



POWER RESTAURATEUR

Anchors Aweigh

RICHARD SCHAEFFER'S PASSION for the ocean is clear—and it's written all over the lavish, yacht-inspired interior of Harbour, his new high-end seafood restaurant in West Soho. From the hardwood floors and porthole windows to the octopus-like glass chandelier, Harbour's nautical décor is authentic and chic, while the food—called “market-inspired” by chef-partner Joe Isidori—is meticulously prepared and 100 percent sustainable. “I’ve always loved boats,” says Schaeffer, former chairman of

NEW YORK FAVORITES

The People: “I love people from all over the world, but there’s nothing like a New Yorker. The excitement and electricity of people here is just great.”

The Water: “I love the New York waterways. A tear comes to everyone’s eye when [they] pass by the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. I’ve been all over the world, but you [pilot] any boat—I don’t care what it is—into New York Harbor and it’s just really a special feeling.”

The Promise: “If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. It’s just something that gets in your blood and it doesn’t go out.”

the New York Mercantile Exchange. “I love fishing, I love the open air and being out on the water. It’s the place where I feel the most relaxed, and I wanted to re-create that on land.”

So he did. After working for the Exchange for 28 years (20 as a board member and four as chairman), Schaeffer began seeking a new challenge two years ago. “I wanted to do something where I could maintain all the friendships I made on Wall Street and all over the world,” he explains. “It was important to me to still be able to share that camaraderie with the people I did business with and not lose touch. I decided that a restaurant would be fun.”

It wasn’t long before Schaeffer connected with Isidori, a former top chef for Donald Trump’s organization (where he earned a Michelin star). “I was looking for a chef and at the same time trying to build and design the restaurant,” Schaeffer says. “It really didn’t come together until I met Joe.” There were numerous aspects of the venture to sort out, but Schaeffer and Isidori were certain of one thing: the menu. “Serving sustainable seafood is very important to me,” Schaeffer says. “I’m a big animal lover, whether it’s fish or giraffes. I have a young daughter and I’d love her to be able to see all the things we’ve been able to see in our lifetime.” From Arctic char to red hake, Schaeffer says there’s “nothing on the menu that’s anywhere near not being here in the next thousands and thousands of years.”

So far, the response to Harbour has been enthusiastic. It took a three million dollar investment, but Schaeffer says his culinary debut is less about making money and more about introducing something new and exciting to New York’s restaurant scene. As for the transition from businessman to restaurateur? Schaeffer says there’s a surprising amount of overlap. “The tactics in running the Exchange are hopefully a little different than running a restaurant because it’s a pretty cut-throat business out there on Wall Street,” he says. “Luckily, I was able to survive and thrive in that. Harbour is more of a passion than a business passion, but I definitely have to employ some of my business sense in order to make the restaurant a success.” 290 Hudson Street, 212-989-6410; harbournyc.com—RACHEL BOWIE

photograph by Sari Goodfriend