

EATER

Eggslut Chef Alvin Cailan Opens His First NYC Restaurant

By Monica Burton
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Alvin Cailan will finally put down restaurant roots in New York City when the Usual opens tonight. The chef, who rose to restaurant world fame with Instagram-worthy egg sandwiches at LA's Eggslut, has been cooking in New York for more than a year now at various pop-ups, but the Usual will be his first permanent restaurant in the city he now calls home.

"I don't want to open an LA restaurant in New York. It just doesn't make sense, it doesn't feel right," Cailan [told Eater last year](#). And with the Usual, Cailan has dreamed up a New York-specific restaurant, entirely absent the egg sandwiches he's known for (the sandwich, not surprisingly, has inspired many [rip-offs](#)).

Although Cailan once toyed with opening a permanent location of his breakfast pop-up [Paper Planes](#), at the Usual he'll do American comfort food for dinner — with an “immigrant” spin. “It’s comfort food, but I’m Filipino, so there are some some Filipino influences,” Cailan [told Eater NY](#), “but I grew up in LA, so also some Mexican-Latino influences. And my sous chef is Chinese-Vietnamese from Houston. So the way we think of food and our flavors are completely different.”



The menu features fried chicken alongside kung pao cauliflower, edamame hummus, and kimchi spaetzle. [Unsurprisingly, given Cailan’s popular Bob’s Burger pop-up at Chef’s Club Counter, there’s a burger on the menu.](#) At the Usual, it’s made from short rib, brisket, and chuck and topped with grated tomatoes, roasted garlic aioli, and onions. There’s also a full bar, with a wine list of 150 small-producer labels selected by Cailan’s brother, sommelier Anthony Cailan, most from Europe and California.

The design at the restaurant inside the Nolitan Hotel is also full of California influence. It’s filled with light wood, concrete, pink walls, and a pink granite bar top. “I think if you came here, you’d know the operators are from California,” Cailan [said to Eater NY](#).

He wants the restaurant to become a neighborhood fixture, rather than a destination spot. Cailan himself settled in the neighborhood in April, but has spent many months in New York City, all with the goal of opening his first real New York restaurant.

“I’m 35 now, so we really wanted to have the experience of opening a regular restaurant in the major leagues of food and have fun at the same time.”

Take a look around the Usual below.

<https://www.eater.com/2018/7/13/17492716/alvin-cailan-nyc-the-usual-restaurant-opening-eggslut>