

FOODSERVICE EQUIPMENT

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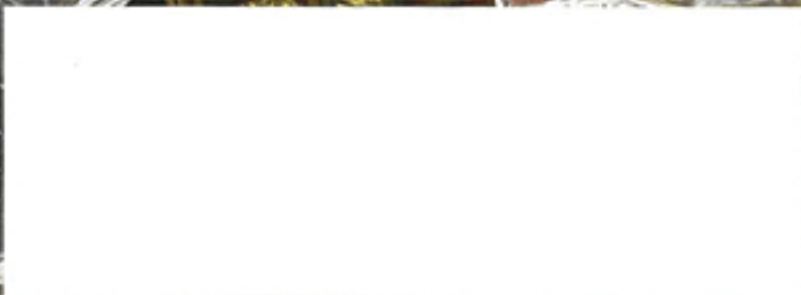
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Out Of THE BOX

PANINI — INSALATE

Academia Barilla's flagship restaurant in New York City showcases the food maker's Italian cuisine via a fast-casual display-cooking line, well-stocked retail area and generously sized commissary kitchen designed for growth.

Photos courtesy of Valerio Architect



By Janice Cha, Senior Contributing Editor

Academia Barilla Restaurant is a New York love letter to Italian pasta. To step from the sidewalks of Midtown Manhattan's bustling Avenue of the Americas and through the restaurant doors is to enter the artisanal world of an Italian marketplace and pasta emporium. Natural wood boards and panels are used for the floors, walls, tabletops and ceiling. Herbs thrive in wooden packing cases suspended vertically to make a living wall. Culinary action runs practically nonstop along the restaurant's display-cooking line.

Academia Barilla, opened in December 2013 by Italian pasta maker Barilla (which also produces the ubiquitous blue pasta boxes on supermarket shelves), serves as the Parma, Italy-based food manufacturer's first foray into foodservice. "[It is] a natural next step to complete the

'field-to-fork' legacy of Barilla," says CEO Stefano Albano. "Academia Barilla was born in Parma to safeguard, develop and promote Italian gastronomic culture throughout the world."

As Barilla's flagship eatery, the restaurant covers about 3,000 sq. ft. with seating for 75. At the entrance, a small retail area—the Mercato—offers Barilla gourmet dried pasta, jarred spreads, oils and vinegars. The restaurant's menu centers on pasta, personal pizzas, paninis, salads and desserts, which patrons order at the counter. The meals are assembled to order in the open kitchen then delivered to tables. Behind the scenes is a generously sized production kitchen that will serve as both test kitchen and commissary for future Academia Barilla locations in the city.

Nearly a year into operations, the restaurant is holding

its own nicely. Check averages hover at about \$13.50 and covers per day range from 600-650. Its owners are poised to open Academia Barilla's second outlet in New York's Bryant Park neighborhood. A third location is in the works for the city's Herald Square.

Academia Barilla's layout, look and feel were created by architect Niccolò Valerio, President of Valerio Architecture



Twin pasta stations rely on high-tech noodle cookers plus a trio of induction cooktops for speedy service.

and Interiors, Los Angeles. Valerio in turn tapped Frank Muller, FCSI, Principal of Muller Design, Minden, Nev., to oversee kitchen design.

"In the restaurant area, we used warm materials: wood, butcher-block tabletops, a handmade chandelier that appears to be made from seeds and a communal table," Valerio says. "We wanted to communicate the depth of the pasta culture that makes up Italy's heritage."

Display Kitchen Flow

Efficiency and speed were top goals for both front- and back-of-house cooklines. Together, the kitchens take up just over half of the restaurant's total footprint with 550 sq. ft. for the display kitchen and 1,100 sq. ft. for the commissary.

"The equipment we selected had to meet two criteria," Albano notes. "First, it had to be capable of producing high-quality product in reduced cooking times. And second, in keeping with Barilla's 'good for you, good for the planet' way of doing business, we wanted equipment that would have a lower carbon footprint by using less energy, water and gas."

The starting point of the front counter of Academia Barilla's display kitchen is at the POS station, where customers place orders aided by colorful menu photos sliding past on flat-screen monitors mounted on the soffit above.

The action-point of the front counter can be found at the two mirror-image pasta stations, where equipment was doubled to keep up with demand during peak times. The stations rely on a pair of smart pasta cookers equipped with timers that automatically lift baskets according to pasta type. They are engineered to use the outgoing hot pasta water to preheat incoming fresh water. Just-cooked pasta is finished to order using three induction cooktops per side. Pasta-dish ingredients are held in refrigerated rails above and cold drawers below the induction cooktops.

The pizza-prep table and stone-hearth pizza oven sit immediately behind the pasta stations, against the back wall. "During less busy periods, one person can work both the pasta and pizza stations," Muller says of the adjacency.

Next to the pasta stations on the front counter, a heated shelf holds pizza slices. Last along the front line are two additional cold display cases holding prepared sandwiches and salads and a sandwich-/salad-prep table.

Muller developed a panini station to supply the restaurant's sandwich needs; it's located on the back counter. The station's three high-speed panini presses turn out perfectly browned sandwiches in less than 60 seconds thanks to a heating system that combines contact plates, infrared heat and microwaves to simultaneously toast and heat from the inside out. With microwaves, even paninis with thicker ingredients get warmed through.

The beverage area, where servers access beer, wine, soft drinks and coffee, incorporates a cool, space-saving flow of



Academia Barilla Restaurant, New York



The Mercato sells gourmet dried pasta by the pound, spreads, oils and vinegars.



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EQUIPMENT

Beverage Area

Perlick glass-door refrig.
Curtis coffee brewer
Lavazza espresso machine
True glass-door refrig.
Randell/Unified Brands ice and water station
Perlick beer tower

Display Cooking

CaptiveAire canopy hoods
RPI salumi, pastry display cases
True salad-prep table w/cold rail
Hatco heated drop-in shelves
Barker grab-n-go display cases
True undercounter refrig.
Electrolux panini presses

Wood Stone stone-hearth pizza oven
True pizza-prep table
Wells/Middleby hot food wells
CookTek/Middleby induction cooktop
Electrolux pasta cookers
True chef base
Randell/Unified Brands cold rail
Ugolini ice-creams machine

Commissary and Prep

Frigid remote refrig. system
Innox blast chiller
Electrolux kettles
Montague range/convection oven
CaptiveAire hoods
Electrolux braising pan
Jade/Middleby stockpot range

Electrolux combi ovens
Everpure water filters
Hobart/ITW FEG slicer, 20-qt. mixer
Robot Coupe food processor
Cambro ingredient bins

Storage and Warewashing

Manitowoc ice machine
Thermairite walk-ins
Frigid freezer compressor
Cambro shelving
CaptiveAire vapor hood
T&S spray-rinse assembly
Hobart/ITW FEG dishwasher
Eagle Group mop-sink cabinet



its own. The bulkiest pieces—beer kegs and coffee brewers—are stored out of sight in the commissary, a wall's distance away.

"We ran beer lines through the wall," Muller says. "It's a short distance, so it saves on costs of remotely located kegs. It also frees up cooler space in front for specialty drinks."

Counter staff pour coffee from insulated airpots up front, which also take up less space than brewing equipment. Wine from choice Italian vineyards and an array of canned and bottled beverages also are on display.

Guests can watch culinary action at a long table facing the cookline or share space at the communal table.



Kitchen And Commissary

Academia Barilla's back-of-house was created to serve as "both commissary and test kitchen, so at 1,100 sq. ft., it covers more space than would normally be needed in this size restaurant," Muller says.

Currently anchoring the commissary cookline are two steam-jacketed kettles, a four-burner range/oven, a braising pan, a two-burner stockpot range and two combi ovens. A blast chiller enables cook-chill production of sauces and other food items required by Academia Barilla's current unit and future satellite locations.

The prep area features a multilevel island counter that makes full use of vertical storage. Overhead racks hold pots and utensils within easy reach, while cutting boards are stored in slots below.

Extra storage can be found just under the top overshelf thanks to a series of welded L-brackets. "The edges of

deep 1/6- and 1/9-size pans slide right into the brackets, so they're like little drawers," Muller says. "Cooks use them to hold spices, tools and so on."

On a second prep island, Muller designed ingredient bins below and room for mixers on the surface. Electric outlets are built into both island work stations for handy access.

Main storage along the back wall of this test kitchen includes walk-in coolers and a freezer, which are dedicated to proteins, produce and frozen food.

Clean Up Time

The kitchen's cleanup areas—the dishroom and mop sink—share a few interesting design features of their own.

Warewashing is compact but "super functional," Muller says. An upright

dishmachine handles pots, flatware and melamine dishes. A separate undercounter high-temperature glass washer is reserved for wine and beer glasses. "The unit does a more efficient job of getting lipstick off glasses," Muller notes. To speed glass-washing turnaround times, team members empty glasses of leftover drinks and garnishes into a small catch basket next to the glass washer before slotting them into racks.

Some elements stay out of sight when not in use, such as the mop sink. Entirely housed in its own cabinet, the unit, made by Eagle, holds a self-contained janitor's sink behind double doors. "Think of a metal locker with a fully plumbed mop sink inside," Muller says. The sink sits on the floor, making it easy to clean mop heads and eliminating the need to lift heavy buckets. The doors close it off from the kitchen completely during the day. "And since it's a self-contained unit, we didn't have the extra expense of building walls around the mop sink and storage area." *for*

SPECS

MENU/SEGMENT: Fast-casual

COMPANY: Academia Barilla Restaurants

LOCATION: New York

UNITS: 1

PLANS: 3-4 openings in 2015

SIZE: 3,000 sq. ft.

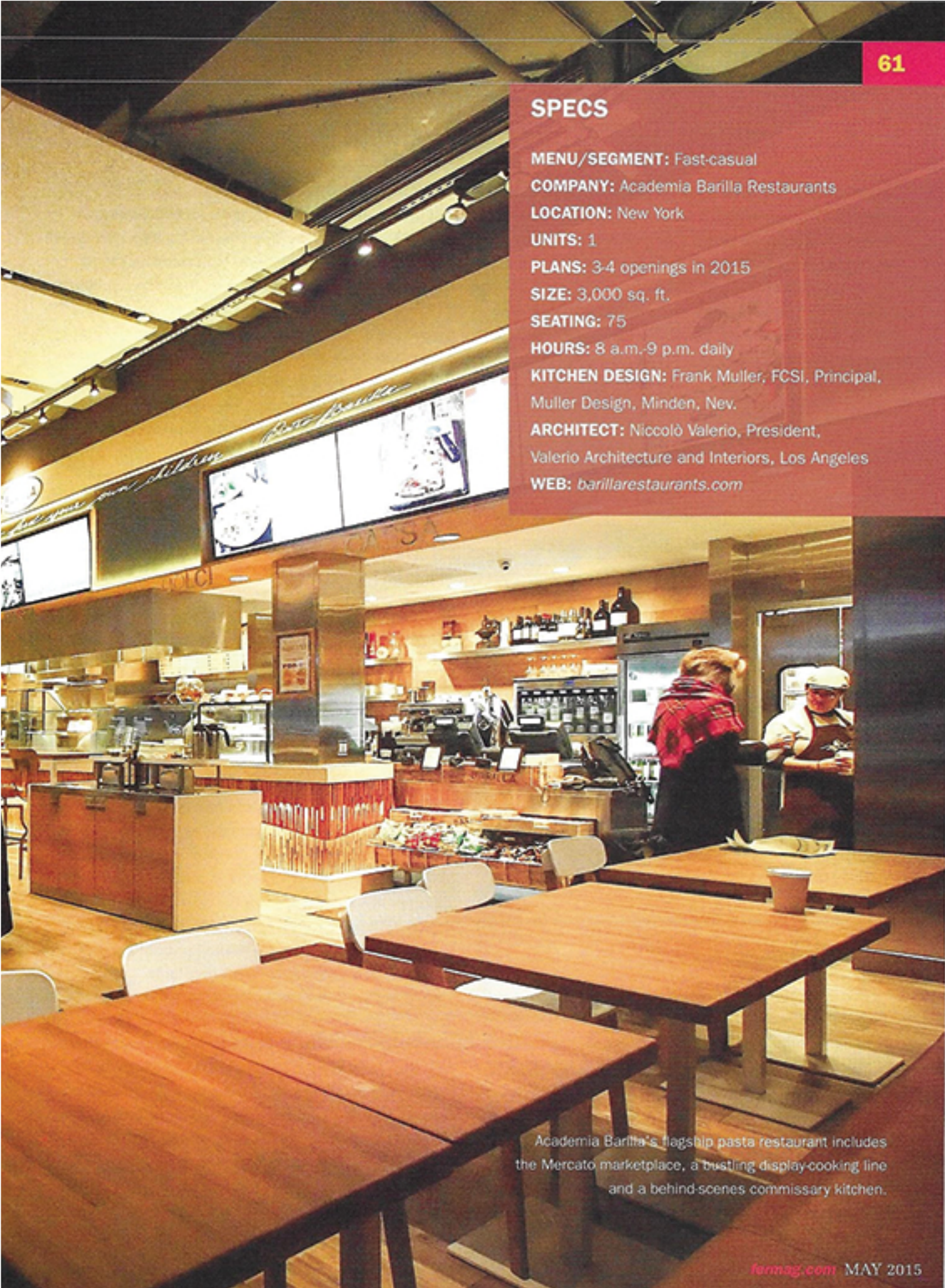
SEATING: 75

HOURS: 8 a.m.-9 p.m. daily

KITCHEN DESIGN: Frank Muller, FCSI, Principal,
Muller Design, Minden, Nev.

ARCHITECT: Niccolò Valerio, President,
Valerio Architecture and Interiors, Los Angeles

WEB: barillarestaurants.com



Academia Barilla's flagship pasta restaurant includes the Mercato marketplace, a bustling display-cooking line and a behind-scenes commissary kitchen.