

Breakfast(s) at My Place(s)

By DONNA PAUL DEC. 10, 2010



Eli Zabar walking his dogs and having brunch with his wife, Devon Fredericks.
Credit Joshua Bright for The New York Times

If an award existed for ensuring that New Yorkers ate well on Sunday (and every other day), [Eli Zabar](#), whose gastronomic empire includes E.A.T. on Madison Avenue, the Vinegar Factory, Eli's Manhattan and Eli's Bread, would be a serious contender. He has been growing vegetables on the Vinegar Factory rooftop for 15 years, and he took over the farmers' market in Amagansett, N.Y., in 2008. Mr. Zabar, 67, lives on the Upper East Side with his wife, Devon Fredericks, 60, who works for the company, and their 19-year-old twin boys, Sasha and Oliver.
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NO ALARM NEEDED I have an internal clock that seems to know when the sun will rise, and that's when I am up. Now, around 5:30 a.m. I check e-mails and make coffee. I set everything up the night before so the beans are ready to grind fresh. Then I'll walk our two Wheaten terriers, Toby and Mini. I like to drink my coffee from a thick-rimmed, white porcelain mug. Before leaving for my jog, I'll bring a tray with coffee up to Devon



Mr. Zabar in the kitchen of his Taste Restaurant & Wine Bar, with Benny Lazo the chef.
Credit Joshua Bright for The New York Times

CENTRAL PARK JOG I've been meeting the same friend, Michael Donovan, every Sunday for 15 years. It's kind of a therapeutic run. We discuss business and personal issues, our kids, whatever comes up. We take a different route each week, depending on our mood. Our ritual is to end at Eli's Manhattan on Third Avenue for the 8 a.m. opening, where we meet up with another friend, Robi Blumenstein, for breakfast.

FORAGE FOR FRUIT We always sit at the same table. I'll start by going downstairs to the produce department in search of fresh fruit. I'll stuff apples, pears, grapefruit, whatever I see that appeals to me that day into the pockets of my vest jacket. I'll bring it all upstairs and cut slices right on our table and order seven-grain bread, toasted dark. We spend about an hour eating and talking about a wide range of subjects; they are both very interesting and smart.

BREAKFAST, PART TWO I'll head home to shower, and then between 11 and noon, Devon and I head back to Eli's, and this time sit at the bar and order huevos rancheros. If our kids are home from college, we'll go to E.A.T. and order the tower of bagels. If we are with friends who have young children, then we'll go to the upstairs brunch at the Vinegar Factory.

WORK ON WINE After brunch, I'll head back to Eli's to do a little work. That usually involves having a meeting with my wine manager and cellar master. We taste wines that have recently arrived and write descriptions of it for the menu. We discuss which bottles are going to be placed in the cellar. My passion is rare wines from Europe, especially Burgundy and the Piedmont region of Italy.

FLY OR WALK Depending on the weather and the season, I might go fly my plane. It's a Piper 2009 J3 Cub. If not, Devon and I might go for a walk along the [High Line](#) or go to a museum. Sometimes I'll watch a football game on television at home.

EARLY DINNER We eat around 5:30 or 6 o'clock. A special treat is going to Brooklyn to [Franny's](#) for pizza. I love the appetizers there; everything they serve is great. Often we eat home and have friends over. Devon is a fantastic cook. She makes a [salad](#) with kale and roasted pine nuts that I adore. This time of year we've been eating white truffles on [pasta](#) or scrambled eggs. We are enjoying them now because in January they'll be gone.

MOVIE OR BOOKS We finish reading the Sunday Times after dinner, and either watch a movie or read books. I have to be in bed by 10:30. I can't stand nighttime.