

Expectations for Manhatta

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HMGT 2305

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March 10th, 2020

For this service analysis assignment we were given a list of different fine dining restaurants throughout New York City. I had to research and by the end of next week at the latest, I had to pick one of these specific restaurants and make reservations. After looking through menus, zagat reviews, and articles of different restaurants, primarily those of Del Posto, Gramercy Tavern, and Manhattan I had to make the decision on where it would be best to dine at. In the end, as a person who has to work Friday and Saturday and has a strict budget on what I could spend at this current time, I decided to dine at Manhattan. All three of these restaurants have menu options that I would love to try out, and I would preferably go with Del Posto because it's Italian cuisine. However, Del Posto does not offer lunch on any days that I am available, and while Gramercy Tavern does I wanted to specifically get a fixed priced experience because I have never dined on a fixed price menu, something that Gramercy Tavern does not offer for their lunch menus. As a result Manhatta was the obvious choice and I continued to do further research on that restaurant.

Opened in 2018, Manhatta is a restaurant established, ran and owned by CEO Danny Meyer's very own Union Square Hospitality Group (USHG). The USHG, also responsible for Gramercy Tavern and the creation of Shake Shack, are a Hospitality group that believes primarily in the use of hospitality to improve the lives of the people within their communities and throughout the world by helping fight against world hunger. Mr. Meyer is responsible for setting up many new hospitality precedents, which include the initiative that he calls "Hospitality Included" which focuses on making sure employees are compensated fairly. This can clearly be seen on both Manhatta's and Gramercy Tavern's websites that clearly state the tip is already

included within the fixed price. With this in mind I'm expecting that the employees are going to show a very high level of professionalism that I will leave me inspired to improve upon my own hospitality skills in my day to day life.

Jason Pfeifer is the executive chef at Manhatta and is the man responsible for opening up the establishment back in 2018. His portfolio includes having worked under very successful chefs at Gramercy Tavern, 93' Per Se, and Maialino. This is actually his second time as an executive chef, as he rose to that position back in 2016 when he worked at Maialino. He also graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 2006, and made the Forbes "30 under 30" in the food category. Jorge Pabon is the chef de cuisine and the 2nd in command at the restaurant, he graduated from the ICE and has worked in Europe prior to working at Manhatta. Emma Alden is the pastry chef at Manhatta with around 10 years of experience within New York City, she is in charge primarily in preparing and managing her team in getting desserts created and done. Matt Whitney is the beverage director at the restaurant and oversees all aspects of their beverage program. The new general manager of the restaurant as of January of this year is Emily LaRuffa, an experienced general manager with many years in the hospitality industry. Overall their resumes and experiences only make me more excited to go and dine.

Manhatta is located on the 60th floor of a building located in the Financial District of lower Manhattan blocks away from Wall Street and the World Trade Center. This building itself was the headquarters of JP Morgan Chase but during the crisis and the restaurant itself rents a spot on the 60th floor, giving it a scenic high up view of the city's southern waterfront and

cityscape. The restaurant is open for both lunch and dinner on a daily basis with lunch being from 11:30 AM to 2PM and dinner from 5PM to 9:30PM. I made the original reservation for Sunday, March 15th at 1PM where I'm supposed to meet with Soumen and Joel from my Dining Room section. This could change due to health circumstances but we're aiming for primarily getting seated for lunch. Making the reservation they made sure to ask us if we had any allergies that they need to be aware of, as well as jotting down my phone number and name for the slot. They did not ask for any particular reason on why we were dining with them or give a heads up on dress code, but after looking through yelp reviews it seems that most people come into the restaurant wearing business casual wear. Could be considered a bit odd considering it's location in the financial district, but according to Danny Meyer's as seen in the Pete Wells article, "Those kinds of places often do not live up to expectations; they try too hard to live up to the view. I expect to conceive of it like a ground-floor restaurant, as a place people might want to visit regularly."

Google maps and Yelp labels Manhatta as a restaurant with American but Pete Wells in his 2018 review of the restaurant labels it as a French restaurant. What's most important about their menu, however ignoring that confusion, is that it's a seasonal menu that is constantly changing throughout the year. According to Jorge Pabon, the chef de cuisine, from a podcast interview that he did in January, the menu typically changes every 3-4 weeks to fit the current environment and atmosphere of the city. The Wagyu steak that I was planning to order might not even be available when I get to dine there, but I'm sure there's going to be other alternatives that I'll be just as excited to try. I'm also very excited to see the back of the house working on the

cuisine for afar; from my understanding after listening to the same podcast was that the kitchen itself is actually out in the open. It was designed that way in order to bring more unity between the front and back of the house employees. Pete Wells himself didn't seem particularly impressed with the food when he visited the restaurant in it's opening year and some yelp reviewers do seem to share a similar sentiment. However, the vast variety of yelp reviewers loved their meals so I want to expect that I'll be awed by what I'm eating. Most importantly the service was almost commented on as being first class and very warm, so I'm expecting that I will feel relatively comfortable when I do dine here for the first time.

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