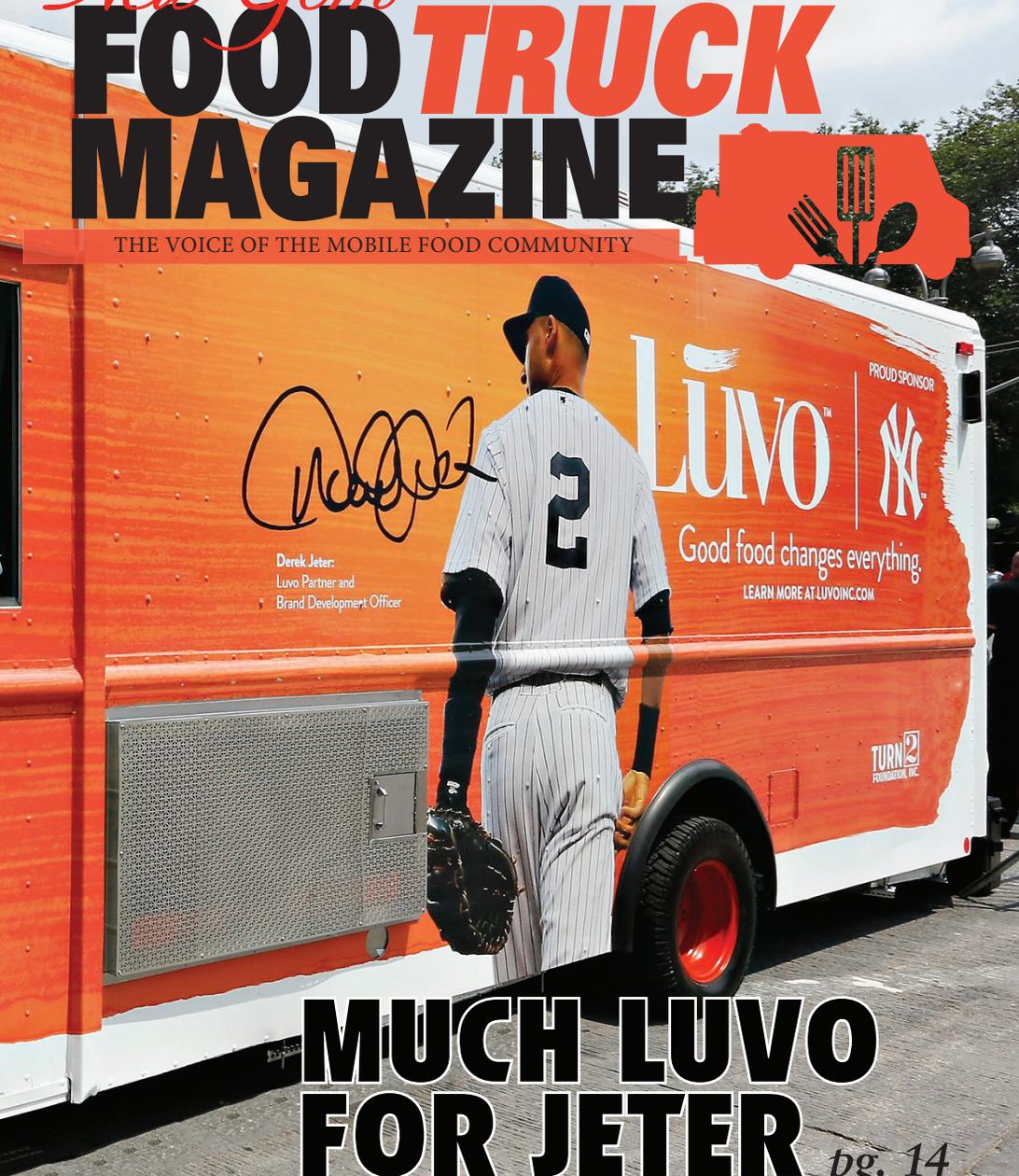


New York

OCTOBER 2014

FOOD TRUCK MAGAZINE

THE VOICE OF THE MOBILE FOOD COMMUNITY



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MUCH LUVVO FOR JETER

pg. 14



THE RISE OF
HOT DOG
ROYALTY

pg. 2

A TASTE OF TRUTH:
BUSTING THE MYTH
THAT STREET FOOD IS UNSAFE

pg. 10



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Contents

PG. 2-3 PAPAYA KING: THE RISE OF HOT DOG ROYALTY

by Wayne Rosenbaum

PG. 4 FOOD TRUCKS IN THE MEDIA

PG. 5 PONTI ROSSI: A CULINARY BRIDGE BETWEEN NAPLES AND NY

by Panicha Imsomboon

PG. 6 MYKONOS GRILL FROM PUSH CART TO FOOD TRUCK

by Panicha Imsomboon

PG. 7 FOOD TRUCK CONFERENCES

PG. 8-9 IN THE DRIVERS SEAT OF CHANGE: A SWEET TOOTH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

by Cat Crow

PG. 10 BUSTING THE MYTH THAT STREET FOOD IS UNSAFE

by Cat Crow

PG. 12-13 2014 VENDY AWARDS

by Cat Crow

PG. 14-15 MUCH LUVO FOR JETER

by Sarah Henry

PG. 16-17 THE FUTURE OF FOOD IS NOW

by Melissa Kravitz

PG. 18-19 "THE ENTREPRENEUR SPACE" IN QUEENS TAKING FOOD HOBBISTS TO COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

by Thomas Fricilone

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PAPAYA KING THE RISE OF HOT DOG ROYALTY

BY WAYNE ROSENBAUM

In 1923, Gus Poulos, just 16 years old, arrived at Ellis Island from Greece. All alone in a big city with no family, friends, or money, Gus relied only on his energy and ambition. Gus quickly immersed himself in the Roaring 20's and began his journey toward the American Dream. Within three years, Gus went from working at a deli in the Yorkville section of Manhattan to owning it.

After years of hard work, Gus was able to take his first vacation to the sunny beaches of Miami, where he fell in love with the plentiful supply of papaya, or as Gus referred the fruit, "the aristocratic melon of the tropics." When he got back to New York, Gus could not find his beloved papayas. Florida was a world away by train and, as a result, most tropical fruits were completely unknown to New Yorkers. In 1931, Gus sold his deli and opened his first tropical juice store (and the first juice bar in New York) called Hawaiian Tropical Drinks.

It didn't take long for New Yorkers to get hooked on the drinks. Long lines formed outside Gus' store, and the legend of his papaya drinks spread like wildfire. In 1935, he opened another store in Brooklyn and in 1937, he set up his third shop in Philadelphia. Gus started serving freshly squeezed strawberry shakes and coconut drinks mixed with papaya juice, as well. It was the birth of the smoothie as we know it! Despite his success, something was missing.

Gus' first store was on 86th Street and 3rd Avenue in Manhattan (where it still stands today), an area heavily populated with German and Polish immigrants. One day while trying to impress a young German-American wom-



an named "Birdie" on his roller skates, Gus fell and badly injured his ankle. The young lady took pity on him and helped him through his recuperation, which included bringing him food from the German restaurants in the neighborhood. Gus loved the food and his new girlfriend. After they married, he introduced the frankfurter to his juice stand and, in my opinion, created one of the most magical combinations of all time.

As the decades passed, Gus' fruit and frank stands grew in stature and reputation. Gus opened several more stores in New York and even opened restaurants as far away as Baltimore and Miami. Legend has it that a famous Brooklyn Dodger became addicted to Gus' fare and coined the name "Papaya King." The name stuck and customers began to refer to the stands as the "Papaya King," prompting Gus to formally change the name of his stand to Papaya King in the 1960's.

Today, say the words "Papaya King" and franks and tropical drinks will instantly come to mind. Papaya King has been called the "best and cheapest stand-up lunch in the city," and "more vital than the subway," by

Zagat. Critic Ed Levine of New York Eats calls Papaya King the "best hot dog in the world," a sentiment with which Julia Child and Anthony Bourdain have both shared. Over the years, Papaya King has played host to movie stars, rock stars, presidents, business titans, and most importantly, New Yorkers and visitors from all walks of life.

2013 and 2014 brought some exciting changes to Papaya King. They opened their second location on St. Marks Place in the East Village and launched a mobile food truck that is roaming throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn. They are proud to share their magical combination with the world and look forward to another 80 years of deliciousness!

TO FIND THE TRUCK

Twitter @papayakingtruck or visit papayaking.com. **If you are interested in booking the truck for a private event** call 646-692-8482 or email jason@papayaking.com



docu-drama

"WINGMEN" follows Ramone Dickerson and Corey Simmons, best friends and owners of 2 Fat 2 Fly, a South Carolina-based food truck that sells stuffed chicken wings, as they pursue their dream of one day owning a million-dollar wing empire. The self-made and self-taught pair get their inspiration from the most unexpected places. Their trial-by-error approach to cooking yields interesting combinations like the jambalaya or mac & cheese stuffed chicken wings, as seen in the special. Will these culinary creatives get their crazy business habits in line and strike it rich?

The new docuseries premiered on the Oprah Winfrey Network on August 16. More episodes are expected to come but a schedule has not yet been released. Stay tuned! *By Rachel Dougherty*



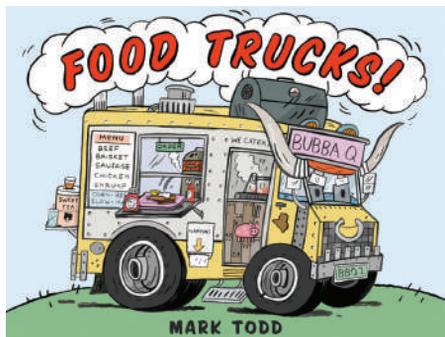
competitive television

Ever dream of managing your own food truck? Do you think you have a concept that will blow customers away? For four teams every week this October, that's exactly what they'll find out. The Food Network's new reality show, Food Truck Face Off, lets four aspiring food truck owners and their teams pitch a food truck concept to a panel of judges.

Two of those teams are selected for a curbside face off. The team that rakes in the most cash at the end of the competition is awarded their own customized food truck for a year.

Hosted by the ever charming Jesse Palmer, best known as a commentator on ESPN and Season 5's The Bachelor, we expect this to be a crash course in food truck planning, prepping, and selling. And who knows, maybe one of these team's concepts will inspire your own food truck idea. You'll just have to watch to find out.

Food Truck Face Off premieres October 12th at 8 pm ET/PT on The Food Network. *By Thomas Friclone*



children's book

"Food Trucks!" written and illustrated by Mark Todd, is a book for children that adults will enjoy, too. The book includes fun cartoon illustrations of 14 different food trucks coupled with lively poems. It's a youthful and informative approach to the food truck movement. "Food Trucks!" truly is a delight! *By Karine Catenacci*



Alessandro Capuano outside of his food truck



PONTI ROSSI A CULINARY BRIDGE BETWEEN NAPLES AND NY

BY PANICHA IMSOMBOON

Ponti Rossi, a new Italian food truck owned by Alessandro Capuano, is off to a successful start. “Our first day was crazy,” Capuano explained, “At the end of the day, we had to restock everything.”

Ponti Rossi means “red bridges” in Italian, and is the neighborhood in Naples where Capuano was born and raised.

Capuano came to New York a few years ago to start his dream of bringing the taste of authentic Italian food to New Yorkers.

The Ponti Rossi food truck allows Capuano to fulfill his dream while providing casual and quick service.

Ponti Rossi’s flexible menu allows customers to customize their own pasta and panini. For

the pasta, you can choose the kind of noodle you want and the way it’s prepared. Examples of the preparations are ragu bolognese, classic tomato sauce, and mixed mushrooms with pancetta and heavy cream. The choices of pastas are penne, orecchiette, fusilli, fettuccine, and spaghetti. Asked which sauce is his favorite, Capuano replied, “Bolognese. We use ground meat, carrots, peppers, onions, tomato sauce, olive oil, and garlic in the sauce and cook it for two hours, at least.”

Craving a panini? For the sandwiches, Ponti Rossi offers a unique selection of meats. Some of Capuano’s favorites are tonno (marinated tuna imported from Sardinia) and nduja (spreadable, spicy pork sausage). Cheese lovers will appreciate that Capuano uses fresh mozzarella from Caserta, a small town in Italy famous for this kind of cheese.

Twice a week, the truck also serves house-made gelato, which is served in a brioche bun and topped with Nutella and powdered sugar. Be sure to get there early on those days because Ponti Rossi makes this special gelato in small batches, and, as you can imagine, it flies off the truck. 🍷





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**PONTI ROSSI
FOOD TRUCK**



Andreas Andreou, Mykonos Grill Owner



MYKONOS GRILL FROM PUSH CART TO FOOD TRUCK

BY PANICHA IMSOMBOON

Mykonos Grill is the latest Greek food truck running on the streets of New York City. The truck, owned by Andreas Andreou, has been open less than a month, but already enjoys regular customers. That's partly because, though the food truck is new, Andreou isn't a new face in Greek food scene.

Before purchasing Mykonos Grill truck, Andreou ran a Greek pushcart for eight years on East 47th Street and Second Avenue. Therefore, when he said goodbye to the pushcart and upgraded to a food truck, his loyal customers remained.

"I had regular customers from before. Little by little, they found out about my truck and it's location, and they visited again," said Andreas.

The truck, which is decorated with scenery from Greece, offers authentic flavor through the menu. Andreou says that the most popular items on his menu are the gyro, the chicken breast, and souvlaki, which are all served with sides of rice and salad. The option of adding a Greek salad to your meal is a new addition to the menu available on the new truck.

Andreou knows which of his food items are his customers' favorites, but claims to not have a favorite himself.

"I like all my food," Andreou explained, "Something that I wouldn't eat, I would not give to my customers."

Andreou cares about his customers. By observing the interactions between Andreou, his staff, and the customers, it seems that Mykonos Grill offers something besides Greek food: friendship.

"You see somebody every day for years. You talk about sports. You talk about different things. You know their personal life a little bit, and you eventually become friends with the customers," said Andreou, who has been in food business for almost his entire life. 🍴



MYKONOS GRILL FOOD TRUCK

WHERE TO FIND
EAST 47TH ST. & 2ND AVE.
HOURS OF OPERATION
10 A.M.–4:30 P.M., M-F.





Tampa Bay Food Truck Rally

TAMPA BAY FOOD TRUCK SEMINAR WILL HAND YOU KEYS TO SUCCESS

Tampa Bay Food Truck Rally is hosting its ninth annual seminar on November 9th from 5 pm to 9 pm. The seminar focuses primarily on setting up a food truck and how to position yourself for success with discussions including procurement practices, branding, marketing, insurance, and menu development.

What better way to learn about the food truck business than from the successful entrepreneurs of Tampa Bay Food Truck Rally. Originally a division of Tasting Tampa, Food Truck Rally started in 2011 by Todd Strutz and Michael Blasco with the intention of hosting as many food trucks as possible in one location for the enjoyment of food and friends. The team started by hosting nine trucks to more than 4,000 people, and, three years later, have a dedicated fleet of food truck business owners now reaching just over 100. Food Truck Rally now helps build channels for food truck owners by helping them with marketing, web development, SEO, and branding—much of what you will learn at the Seminar IX.

Best of all, Food Truck Rally's Seminar IX will be available to stream online. Whether you're in Tampa Bay or not, you can be a part of this educational event. Registration is still available at foodtruckseminar.com. Don't miss this great opportunity.



ROAM MOBILE FOOD CONFERENCE COMES TO SAN ANTONIO

For mobile food vendors around America, the 2nd Annual Roam Mobile Food Conference is coming to San Antonio, TX on November 8th and 9th at the Embassy Suites Hotel along the historic Riverwalk.

From food trucks to carts to kiosks, Roam is a great opportunity for mobile food handlers to learn, network, and develop best practices for their company while meeting important exhibitors such as Localite LA and Insure My Food Trailer to help you understand exactly what it means to run a mobile food business.

The conference will host two days of seminars that include mobile food innovations and trends, vending technology, and basic operations. Whether you've been in the business only a few days or a few years, you're going to get the knowledge you're looking for.

For the novice, you can attend "So You Wanna Open a Food Truck? Business Planning," then head over to "Funding Facts," to get you started with your new business venture. For the more experienced food vendor, classes such as Health on Wheels: 10 Hot Trends in Nutrition, or Taking off the Wheels: Food Truck to Restaurant, might be more your style. And best of all, you get to taste some of San Antonio's best food trucks. So don't wait on this one, registration is still available at roamconference.com.

IN THE DRIVERS SEAT OF CHANGE: A SWEET TOOTH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

BY CAT CROW



MEET THE WINNER of the 2014 Vendy's Rookie of the Year Award: Snowday. Snowday is the first food truck acquired by Drive Change, a food truck social enterprise that hires, teaches, and empowers young people coming home from adult jail and prison.

Drive Change's pilot phase began in April 2014 with a class of eight and an intentionally transitional model. The program hires young people for six to eight months and provides them with transferable skill learning, credentials, and hands-on experience, before helping to transition them into other, more permanent job placements.

Drive Change is the brainchild of Jordan Lexton, who conceived of the truck after teaching English on Rikers Island for three years. Her students were young, just 16 to 18 years old. New York City is one of

the two states in America that charges 16-year olds as adults in the criminal justice system, so most of Lexton's pupils left Rikers with felony convictions. With the recidivism rate in the New York City jail system as high as 65%, Lexton saw too many young people get released only to come right back.

"Kids who were so full of potential, who so wanted to go on and do bigger and brighter things, couldn't because the ability to access that opportunity was just not there. It became pressingly clear to me that if we don't really address this time of reentry," Lexton explained, "we are setting up these young people for a life behind bars."

Lexton settled on the idea of starting a food truck for a couple reasons. Mostly, she listened to people who said they really needed employment; she knew that she wanted to start a business rather than just offer support services. A culinary arts class that she witnessed at Rikers inspired Lexton further.



“WE’RE NOT JUST
A FOOD BUSINESS.
WE’RE CHANGING
LIVES AT THE
END OF THE DAY.”



TRY IT FOR YOURSELF!
Follow Snowday on Twitter to find their up-to-date location
@SNOWDAYTRUCK
To donate to the cause, head to Drive Change’s website:
WWW.DRIVECHANGENYC.ORG

“It was in the kitchen that I saw a glimmer of light and self-esteem in young people that they didn’t seem to possess anywhere else in the jail,” Lexton explained.

Lexton believes that the ability to make and present something, and to acquire licenses and credentials, creates a sense that upward mobility is possible to those with a criminal record—a sentiment that has held up to be true in an industry that tends to be receptive to hiring employees with checkered pasts.

“Also, I love to eat,” Lexton laughed, “And food brings people together. Providing good food seemed like a great way to start conversations around the kind of reform that I want. Why not hire the young people that I want to provide opportunities for?”

Roy Waterman, Drive Change’s Program Director, an all-around handyman who was formerly incarcerated himself, explains:

“We’re not just a food business. We’re changing lives at the end of the day. It’s not just about teaching youth transferable skills, it’s also about reshaping their decision-making processes so they don’t make same mistakes.”

Besides serving a social purpose, Snowday serves up delicious and inventive eats. Snowday’s menu has a “Frech-Canadian-ish” theme, with maple syrup as the central ingredient. While visiting Montreal, Lexton fell in love with a treat called “sugar on snow,” hot maple syrup drizzled on fresh snow, which inspired the truck’s name as well as its sweet and savory fare. Not only is maple syrup a versatile ingredient, but it’s also a huge New York State commodity, a fact that fits right in with Snowday’s farm-to-truck model. Snowday sources all of its ingredients from local urban or upstate farms, and the menu changes seasonally, ensuring that the food is as fresh as it can be.

Jared Spafford, the Director of Culinary Operations for Snowday and formerly a sous chef at Marlow and Daughters, has designed a rotating menu that has included tasty delights like quinoa salad with farm-fresh veggies and maple dressing, maple-bacon Brussels sprouts, and beer-battered maple onion rings. Oh, and a maple grilled cheese sandwich. Yep, that’s a grilled cheese sandwich, drizzled with maple syrup. Now is a good time wipe the drool off this cute little publication, if you haven’t already. 🍷



A TASTE OF TRUTH: BUSTING THE MYTH THAT STREET FOOD IS UNSAFE

BY CAT CROW

TASTE BUDS: DELIGHT! The Institute of Justice claims to have busted the commonly perpetuated myth that street food is unclean and unsafe with their new research report, *Street Eats, Safe Eats: How Food Trucks and Carts Stack up to Restaurants on Sanitation*. The report, which reviewed more than 260,000 food safety inspection reports from seven large American cities, reveals how food trucks and carts stack up against their wheel-less brethren. The results are sweet (and savory) music to our food-truck-lovin' ears.

Street Eats, Safe Eats relies on inspection data collected from government agencies in Boston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Louisville, Miami, Seattle and Washington, D.C. These cities were chosen because they inspect their street vendors using the same

criteria that they use to inspect restaurants. Results show that in every city examined, food trucks and street vendors passed health inspections just as well as—if not better than—restaurants. In six of the seven cities, food trucks and carts averaged fewer sanitation violations than restaurants, with statistically significant differences.

On the Institute of Justice's website, Dick Carpenter, Director of Strategic Research at the IJ, concludes:

“Bans and limits do not improve public health—they stifle entrepreneurship, destroy jobs and limit consumer choice. The recipe for clean and safe food trucks and carts is simple—the same inspections used for restaurants.”

Read the report yourself at www.IJ.org. The proof is, if I may, in The Pudding Truck.

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2014 Vendy Awards

BY CAT CROW

WHILE IT ACTUALLY DID RAIN ON THIS "PARADE" OF PEDDLERS, THE WET WEATHER DIDN'T DAMPEN THE SPIRIT OF THE 10TH ANNUAL VENDY AWARDS. MORE THAN 2,500 FOOD LOVERS GATHERED ON GOVERNOR'S ISLAND ON SEPTEMBER 13 TO FILL THEIR BELLIES WITH TASTY SAMPLINGS FROM THE BEST OF NYC'S VENDOR CONTENDERS AND VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITES.



Cinnamon Snail owner Adam Sobel with judge, Adam Richman, of Man vs. Food.

VENDY CUP WINNER: Cinnamon Snail

Adam Sobel's highly-rated vegan and organic food truck, the Cinnamon Snail, took home the coveted Vendy Cup, and the team was beyond thrilled.

"This is a real dream come true for us!" Sobel exclaimed, continuing, "I knew about the Vendy's before I even had a food truck, and I always thought, 'Man, if vegan food could ever get that kind of recognition it would be a huge thing for the way that people treat animals and think about vegan and vegetarian food.'"

The Cinnamon Snail's award-winning menu changes seasonally and at the team's whim, because as Sobel would say, that's just more fun. Rated on Yelp as the #1 place to eat in NYC this year, the Cinnamon Snail is no stranger to success. What's the Cinnamon Snail's secret? Sobel's philosophy is simple:

"We just make extra yummy food and care about the people that we make it for," Sobel explained.

THE WINNERS *(drum roll please):*

VENDY CUP:
Cinnamon Snail

MASTERS CUP:
Calexico

BEST DESSERT:
Ice & Vice

BEST MARKET VENDOR:
Zha Pan Asian

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR:
Snowday *[featured pg. 8-9]*

PEOPLE'S TASTE AWARD:
Nuchas

HEROIC VENDOR AWARD:
Baare Batchiri



The heroic Vendor Award winner Baare Batchiri and his wife.

HEROIC VENDOR AWARD: Baare Batchiri

Baare Batchiri is the first non-food vendor to receive the 2014 Heroic Vendor Award. Last June, Batchiri was selling cell phones at his stand outside of 590 Broadway when a homeless man randomly and violently attacked him with a pair of scissors. Despite suffering stab wounds to his chest, Batchiri courageously chased the perpetrator into the subway and aided the police in his capture. After ten days in the hospital, Batchiri was eager to return to his stand. Since the attack, Batchiri has managed to maintain his charitable and friendly nature, even towards the mentally ill man who nearly killed him.

MUCH LUVO FOR JETER

BY SARAH HENRY

ANYONE CAN NAME a few of the latest healthy food trends. You can't go anywhere without hearing about coconut water, kale, and quinoa (surely, no grain has ever had it so good). And then there's Derek Jeter. Yes, celebrity endorsements are also trending—when it comes to backing a product they believe in. The new Luvo food truck, which caters to Manhattan lunch crowds, is now serving fast, healthy food with a side of baseball superstardom.

Gone are the days when Jeter would eat a Big Mac to fuel up.

"We used to send the batboys to the fast food restaurants around the [old Yankee] Stadium and eat right before the games," Jeter told the *New York Daily News* at the truck's debut in July.

"If I'm going to be honest with you, when I first heard of [Luvo] I was like, 'C'mon,' but then, once you taste it and get an opportunity to see the nutrition factor, it aligns



Derek Jeter and LUVO Chef John Mitchell



Luvo CEO Christine Day, Chef John Mitchell, Derek Jeter

with everything that I've been about, especially with the [Turn 2] Foundation," Jeter told the *Daily News*, referring to his charity for underprivileged children. "We're always trying to promote healthy lifestyles."

Jeter initially came on board as an investor and chief development officer, but when he's done playing for the Yankees, he will help design a performance line for Luvo, which will feature hearty, protein-driven food for athletes, according to Kevin Day, Luvo's Sports and Marketing Manager.

"He really liked the brand and the products," Day said of Jeter.

The truck, which has been operating regularly since mid-August, also serves as a marketing platform for Luvo and a test-run kitchen for experimenting with foods. Luvo may possibly open a series of bistros in the future, Day said.

Luvo strives to combine healthy food with accessibility. Most of the available food that is "fast" also harbors a glut of fat, salt, and calories, not much value, nutritionally. Shouldn't healthy food also be fast, easy, and tasty? Luvo Founder Steve Sidwell thought so. With a background in investment banking in Vancouver, B.C., Sidwell found himself traveling a lot. Sidwell would frequent fine dining restaurants with clients at night, and grab fast food during the day. As a result, Sidwell found himself 20 to 30 pounds heavier. He tried conventional diets, but nothing really stuck, so he hired a personal chef. Sidwell provided the chef with a set of nutritional requirements, and was surprised to find that the chef made great tasting food within the guidelines. No butter. No cream. And...it still tasted good. He thought

New Yorkers can visit the truck, which can be tracked on: Twitter @luvoinc or Facebook.

Find Luvo products in the following stores: ShopRite, (which has the largest selection of Luvo products), A&P/Food Emporium, D'Agostinos, Fairway Markets, Fresh Direct, Gourmet Garage, Key Foods, Kings/Balducci's, King Kulle, Morton Williams, Stop & Shop, and The Fresh Market.

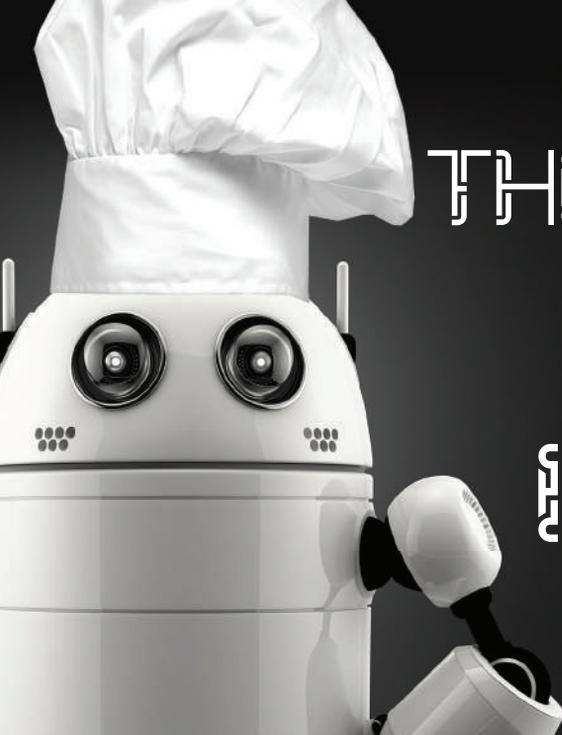


to himself, why can't this be accessible to everybody? Thus, Luvo was born.

Luvo is a Latin-based word, which loosely means "to give aid or furnish strength to accomplish a purpose," according to Day, but for the purposes of building the brand, Day said the word takes on new meaning.

"To us, Luvo means being someone who takes care of themselves so that they can take care of others, in turn. If something inspires you, in a fun way, to be the best version of yourself, then that's a very Luvo thing. It's a movement, and a way of thinking, and the belief that healthy lifestyles can change the world for the better," Day said.

And for frequent fliers, inedible airplane food may be a thing of the past, at least for those who choose Delta Airlines. Luvo has been a partner of Delta since February, and the food has been well received. 🍷



THE FUTURE of FOOD IS NOW

BY MELISSA KRAVITZ

The future of food has arrived. The Future Food Expo, a free part of Mario Batali and Danny Bowien's Taste Talks series, came to Williamsburg's Colossal Media warehouse this year. Tables at the expo were lined with download codes, samples of food and beverages, and plenty of free swag. While much could be learned at the exhibition, one detail was confirmed: the future of food is now. Gravity-less space snacks, meals packed in aerosol cans and Soylent-style meal replacements are all popular in science fiction, but the Twenty-First Century promises some more practical, and delicious, bites. Cooking apps, online farmers markets, and sustainable urban farming, as well as grocery and alcohol delivery services are just a few of the elements expected to expand even further in the next few years.

Fresh Direct, a preferred grocery delivery service for New York City's Upper East Side moms, had a table scattered with loaves of bread and various premium olive oils. The service marks a change in shopping culture: why waste time at the supermarket when you can order everything you need online, from one place, without having to wait in

line and carry groceries?

Online grocery shopping allows the consumer to compare prices, take advantage of specials, and even keep a digital grocery list to eliminate the inconvenience of forgetting the 2% milk week after week. And best of all, your groceries are delivered to your door! While Manhattan's Whole Foods and Trader Joe's still boast long lines almost every day, they also offer delivery services, and more online-based grocery retailers are expected to emerge in the near future.

In contrast to Fresh Direct is Farmigo, an online farmers market and specialty foods store that encourages building community and supporting sustainability via its shopping site. "We're about bringing people together, rather than isolating them with a drop-off service," a Farmigo representative said. Farmigo sources their stock from local farmers and producers, who harvest after community orders are placed. The food is then brought to a community pick-up spot, like someone's home or a more public location, where customers can mingle and exchange recipes while getting their pre-ordered food, similar to a CSA environment.

The Future of Food Expo was also

well-represented by food entrepreneurs. Legally Addictive, a new Brooklyn-based company, handed out samples of their Crack Cookies. Originally sold on Etsy, the cookies enjoyed an overwhelmingly positive international response. Thanks to the Internet, people with a talent for baking, or even just a great family recipe, can start a food business with very little financial backing. Other local food entrepreneurs who exhibited their goods and offered tasty samples included the owners of Empire Mayonnaise Company, Rakka Chocolate, and Little Boo Boo Bakery.

Businesses like Farm to People cater to a growing trend of shoppers looking to purchase high-quality products made by local food artisans rather than purchase goods from mass distributors. Farm to People is an online food shopping and delivery service that curates food from local, small-batch artisanal producers and delivers your selections to your door. As mega-websites, like Amazon, continue to thrive, the option to purchase from a small business that supports other small businesses represents a shift in American consumer values that can easily be seen in a Brooklyn market, where Brooklynites chase a snack of jerky dehydrated down the street by beer brewed by a local, start-up microbrewery.

Squarespace also had a booth set-up at the expo, demonstrating the ease with

which their site helps small businesses or individuals start their own customizable websites, allowing for better promoting and vending of their goods and services. The several successful small businesses at the Future Food Expo seem to confirm that there is perhaps no better time in history to start a food business.

Along with vending, packaging is another facet of the food industry that could use some significant change. Disposable single-serving containers, take-out bags and utensils, and certain home supplies damage the environment by creating tens of millions of pounds of waste each year. Susty Party exhibited their socially responsible tableware, which is made from 100% recycled materials. Susty Party's Brooklyn facility is staffed by employees who suffer from blindness or bad eyesight, and supports individuals who may struggle to find work by creating a safe and productive workspace for them. Not to mention, Susty Party's straws and tableware are colorful and appealing independently of their alluring sustainability factor.

Sustainability and social responsibility, whether in forming a community or helping the disadvantaged, are keys to the future of food. From online markets to small businesses to recycled goods, the future of food is here, and we only see it improving the world in which we eat. 🌱

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"THE ENTREPRENEUR SPACE" IN QUEENS TAKING FOOD HOBBIEISTS TO COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

BY THOMAS FRICILONE

Around the corner from the M train, just down 37th street in Long Island City, there is an orange and blue awning at the entrance of a large facility with signs promoting "The Entrepreneur Space." The unsuspecting passerby might imagine French-cuffed business men dreaming up elaborate schemes around a long marble table a la Bond villains. However, something much more amazing and much less evil is happening inside these walls. The entrepreneurs who utilize this 5,000 square feet of commercial kitchen space are aspiring chefs, bakers, and caterers looking to turn their hobbies into careers. More commonly referred to an incubator for food start-ups, the Entrepreneur Space has helped over 450 businesses get on their feet in the last few years.

The incubator, funded by NYCEDC (<http://www.nycedc.com>) and overseen by the Queens Economic Development Corporation (<http://www.queensny.org/qedc>), was first developed by Katherine Gregory and her company, Mi Kitchen es su Kitchen (<http://www.mikitchenessukitchen.com>).

I met with Gregory at The Entrepreneur Space to get a tour of the space and learn about how the business has developed in the last three years since the launch. Gregory is a small and confident woman with short white hair. She talks slowly, allowing sentences to sink in before giving you the meat of the point she's trying to make. "It started as a part-time incubator as part of a different organization. The organization would hold classes and seminars during the day, but at night," she explained, "the kitchen was open for clients to come in and prep."

After a few years, and the proof of the incubator's success, QEDC took notice and offered to help find a commercial space that could run 24 hours a day. With NYCEDC as funder, the project got underway.

The point of The Entrepreneur Space is to help small food start-ups get on their feet, and then become successful enough to move into their own spaces.

It's not hard to imagine why clients would want to stay at The Entrepreneur Space, though. First of all, it's quite mas-



The Entrepreneur Space has helped over 450 businesses in the last few years.

sive. Once you enter the kitchen, you are welcomed by high ceilings and an array of chefs and bakers going about their business. Ovens, sinks, and refrigerators line the walls; tables are set up and divided into separate kitchen areas. A separate room is filled with pots, pans, and other supplies. “The chefs bring their own knives and cutting boards,” Gregory explains. She points to a pot the size of a witch’s cauldron and laughs, “But no one wants to be lugging one of these around.”

“Each client gets their own large refrigerator and freezer space.” The space is extremely organized and clean. It’s one part of the business Gregory is most proud of. The kitchen not only allows a space for cooking, it teaches every chef about sanitation. “No one touches the food without gloves on. And everyone has to wear a hairnet,” she tells me as I strap one around my head, “Mayor Bloomberg visited here a few years ago and I made him wear one too.”

The Entrepreneur Space not only serves as a kitchen, but also offers informal consultations on better food practices and business practices including inventory, scheduling, and marketing. There are several rooms designed for classes so clients can learn things like how to export their products to other countries or how to set up and start a food truck (wink wink).

While the facility is set up primarily for baking, several food trucks have found their way into the kitchen and have had success. Currently, the space hosts one food truck, Snowday, managed by Drive Change. Snowday is a charity-based food truck that employs formerly incarcerated youth.

The most important thing to Gregory is making sure that clients have everything they need, like proper licenses and permits, to turn their food hobby into a legitimate business. “There’s very little you’re allowed to make in your own home’s kitchen to sell,” she tells me. “We want to help businesses play by the rules and succeed.”

For the future, Gregory wants to see the schedule of clients in the space reach 75% full. “We’re at 50% now, and we don’t want to reach 100% because it limits flexibility.”

When asked about the prospect of acquiring another building, Gregory laughed. “One building is enough.” And from the looks of it, she has her hands full. However, Gregory is a woman who seems to continually strive for greatness with the success of others in mind. She taps her chin, “I would consider helping to consult others on how to bring some new incubators off the ground.” And if the success of The Entrepreneur Space is any indication, that could be a great idea. 🍴



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