

Hospitality

Growing Il Mulino New York

An Interview with Brian Galligan,
President, Il Mulino USA



Il Mulino New York Uptown (above) and one of the restaurant's signature dishes (below)

EDITORS' NOTE In 2001, Brian Galligan, President, partnered with Jerry Katzoff, Chairman, to purchase the Il Mulino New York brand. Galligan brought more than 20 years of leadership experience in hospitality to Il Mulino USA. Il Mulino New York, an iconic Italian restaurant located in the heart of Greenwich Village, has been rated "The #1 Italian Restaurant in Manhattan" for 25 of 28 years by Zagat Survey and many other publications. The goal of this partnership was to grow the Il Mulino New York concept and brand and significantly expand to other top cities across the globe. The storied brand's strength is its authenticity, the quality of the dishes and the original recipes that have earned Il Mulino acclaim for the past four decades.

COMPANY BRIEF Founded in Greenwich Village in 1981, Il Mulino New York (ilmulino.com) originated as an intimate and esteemed eatery serving local foodies in the know. Today, Il Mulino New York has blossomed into a culinary empire with 17 outposts across the U.S. that cater to tastemakers, celebrities, and dignitaries. It has also launched three innovative dining concepts, Trattoria Il Mulino, Bistecca by Il Mulino and Il Mulino Prime, as well as the Il Mulino New York gourmet product line which offers exquisite signature sauces, pastas, infused olive oils, salts and more.

How is Il Mulino addressing the uncertain and challenging times due to the Coronavirus?

We have welcomed guests for 40 years and have pivoted quickly to continue to be here for our community and families in this time of uncertainty. Due to government direction, our dining rooms are currently closed but our kitchens are open with pick-up and delivery options per geographic location.

Managers, chefs and kitchen staff at the restaurants are fulfilling the needs of our communities. We have created a special family style Italian classics menu for pick-up, are offering our a la carte menu for delivery services, and will ship Il Mulino food collection items from our online shop at ilmulino.com.

We want to thank our friends, patrons, vendors, purveyors and staff and know that we will get through this together.

How do you define the Il Mulino difference?

The difference is the level of our food and unmatched service. It's the atmosphere. It's the connection with our devoted staff. It's refined and consistent, a timeless dining experience.

Where do you see the greatest opportunities to grow the Il Mulino brand?

We see Il Mulino New York as a great growth vehicle for us in destination cities. We see Trattoria Il Mulino, which is our casual concept, growing in mixed-use spaces throughout the country. I think our Il Mulino Prime, an Italian modern steakhouse concept, which we currently have two in New York City, has an opportunity to grow rapidly throughout the country.

Are there common characteristics that are present at each of the brands?

It's the aroma, it's the feel, it's the design. The integrity of our brand across all of the concepts is the common denominator. We maintain a high standard offering the finest cuisine and exceptional service across multiple restaurants. The extra details that guests know us for such as our "Benvenuto to Il Mulino" or welcome, an array of complimentary piccolo *assaggi* including Parmigiano Reggiano, bruschetta and zucchini chips presented to the table before the menu. We serve Abruzzi cuisine using traditional recipes and offer a world-class wine program.

Will you highlight Il Mulino's investment in its workforce?

Our waiters and our staff are professionals. We have very limited part-time people, and our dedicated staff is the key to our unparalleled service and success. Our managers have been with us a long time and that consistency is critical. We have invested in service and training. Our staff can grow with the organization and take on different roles within the company as we expand.

How did Il Mulino become involved in working with hotels and what is your outlook for this part of the business?

Our relationships with hotels have been very successful across the country. We are in Acqualina Resort & Residences On The Beach, a five-star property in Sunny Isles, Florida. We have created a significant business from our Sunday breakfast buffet to offering our signature dishes for room service to the Il Mulino New York dining experience for both



lunch and dinner. We attract a tremendous number of outside guests and appeal to both travelers and locals. We have two concepts in the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City which have done very well, Il Mulino New York and Trattoria Il Mulino, and draw a substantial business with hotel guests, travelers, locals and walk-ins. We are also present in The Ritz-Carlton San Juan in Puerto Rico, but the property has been closed because of the hurricanes. We are in a Hilton in downtown Nashville across the street from the convention center which has been great. We're in the Mount Airy Casino Resort. We're in The Forum Shops, which is an offshoot of Caesars. We have had tremendous success in the hotel business and this is an area we are focused on continuing to grow.

You mentioned the Il Mulino store. What products do you offer?

We have a cookware line at HomeGoods. Il Mulino has signature sauces available at retailers and online at ilmulino.com. In addition, we offer pastas, salts, extra virgin olive oil, Parmigiano Reggiano and more at ilmulino.com. ●