

📍 New York

Flipping perspectives

First there was the ramen burger. Then came the cronut. Now, the Big Apple's latest must-try fusion food: Jordan Andino's Filipino taco

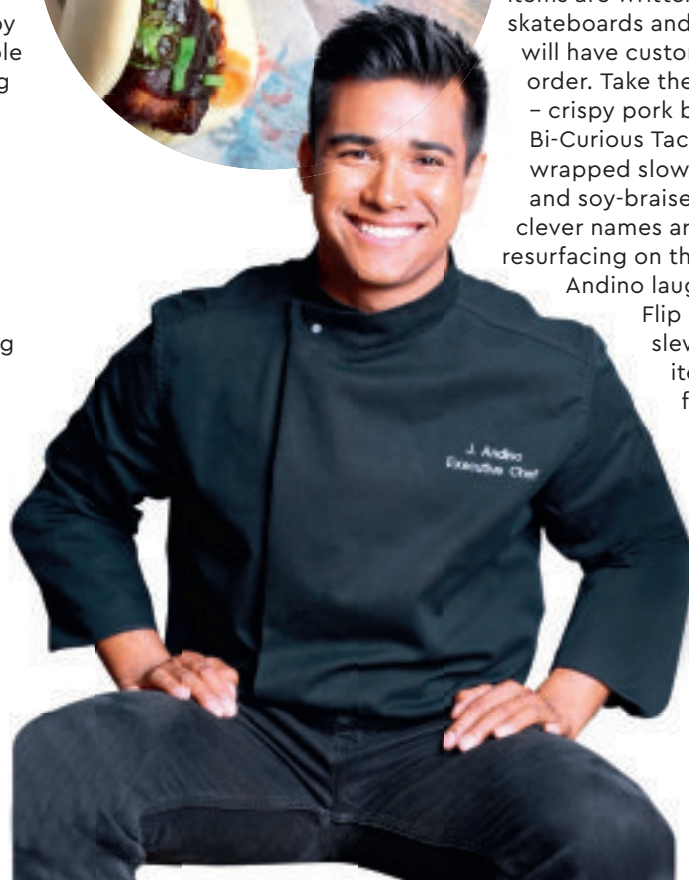
CHEF It's always summer at Flip Sigi, where colorfully painted beaches and jeeps adorn the interior walls of the restaurant's two outposts in the West Village and Upper East Side. New York's first "Filipino taqueria" is the brainchild of surfer-turned-chef Jordan Andino, whose bubbly personality, infectious smile and creative spin on Filipino fare have thrust him into the national spotlight.

Born to Filipino immigrants in Toronto and raised in California, Andino seeks to introduce the cuisine of his youth in packaging more familiar to western palates. "My dad is a chef as well," Andino says, "and my grandmother is definitely the culinary matriarch of the family." He evokes their influence by drawing on "the tangy and sweet flavors" of the Philippines that are developed with vinegars and tamarind.

Of course, Flip Sigi is far from traditional – a fact embodied in dishes such as the crispy wonton nachos with adobo chicken. "People who've had authentic Filipino food growing up have typically loved the restaurants because of the innovative take on classic dishes," Andino says.

Indeed, his style has been a hit: Customers are flocking to the restaurant, and Andino recently landed spots on both *Zagat's* 30 Hottest Chefs Under 30 and *People's* Sexiest Male Chefs in America. He hosts a new reality TV show on the Cooking Channel, *Late Nite Eats*, which takes him to a different North American city each week to chat with chefs behind the most innovative after-hours restaurants.

Andino himself trained at wildly prestigious establishments, including the three-Michelin-starred French Laundry. And though his time in fine dining taught him the tricks and techniques to create great flavor – not to mention the ability to plate like a fancy place – Flip Sigi is a decidedly casual affair.



"My West Coast beach lifestyle really affected the vibe and décor at my restaurant because I wanted to bring the laid-back beach feel to the hustle and bustle of NYC." Menu items are written on wall-mounted skateboards and sport names that will have customers smiling as they order. Take the Buncha Nice Buns – crispy pork belly bao – or the Bi-Curious Tacos, a duo of tortilla-wrapped slow-braised short ribs and soy-braised chicken. "The clever names are my inner child resurfacing on the menus,"

Andino laughs.

Flip Sigi also has a slew of secret menu items. The chef's favorite? The FUC Me – that's Filipino Underground Crunchwrap, served with short ribs and kimchi fried rice. Take Andino's word: "It's fantastic!"

flipsigi.com

– Julianne Ross