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NYP Real Estate Guide Home

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OUR CALENDAR OF EVENTS,
PHOTO GALLERIES & MORE

TANNED and smiling, chef Eduard Frauneder offers us a shot of rum after a steep climb to his third-story, 1,300-square-foot East Sixth Street apartment. It's 10 a.m., a bit early to start boozing, but Frauneder, recently back from vacation, is still on Belize time — and this is an expensive, top-notch Central American rum.

"I got a great deal on it there, but then I had to check my suitcase, so I ended up paying another \$40 anyway," he says, pouring the rum into paper cups and ushering us into the bright, south-facing living room.

Also, he informs us, one of his three kiteboards is still tied up in US customs. Yet, the 33-year-old Austrian seems unfazed by these travel hiccups. When you're running two restaurants, a private dining club and a catering service, you get used to the unpredictable.

Frauneder's first restaurant, Seasonal Restaurant & Weinbar, which he started with business partner and fellow chef Wolfgang Ban, opened a few weeks before 9/11. "We had no idea what would happen, but we ended up earning a Michelin star," he says of the Midtown spot that specializes in Austrian cuisine.

He brought that same determination to establishing their newest venture, Edi & the Wolf, which opened in late November in Alphabet City. (The name comes from the partners' nicknames, Edi, pronounced Eddie, and Wolf, for Wolfgang.)

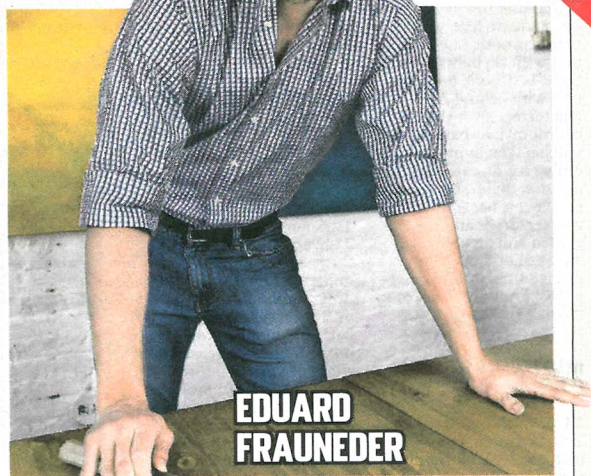
"People were skeptical of Avenue C," Frauneder says. "But I knew it was going to fly. I had been living around the corner for two years. I passed by the space [formerly an Italian restaurant] many times and I loved it. I loved the back yard. So, I spoke with the landlord . . . and invited him to Seasonal to see what I did."

Initially, the landlord's demands were "outrageous," Frauneder says.

A deal seemed impossible. But one night, the landlord, with his father in tow, showed up at Seasonal. They became big fans of the restaurant. And they appreciated that Frauneder lived near their space. When their tenant, Mr. C's Italian Trattoria, went out of business that summer, the landlord negotiated and signed a lease with Frauneder and Ban.

But it wasn't easy transforming the space

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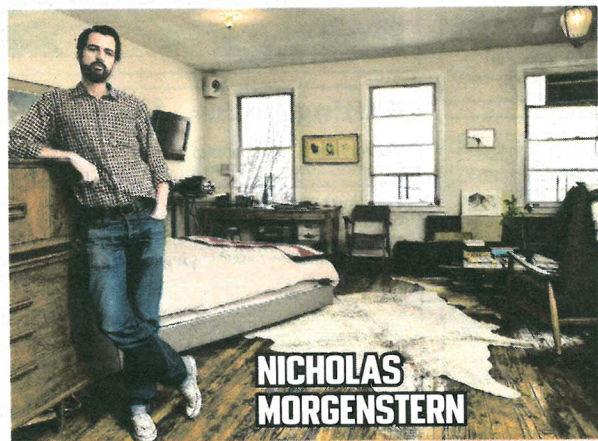


**EDUARD
FRAUNEDER**

ALPHABET SOUP

INSIDE CHEFS' SAUCY EAST VILLAGE DIGS

By JENNIFER CEASER
Photos by ZANDY MANGOLD



**NICHOLAS
MORGENSTERN**

NOT many people would think to decorate their apartment with a desiccated wasp nest, but Goat Town restaurateur Nicholas Morgenstern sensed it would suit his Alphabet City studio perfectly.

"I was driving back from Ohio, and I saw it by the side of the road," he recalls. "I decided to hang it from a ladder that I'd found in a dumpster in TriBeCa."

Morgenstern christened the creation the "wasp-nest ladder." It's tucked in the corner behind his bed, which is draped with a vintage Pendleton throw. At the foot of the bed are two cowhide rugs he picked up at flea markets in New York and Oregon. A mid-century oak dresser hugs one wall. A vintage map of San Francisco hangs opposite it.

The living area is outfitted with two low-slung, "Mad Men"-esque sofas and a '60s-era chair. Other pieces of furniture were rescued from the streets of the East Village.

"I grew up with flea market stuff," explains

the 32-year-old California native of his decorating inspiration. "My dad was really into estate sales. And I actually got rid of a lot of stuff when I moved in here."

He'd been renting a large loft space in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and commuting to his Fort Greene restaurant, the General Greene, which he opened in July 2008.

The apartment "was too big," he says. "I only lived in one of the rooms."

And Morgenstern, who'd been the pastry sous chef at Daniel and head pastry chef at Gramercy Tavern and Gilt, was willing to sacrifice size if it meant returning to Manhattan. (He still waxes poetic about his first city apartment, on Thompson Street, a walkup with a bathtub in the kitchen.)

"I found this place through friends who lived here," says Morgenstern, who signed a lease for his 600-square-foot, second-floor apartment on East Third Street last March. "They got pregnant and moved to

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HOME COVER STORY

CHEFS STIR IT UP DOWNTOWN



FRAUNEDER from Page 39 into a *heuriger*, a traditional Austrian wine tavern. After 10 weeks of construction — “I learned that the earlier the beer system is installed, the easier it is to keep the construction workers happy,” Frauneder says — the rustic neighborhood spot, with communal tables, a no-reservations policy and what he calls an “egalitarian spirit,” was born. Though Frauneder spends most of his day at *Edi & the Wolf*, being so close to his job can be a bit unsettling. How close? Walk to the back of his railroad apartment, to the spacious open kitchen/

dining area, and you look right down onto the restaurant’s back yard. “It’s a very European concept, to live on the same block as your restaurant,” Frauneder explains. “Considering the hours we keep, logistically it makes sense. Plus, I never would have found the place if I hadn’t been living here.” He had to negotiate for his rental in much the same way as he did for the restaurant space — by proving himself worthy. The apartment’s owner was the daughter of a noted Austrian artist, Charles Keller, who’d used it as a studio. When he passed away in 2006, rather than putting his artwork in storage, she decided to leave his paintings (as well as some of her own) and find a suitable steward. “She was looking for someone reliable,”

Frauneder says. “And I’m hardly ever at home. It’s the perfect arrangement.” (Of course, it likely helped that he was tall, handsome and Austrian.) We believe him when he says he’s rarely at home: The kitchen cupboards are empty; the refrigerator contains nothing but wine and beer. He also hasn’t had time to do much decorating. The large dining room table is from IKEA, as is much of the furniture in the front living room: a black leather couch (which he plans to replace soon), a white coffee table, an orange space-age chair. There are a few pieces of furniture that he “recycled” from the streets of the East Village; other items, bookcases and small tables, were there when he moved in. (The bed — which occu-

pies a sort of middle room in the apartment — is a new purchase.) The overall look is minimalist, which is exactly what Frauneder was after. But he also likes dressing up the apartment’s austere white walls with a rotating collection of the senior Keller’s paintings. Two large works by Keller’s daughter, Marthe, a famous artist in her own right, are hung more permanently. Her colorful canvases, “*Fautrice del Diletto*,” made up of multiple squares, is in the dining room (“That took me three hours to hang correctly,” Frauneder notes); in the bedroom is the diptych “*Sines of Life*.” (“It’s super dreamy and I love waking up to it,” he says.)

But the artwork that’s now occupying most of Frauneder’s time are the sketches of the outdoor space at *Edi & the Wolf*. He hopes to turn the space into a 35-seat “wine garden” this spring, with special “hyper-seasonal” tasting menus to be offered Thursday to Saturday. “That rustic feeling inside will translate into the back yard,” he says. As will the tenor of the restaurant — one based on the *heuriger*’s casual, all-embracing approach. “That’s the spirit of the East Village, too,” Frauneder says. “Where the politician sits next to the truck driver. Where they can eat something simple but good.”

MORGENSTERN from Page 39 a bigger space, right next door.” Morgenstern was also itching to open a new eatery after selling his interest in the General Greene, a restaurant perhaps best known for his smooth, eggless ice cream (in funky flavors like peanut butter bacon banana). Two possible spaces in the neighborhood fell through before he came across an empty storefront, on East Fifth Street near Avenue A.

He signed the lease that summer, hired a trusted team of designers (Evan and Oliver Haslegrave of the Brooklyn-based firm *hOmE*) and teamed up with chef Joel Hough (of *Cookshop*) to open *Goat Town* (derived from the Dutch word for Gotham). The inviting space, combined with a farm-to-table approach to cooking, was a hit almost immediately after opening Dec. 2.

“I really love the way the restaurant turned out,” says Morgenstern. “I wanted it to be comfortable, to feel kind of diner-like ... a place where people could come and hang out but have it not be too casual.” He credits much of *Goat Town*’s groovy vibe to the design team, who created the curved tin ceiling, the booths, the weathered copper bar. “I knew I wanted some of those things in the design,” Morgenstern says, “but they were the ones who came up with the idea of the subway-tiled booths. Everyone who comes here says something about the booths. They can’t believe how comfortable they are.” It’s a good thing Morgenstern is a fan of the space, given that he spends close to 18 hours a day there, by his own accounting. His office is there, he bakes most of the restaurant’s cookies,



GOAT WORLD: Morgenstern calls the communal back deck “an East Village version of ‘Melrose Place.’” Inside are two of his creations: a table made from wood scraps and a “wasp-nest ladder.”



NICHOLAS MORGENSTERN’S FAVORITE THINGS

- A vintage map of San Francisco
- The cowhide rugs from *Build It Green*
- The “wasp-nest ladder”
- Industrial shoe caddies he constructed
- Vintage Pendleton blankets
- The back deck of the building

“*Melrose Place*’ everyone [in the four apartments] is always outside hanging out,” he says — or tooting around town in one of his many cars. “I own a few cars. I have a new Subaru wagon, an old Datsun truck,” Morgenstern says. “And I belong to the Classic Car Club [which loans out fancy automobiles]. My dad always had tons of cars, and I grew up racing on the amateur circuit.” But it’s clear that his strongest passion is *Goat Town*. “I’m really content with what I’m doing; I’m really lucky that it’s just two partners running the business, that I don’t have some big investment firm knocking at my door demanding money,” he says. “That is a luxury in this business.”

EDUARD FRAUNEDER’S FAVORITE THINGS

- Paintings by Charles Keller, the Austrian artist who lived in the apartment for decades
- An old trunk, also left by Keller, filled with sketches of nudes
- His chef’s knife
- His kiteboards; he spends weekends “competitive kite-cutting”
- An English-language cookbook he got in Kyoto



ALPHA MALE: When not manning one of his three restaurants, Frauneder can be found kiteboarding (usually on Long Island Sound, not his dining room table). His sparsely decorated living room is supplemented by a rotating collection of paintings from a previous resident.



ALSO IN THE AREA



\$3,300/month: Two-bedroom, two-bath on East 8th Street near Avenue C, with large living room, separate kitchen, hardwood floors and part-time doorman. Agent: Christina Vesco, The Real Estate Group New York, 917-843-6097



\$849,000: Two-bedroom, one-bath prewar co-op on East 7th Street between avenues C and D, 1,250 square feet, with open windowed kitchen with washer/dryer combo unit. Agent: Dina Cohen, Citi Habitats, 917-873-4724



\$5,750/month: Two-bedroom, two-bath on East 8th Street between avenues B and C, with kitchen with wine fridge and 1,000-square-foot deck. Agents: Mitchell Cashwell and Michael Sguera, Citi Habitats, 646-379-5830 and 212-794-1133