



Historic 2nd Ave Deli Opens a Bar Aimed at Millennials

2nd Floor, upstairs from the UES deli, serves takes on Jewish deli classics

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Photography by [Ben Fractenberg](#)

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Sixty-three years after opening its original, now-closed delicatessen in the East Village, **2nd Ave Deli** is firmly embracing the 21st century and adding a second-floor cocktail bar to its Upper East Side location. Called **2nd Floor**, the bar at 1442 First Avenue and 75th Street aims to reintroduce the Jewish delicatessen to millennials who may not have grown up with one.

“When you ask the average young person what a deli serves they say a pastrami sandwich. Whereas you have stuffed cabbage and goulash and fricassee, and people don’t even know what that is anymore,” co-owner **Jeremy Lebewohl** says. “In deciding to create this extension of a deli upstairs, we also saw it as a fun opportunity to bring back those ingredients and the idea you can have more than just a sandwich at a deli.”

Jeremy and his brothers **Joshua Lebewohl** grew up in the original 2nd Ave Deli, opened by their late uncle in 1954 and closed in 2006 after a rent dispute, and the duo has kept the brand going with two more locations in Midtown East and the Upper East Side. Though 2nd Floor is made to feel comfortable for existing customers, it’s the family’s latest move to keep the brand alive by trying to appeal to a younger audience.

The space at 2nd Floor has been intentionally designed with a patina to make it seem warm and lived-in: The ceiling has pressed tin tile, the floors use reclaimed wood, and vintage Yiddish theater posters hang on the walls in the bathroom. It’s a multi-room space with a bar in the front room and two rooms set further back with hidden TV’s.

In contrast, the food and drink menus are pure 2017. Chef **David Teyf** gives pigs-in-a-blanket an update with everything bagel seeds and beef franks, used because the entire bar is kosher. He also stuffs potato latkes with pastrami and sauteed onions, and makes p’tcha — a very traditional, rarely seen aspic made of calves’ feet — more relatable by calling it veal bone broth and serving it in soup form. Drinks, meanwhile, get playful names like the shofar (apple brandy, grenadine, honey, lime, baked apple, cinnamon) and man-o-manischewitz (London dry gin, mulled Manischewitz, lemon, and cinnamon). The full menus are below.

The Lebewohls are not the first second-generation set to modernize legacy family brands in New York City: Jake Dell recently [expanded Katz’s to Brooklyn](#), Russ & Daughters [added two cafes in recent years](#), Nom Wah Tea Parlor now [dots the city with tweaked locations](#), and fellow UES legacy Oliver Zabar [added a beer bar to the Zabar portfolio](#).

Like the other heirs to historic restaurants, the Lebewohl brothers in their late 30s are trying to attract people beyond their parents’ generation to the brand.