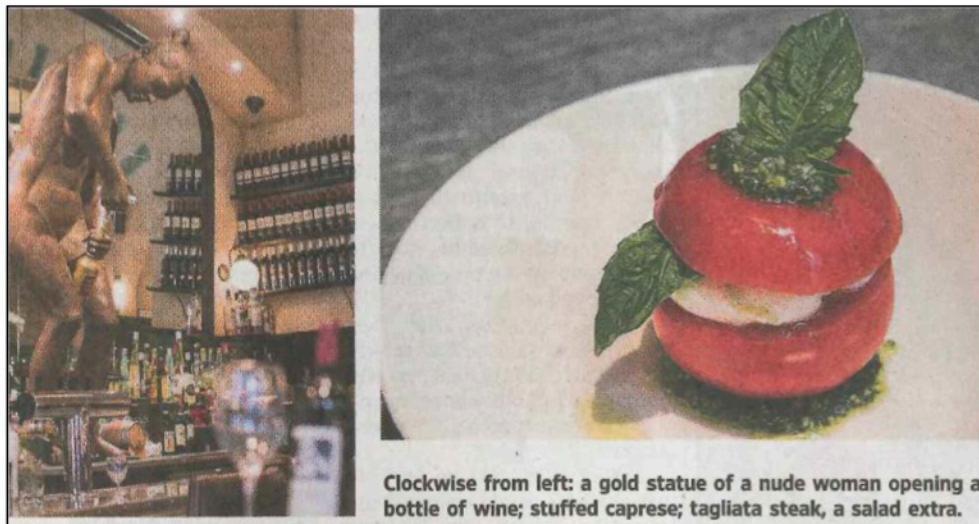


# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

December 18, 2014

LUNCHBOX | Florian Café



Clockwise from left: a gold statue of a nude woman opening a bottle of wine; stuffed caprese; tagliata steak, a salad extra.

## An Italian Restaurant With a Golden Touch

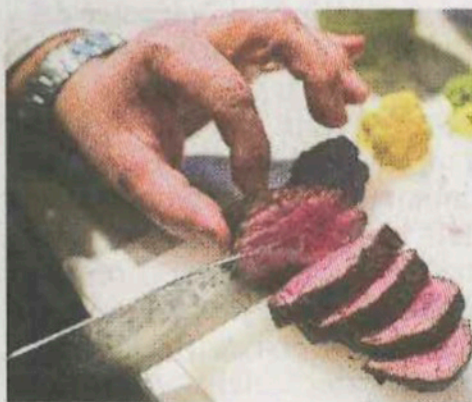
Lunchers around Union Square looking for an Italian setting with features that boast a Midas touch are in luck.

Enter Florian Café and the large gold sculpture of a nude woman opening a bottle of wine is impossible to miss. Look around to find more original pieces showing all forms of hospitality in the buff on display.

Shelly Fireman is the artist behind these gilded sculptures made out of his studio in Italy. He is also the owner of Florian.

"That's what I do in my spare time," said Mr. Fireman. In fact, all of the artwork in the new restaurant is a product of Mr. Fireman.

After taking in the atmosphere, start lunch with the stuffed caprese (\$10), from



the homemade burrata mozzarella bar or choose three vegetables (\$13.95) from the antipasti table.

Another original feature of the restaurant: the pasta, made in-house daily. Try the tordelli Bolognese (\$19/\$24), Florian's meat-filled ravioli.

For a lighter lunch option, order A Very Nice Salad (\$10), made with baby rucola, trevisano radicchio, puntarelle, endive and Anjou pear.

Add the tagliata steak (\$12), for a heartier version.

Save room for a very large, very sweet ending with the made-to-order vanilla ice cream. Portions are generous, so take the "really to share" cue on the menu literally.

"We could prepare [the ice cream] before," Mr. Fireman said, "but it doesn't have that creaminess."

"I serve food that people want to eat every day," Mr. Fireman said. "That's the purpose of being in business, to please others."

—Christina Kline

**Florian Café; 225 Park Ave. South between 18th and 19th streets, and serves lunch from 11:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.; 212-869-8800.**