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## North End Grill Day One: Danny Meyer and Floyd Cardoz Launch Their New Battery Park Eatery

by James Mulcahy



What do you get when you visit a restaurant during the first day of service? Well, if you're visiting one of famed restaurateur Danny Meyer's new haunts, chances are that you'll get to meet him in person. Today, lunch service launched at his new Battery Park City restaurant **North End Grill**, and there he was in the dining room casually going up to diners and thanking them for stopping by.

Meyer's signature brand of hospitality is complimented by a seafood-heavy menu from chef **Floyd Cardoz**, who formerly was at the helm of Meyer's now-shuttered *Tabla*. We dropped by the way-Downtown eatery to scope it out on the first day of lunch service. Take a look at the below to see what we found, and if you do stop by make sure to have a witty comment or two in your pocket so you can impress Meyer when he comes over to say hi.

**The Space:** Unless you are intimately familiar with Battery Park City, the Grill is not so easy to find. All of the buildings have an eerily silent, *I Am Legend*-esque quality down there, and we were about to turn back moments before we stumbled on the eatery. The warm venue should do a lot to improve foot traffic in the area (especially when combined with the lunchtime crowds that fill up the nearby *Shake Shack*). North End is broken up into two rooms - the first contains a bar (the restaurant is sans alcohol at the moment) along with a long chefs counter that lets you see all of the action in the abundantly staffed kitchen.

Walk through and you'll find the stylish, black-and-white dining room that's more subdued than the front space. If you can't get a seat at the windows in the front where you can enjoy lunch along with a view of the Hudson, you can always snag a seat underneath the giant black-and-white portrait of a chicken in the back dining room.

**The Food:** The lunch menu was extensive and, while heavy on the seafood, contains plenty that will please anyone not in the mood for fish. Appetizers range from the light and simple - think some raw fluke with bacon, apples and lime - to heartier options that can serve as a full meal (after finishing off that lightly charred grilled clam pizza, we were ready for our midday siesta). There's a section of egg dishes (tuna tartare with fried quail egg and crispy shallots) and inventive entrees like a bacon-shrimp burger that won't leave anyone asking "where's the beef?" Floyd's mastery of Indian cuisine is not lost in this New American menu, potent spices dusted the french fries and were carefully worked into many of the other dishes on the menu.



**The Drinks:** Although no alcohol is being poured at the moment, the restaurant did go through the trouble of concocting a large list of mocktails. Check out mixes like the Kachumber Kooler, a mix of cucumber, cilantro, green chilies, tonic and lime.

**The Crowd:** So, who is going to make their way down here when there are so many other Meyer restaurants around town to enjoy? Well, we overheard a two-top of appreciative diners saying that they work in the area and are so happy to have a new place to go. Also drawn to this culinary desert on day one were a white-haired couple who claimed it was their anniversary and a few larger parties of suits who looked like they were dining in for business rather than pleasure. Those not on business meetings - aka the foodies - seemed to congregate at the chef's counter, where they could watch the grills be raised and lowered above the flames using a round metal wheel.

**The Vibe:** Though stacked with that power-lunch crowd, day one still managed to feel convivial and relaxed (thanks in large part to Meyer for making everyone seem at home). And with clear views of the Staten Island Ferry from our seat in the dining room, the whole experience (ok, so maybe it's just the area) felt a tad bit *Working Girl* (minus the shoulder pads and teased up hair). "Let the river run..."

**The Details:** 104 N. End Ave.; 646-747-1600

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