

This burger is about to put Hudson Yards on the map

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With the grand opening of Hudson Yards' Shops & Restaurants mega-complex just two months away, many of the half-dozen major eateries are still shrouded in secrecy, but not Hudson Yards Grill — Michael Lomonaco's something-for-everyone brasserie.



Opening March 15, along with the million-square-foot mall's other restaurants and stores (including the city's first Neiman Marcus), Lomonaco's latest is an all-American anchor amid a sea of esoteric edibles: Greek fish by the pound at Milos, tapas at Mercado Little Spain and who-knows-what at David Chang's "Momofuku concept."

Speaking exclusively to The Post, Lomonaco, the popular chef of Porter House and formerly of Windows on the World, shared details about his new, 275-seat venue.

Located on the mall's fourth floor, the 11,400-square-foot Grill will be open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Chef de cuisine Brian Mottola's menu will feature starters from \$12; \$19 and \$20 entree salads; and fish, meat and pasta mains in the \$20s and \$30s.

There'll be a \$19 LaFrieda beef-blend burger on a potato bun with aged cheddar and tomato; a \$25 lobster roll; and a few pricier choices, such as rotisserie chicken. Lamb and suckling pig will appear among the daily rotisserie specials. Although it isn't a



steakhouse, there will be one prime cut, “like at Porter House,” Lomonaco says.

There’ll be sushi, too — a reminder that Lomonaco once sold a lot of it at Windows on the World satellite the Greatest Bar on Earth.

Besides drawing customers from Hudson Yards’ office workers and shoppers, Lomonaco has his eye on the neighborhoods east of 10th Avenue.

“It’s a no-tablecloths, family restaurant,” Lomonaco says. “It’s very approachable and hospitality-oriented, and will appeal to the large population that’s going to live and work in the area.”

The images here are the first to be shown for any of the Hudson Yards restaurants. A stroll-through revealed a convivial space designed by architects Bentel & Bentel, with open sightlines under a 14-foot-high ceiling. There are dark walnut walls in the dining room and bar, an open kitchen and a lot of colorful wall art.

Related Urban, a division of Hudson Yards developer Related Companies, tapped Per Se chef Thomas Keller, who’ll have a place of his own, to help “curate” the food-and-restaurant collection. But why did the restaurants decide to take the plunge? For all the hoopla, nothing’s a sure bet at the former rail-yard site where many New Yorkers have yet to set foot.

“We decided that we could fill a niche,” says Chris Himmel, Lomonaco’s business partner and friend of 15 years, and the son of Related Urban retail mastermind Kenneth Himmel. “Michael and I are driven not so much by what Related needed, but by what we thought made the most sense” — that is, an accessible, midpriced, unpretentious American brasserie.

Himmel says they hope to see the same customers two or three nights a week, “and they won’t have to reserve six weeks in advance.”

Their lease starts at a lowball rent of \$100 per square foot per year before it escalates over time (they wouldn’t say by how much). The Grill restaurateurs hope to take in \$10 million to \$20 million a year, figures which would place it among some of the city’s highest-volume eateries.

Related paid for some of the multimillion-dollar build-out. In a further expression of confidence, Related Companies chairman Stephen M. Ross and Kenneth Himmel are individual investors in the Grill — as they are at some Time Warner Center restaurants, including Porter House.

Lomonaco’s restaurants have been famed for their views as well as for their food — the Central Park skyline from Porter House, the endless vistas from Windows on the World.

But Hudson Yards Grill has no dining room windows at all, which doesn’t seem to faze Lomonaco.

“This time, we are the scenery,” he chuckled, referring to his army of cooks and servers buzzing in and out of the open kitchen.