

## NOW TRENDING

## ▶ PERFECTING PIZZA

"Pizza is perhaps the one dish that describes what the world knows and loves about Italian food: It offers endless possibilities and is endlessly talked about. It's a fad that will never fade, but in the era of artisanal yeast and heritage grains, there's been a spike in 'fancy' pies, to which I have no objection. In college I worked at a stromboli restaurant called Stuff Yer Face, and we worked the classics. In pizza and in stromboli, both then and now, the most important ingredient is the crust."

## ▶ IN FARM'S WAY

"The easiest way to convince people of the benefits of eating local and seasonal food is to have them eat it. The difference between a perfectly ripe ear of corn in August and the one you buy at the supermarket in Detroit in January is remarkable. Michael Pollan and I can pen op-eds about the necessity of a more sustainable food system until the end of time, but the public will likely be more easily persuaded by the flavor of the product."

## ▶ HALL PASS

"Last year, Eataly was one of the top 10 tourist destinations in New York. In addition to a market and a set of restaurants, it's a

spectacle and it's a giant bar. People can go to Eataly with no intention of eating and they can also go with no intention of doing anything except eating. The [high-end food court] phenomenon is driven by convenience. And now, food halls like [Brooklyn's] Berg'n and Brookfield Place at the World Trade Center bring vendors from around the city under one roof and they create an event of food consumption."

## ▶ LOOKING TO PALERMO

"I am supremely excited about the food of Sicily. The wines made from the volcanic soil on Mount Etna are in vogue, and the food will follow."

## ▶ ROOTING FOR GLUTEN-FREE

"Eliminating gluten from people's diets is making them feel better. I think it's a trend that's going to stay. What's important to note is that eliminating gluten does not necessarily diminish the quality of the food we cook. We offer gluten-free pasta at all of my restaurants. At Del Posto, we offer a gluten-free tasting menu. For us, it's about being hospitable and making sure everyone can enjoy his or her experience at our restaurants, without compromise."



# HOLDING COURT

CELEBRITY CHEF AND INFECTIOUS INNOVATOR MARIO BATALI FORECASTS THE FUTURE OF DINING // BY MARGIE GOLDSMITH

▶▶ MARIO BATALI IS a culinary household name, and has been since 1996, when *Molto Mario* debuted on the Food Network. His fame only grew with appearances on *Iron Chef America*, and then the stunning success of the Michelin-starred Babbo, the James Beard Award, the four stars from *The New York Times* for Del Posto, and the openings of more than 20 restaurants and markets from New York to Hong Kong. Today, Batali hosts ABC Daytime's *The Chew*.

And, of course, there's the ingenious concept and triumphant execution of Eataly NYC. The venue, located in New York's Flatiron District, is a hedonistic immersion into Italian culinary culture—a shopping and dining village all under one roof that has proven to be one of the city's signature attractions, and not only for visitors. "Just steps from Eataly" has become an invaluable selling point for area real estate. It's that popular. (Eataly Chicago followed in 2013.) Founder/creator Oscar Farinetti—along with partners Batali, Joe Bastianich, Lidia Bastianich, and Adam and Alex Saper—captured this limoncello-scented lightning in a bottle.