

Giorgio Armani's culinary style lives on in NYC

by AGJ Heritage Project
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Giorgio Armani's passing feels like the end of an era, yet his influence lives on in ways both expected and surprising. When I visited Armani's restaurant last fall, I remember being struck by how much the space embodied his signature philosophy: elegance without excess, refinement rooted in simplicity, and a quiet confidence that spoke louder than opulence ever could. Now, reflecting on his death, that experience feels even more profound.

The establishment is a sophisticated addition to Manhattan's dining scene, blending high-end Italian cuisine with the elegance of the Giorgio Armani brand. My experience at the chic restaurant was nothing short of exceptional.

I arrived early on a Saturday afternoon, right after work, before the decibels of the lunch crowd became too overwhelming. I wanted to have a cocktail and a quick bite before returning home. A friend had to cancel our original lunch plan, so I found myself walking toward the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I remember reading about an Armani restaurant within the vicinity that opened a few weeks ago. I thought eating at the restaurant would be an interesting experience.

The newly designed flagship building, which also houses luxury boutiques and private residences, was a personal project for Giorgio Armani. Supposedly, the sartorial nonagenarian was supposed to occupy one of the penthouse suites above the restaurant. It is uncertain if this ever came to fruition, for he passed away on September 4, 2025.

The global brand has many restaurant locations, but New York City remained a place where Armani wanted to extend his renowned blend of high fashion and fine dining, offering a luxurious ambiance paired with exceptional cuisine. The construction of the complex took Armani several years before his vision finally came to fruition.

"Giorgio Armani was personally involved with every decision of the New York City location," remarked Steve Drewery the restaurant manager. Steve has been with the Armani brand for a long time. He managed the Armani restaurant in Tokyo before he was called to assist with the opening and managing of Giorgio's pet project. There are more than twenty Armani restaurants throughout the world, which include cities like Mumbai, Cannes, Munich, and Milan.

His completed project has created a curious buzz around the city.

I did not make a reservation, which is



necessary for the highly coveted spot located on Madison Avenue between 65th and 66th Streets, so I sat at the bar. The bar top, made with Italian marble, immediately caught my attention. Its interior design embodies Armani's minimalist aesthetic, featuring green lacquer surfaces, eucalyptus wood, and soft banquettes. In addition, the gray bar stools have a luxurious fabric and metal frame, creating a minimalist yet opulent atmosphere.

At the bar, I ordered a *Manhattan*. Ricky, the bartender, made the drink, much to my delight. We chatted for a while, as I sipped and absorbed the atmosphere. He is from Bogotá, Colombia, and worked in other Italian-owned restaurants. He realizes what an opportunity it is for him to work at a worldwide brand, a stone's throw away from Central Park.

Whether it's contemporary Italian dishes, impeccable service, or chic interiors reflecting Armani's signature style, the experience is designed to impress. Perfect for a special occasion or a refined dining

experience. While Ricky was attending to the orders of other patrons, I looked over the lunch menu against the soft lighting that enhanced the warm and inviting feel of the space.

I ordered the *insalata di arancia, finocchio, salicornia*, and *pappardelle, ragu di cortile pecorino*. Before my orders arrived, I was given crostini sticks, an ample size of sourdough bread, and Parmesan wafers. Ricky poured olive oil imported from Sicily into an oval-shaped plate. I dipped my piece of sourdough bread into the olive oil, and the taste brought me back to my visit to Italy this past summer.

The restaurant offers meticulously crafted Italian dishes, including classics like *Maine lobster with grapefruit and sabayon*,



truffle-laced pasta, and saffron-infused steak tartare. Guests can choose from a prix-fixe lunch menu or an à la carte dinner menu, complemented by unique cocktails like the bourbon-based *Madison Rubino* or the citrusy *Garibaldi in Love*. Inside the restaurant, there is a second level reserved for private parties. Upon arrival on the mezzanine level, there is an impressive collection of the best Italian and French wines.

My *pappardelle, ragu di cortile pecorino*, did not disappoint. The portion was typical of the Italian palette, with no gluttony of food portions found in many Italian American restaurants. Each dish looks meticulously crafted. Executive chef Antonio D'Angelo, a Neapolitan, prides



himself on authentic Italian-made dishes.

Ricky explained that during their daily staff meetings, one of the chefs expressed his disdain for a patron who requested *Tabasco* sauce for a dish. The bartender said, "It is highly emphasized that the dishes offer an authentic Italian experience, not American."

After I finished my very satisfying lunch at Armani restaurant, there was a door inside the establishment that led to the boutique. I decided to peek into the clothing store. Even though I was surrounded by cashmere sweaters, silk shirts, and the aroma of the

finest Italian leather, I could not escape my pleasant and delicious experience at the restaurant.

Dining at Armani Restaurant was truly a delightful experience, where exquisite flavors, impeccable presentation, and sophisticated ambiance come together to create an unforgettable culinary journey. Every detail, from the innovative dishes to the warm, attentive service, leaves you feeling pampered and inspired, making it a destination worth savoring again and again.



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