day. "Based on the Torino model, every shopping experience has a counterpart in a dining experience. So there's a vegetable restaurant in the produce department. We also have a vegetable butcher: You can bring vegetables to the counter and have them butchered for you. The restaurants are kind of full service, but not really. You can't have coffee or dessert. You can have your vegetable and seafood but you go to the ice cream corner for a gelato and to the coffee bar for an espresso", said Mario Batali.

Mario will also run the rooftop beer garden that will offer full dinners and will be open until 2 am. "It is the first time since Joe Bastianich and I first opened [Otto Restaurant](#) [8] that I actually designed the menu of a restaurant that I run," he pointed out. One of the former chefs of his first restaurant [Babbo](#) [9], finally, will be delighting the clients of the Italian steakhouse "Manzo".

With the Italian cuisine being so popular in America, and especially in New York, Eataly meets a growing demand of products that can fit the standards of the old-fashion "Italian spirit" in the kitchen: high quality, tasty, and affordable.

It promises to become one of New York's hot spots for both tourists and locals--not only a shopping center but also the place where Fellini's motto becomes a real experience, and life "becomes a mixture of magic and pasta"

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