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The new Hakkasan New York sources locally - but doesn't care if you know it

BY SUZANNE WEINSTOCK

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Hakkasan, the latest addition to New York's culinary scene, certainly doesn't brand itself as sustainable - but that doesn't mean it isn't. In a world where sustainability is often half-heartedly implemented for PR bump, this global luxury brand keeps it local simply because it's the right thing to do - proof that local eating isn't simply a passing trend.

"Sourcing locally gives back to the community, makes sense financially and the quality is here," says COO Didier Souillat, who worked with brands like Daylesfor Organic Foods prior to joining Hakkasan. Head Chef Ho Chee Bon came to New York six months prior to the opening to evaluate the quality of local suppliers. "The ingredients have to be no hormones, no antibiotics, free range, never frozen and as natural as possible," Souillat says. Local items that made the cut? Duck, pork belly, chicken, berries, apples and even ostrich. Taste the results in signature dishes like Roasted Silver Cod with Champagne & Chinese Honey, Stir-Fry Black Pepper Rib-Eye Beef, Stir-Fry Lobster with Wild Mushrooms in XO Sauce, and Truffle Braised Egg Noodle with Enoki Mushroom.

Hakkasan will begin the sourcing process all over again for its upcoming openings in San Francisco, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. "We just think sourcing locally is the right thing to do and we'll do more of it as we grow and as we know more and more about the U.S. markets we're in," Souillat says. "We're happy to work with small producers who can grow with us. When we go to Las Vegas and L.A. we'll source again locally and integrate special local ingredients that we find."

The local-focused attitude extends to the décor of the restaurant. Although the design was done by Paris-based architect team Gilles & Boissier, Hakkasan employed local labor and used local materials, including marble fabricated and installed by Artisan Stoneworks in Deer Park, New York, and wood sourced from Ohio and Pennsylvania white oaks. "We're not only about the food," adds Souillat. "We're an entertainment center. It's ambience, food, bar and a DJ spins every night."

Check it out in our slideshow.

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