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Hudson Jane: Breakfast So Good It's Trademarked

by Winnie McCroy
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The Double Brown at Hudson Jane. (Source:Michael Tulipan)

Partners in life and business, Chef Megan Johnson and Jen LaPorta have taken Brooklyn by storm with their quaint new eatery, **Hudson Jane**. Named for the Greenwich Village corner on which the two first kissed, this former slice joint now offers high-end breakfast and lunch options, with dinner service and a supper club in the near future.

Johnson, formerly of Gramercy Tavern and Gottino, wanted to put her unique spin on American comfort food in a place all her own. Her partner wanted to be sure the spot would resonate with locals.

"We looked in the Village, and it was so oversaturated," said LaPorta. "But we live in this neighborhood, so we decided to

bring this concept to Clinton Hill. It checked a lot of boxes for everything we wanted."

The pair signed a ten-year lease on the spot and proceeded to gut what they called "an eyesore," emerging with an open seating plan to accommodate the stroller set, additional seating in the back, and a coffee counter-cum-wine bar. Laptops are forbidden on weekends and during dinner. The spot immediately began attracting regulars.

"I think people responded very well to my take on American comfort food," said Johnson. "I do it differently -- more interesting -- and I think that's what draws them in."

This clever chef provides options for those with dietary needs, like Valancy Jane's Vegan BLT, made with thinly sliced "eggplant bacon," marinated for 48 hours in cider vinegar, soy sauce, and maple syrup, and served on seed and grain Pullman bread. The Wheat Berry Salad, with pole beans, feta, pea tendrils and arugula, also healthily satisfies.

But the biggest draw at Hudson Jane are the dishes featuring the nitrate-free, thick-cut Berkshire pork bacon. Johnson wraps it around squeaky cheese curds in one appetizer and crams it between two golden hash brown patties in their famed breakfast sandwich, The Double Brown.

"It all started with a fast-food gimmick that we decided to take to the next level," said Johnson. "I dipped two hash browns in egg for fortification, put in bacon, a sunny-side up egg, lettuce, tomato, and our secret sauce. Now, people order it all day long. We went to our attorney and trademarked it."

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Chef Megan Johnson and Jen LaPorta (Photo: Laurie Rhodes)

Dinner is Served

This fall, Hudson Jane will begin offering dinner service. They plan to serve LaPorta's Cuban mom's Oxtail Stew with cilantro and yucca, as well as Johnson's grandmother's handmade noodles with stewed beef, which she described as, "a little like goulash, with lots of ground black pepper."

At their wine bar (open as soon as their license comes through), they'll offer seasonal vintages, craft cocktails, and beer, to pair with noshes like guacamole with crispy chicken-skin chips, and corvina ceviche. Their \$19 Molinaro sandwich, stuffed with coppa, Molinari Toscano, bacon, mortadella, and provolone, makes for a filling dinner.

"During the nighttime, we want to change the vibe and turn the sex up," said LaPorta. "But we also want to make it approachable, so even if you don't know a lot about wine, you won't be nervous."

They will offer "meet the maker" nights, and cooking/canning classes for adults and children. And for \$1,250 a year, you can join the Hudson Jane Supper Club. It entitles you to a four-course Saturday dinner with wine pairings once a month, plus perks like classes, gift baskets, and VIP discounts.

"The whole idea is that we never get to see our friends," said Johnson. "So it's great to coordinate this kind of regular dinner party."



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Dutchbaby Pancake (Photo: Michael Tulipan)

A Woman's Place Is in the Kitchen

After working in a number of New York City kitchens, Johnson learned just how hard it is for women in the hospitality industry. The assertive behavior men get away with had them labeled as "bitchy."

"Guys get to lose their shit anytime they want. If I do, the staff threatens to walk," she said. "So you have to find a balance between being nice and reasonable and the point at which I'll snap."

Vendors try to mansplain to the pair, but they take it in stride. Johnson said that because she's young and petite, they sometimes feel they can take advantage. She shuts it down, asserting, "we surround ourselves with good people."

They stock their reach-in and home fridge with brands they trust, like Lorena Pasta, Pilot Kombucha, cured meats from Olli Salumeria, Normandy butter, Bien Cuit breads, Hudson Valley prosciutto, Applegate Hot Dogs, and Brooklyn Cured sausages, with LaPorta noting, "For us, it has to be humanely raised."

And when they're not at work, you'll find them at the vegan spot LuAnne's Wild Ginger on DeKalb Avenue, or at Myrtle Avenue hotspot Bar Bolinas, tucking into a huge plate of nachos.

"We get them at least once a week," confides Johnson, rearing back and unleashing her distinctive giggle.



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Supper Club at Hudson Jane. (Photo: Michael Tulipan)

Hudson Jane is located at 360 Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn, NY.

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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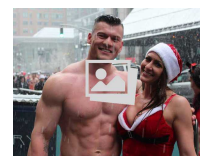
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