
Zero Waste, Maximum Taste



July 12, 2021

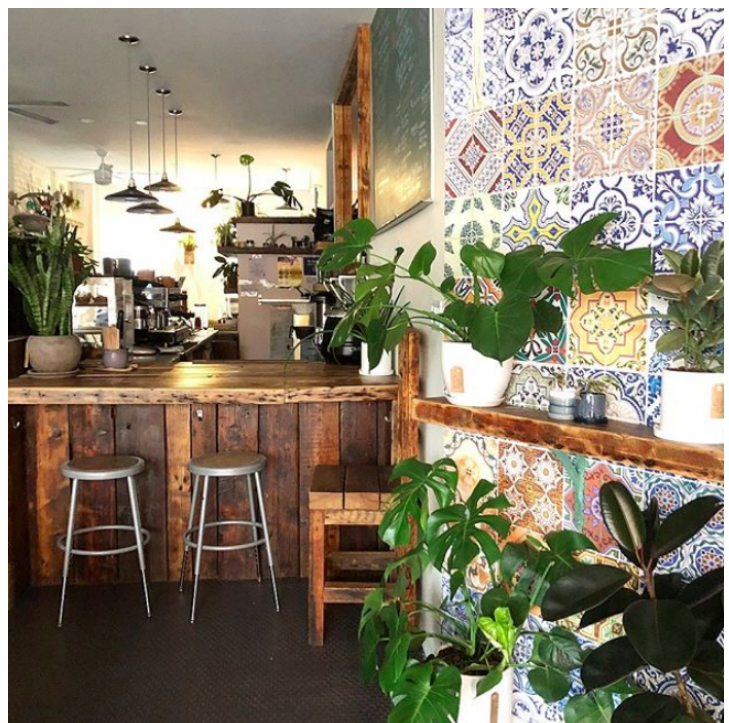
It's no secret that climate change has been one of the most impactful topics of conversation over the past few decades. The rise of social consciousness towards the subject of environmental catastrophe has escalated from a distant worry to a seemingly ever present panic. In a 2020 study done by researchers at Yale University and George Mason University, around 66% of Americans reportedly felt a personal sense of responsibility to help in the reduction of global warming. When asked about their concerns facing climate change, it was shown that the number of Americans who were constantly anxious about the state of the environment had grown nearly ten percent just in the past five years.

The conversation surrounding our authority to lessen the carbon footprint we leave on the world has never been more pertinent. A big part of this discussion involves, of course, greenhouse gas emissions. The culinary world has more to do with this subject than many would think, although the public is certainly catching on quickly. Food production is a large

factor in emitting many of the greenhouse gasses that are responsible for planet-warming, such as methane and carbon dioxide. In fact, food waste accounts for over a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. While this is not something that one normally thinks about as they are sitting down for a meal, there are many up and coming restaurants striving to open up the conversation.

One Brooklyn wine bar, Rhodora, is committed to being part of the change. Owner Henry Rich and deputy director Halley Chambers have dedicated their careers to creating a space that serves as a guilt free way to enjoy a night out. They are actually the first of their kind, opting to surpass the regular attempt at low waste and going straight for an absolutely zero waste business model. No single-use plastics are used, or allowed, in the bar, and all of the products handled in the space must be recyclable. This goes for food and beverage options as well- all consumable products are compostable, as well as having the added benefit of being organic. The owners work with natural winemakers in an attempt to “work against the often harmful impacts of large-scale wine manufacturing,” simultaneously supporting sustainability and smaller entrepreneurs. Their mission statement, which positions “respect for humans and the environment” at the core of their pursuit, makes this Fort Greene location a top choice for a memorable and ecologically sound evening.

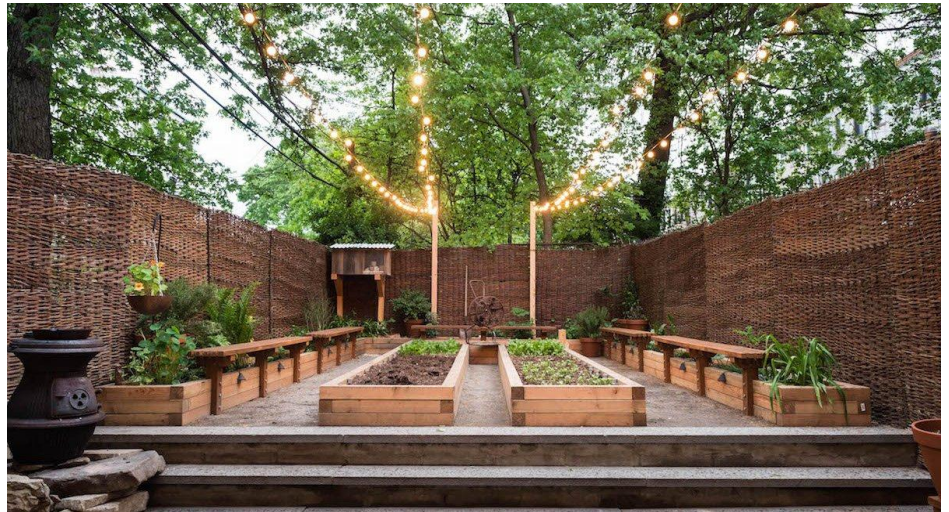
Rhodora is fortunately not the only venue working towards a zero waste goal. There are many other restaurants and cafes that are doing their best to produce as little waste as possible in their businesses. Planted, a cafe located in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, has also gone the extra mile in regards to eco-friendliness. In their mission statement, they describe themselves as a low-waste market and cafe that “puts vegan, whole foods, health and the environment above all else.” Much like Rhodora, they feature local growers as a cornerstone of their movement to support organic, plant-based meals. As an added bonus, the cafe also operates as a plant



shop. This not only enhances the atmosphere of the space, but encourages guests to leave with their own locally sourced greenery.

If you're looking for something even more locally sourced, look no further than the Prospect Heights restaurant Olmsted, owned by chef and skilled agriculturalist, Greg Boxtrom. The focal point of this restaurant is their dedication to minimizing food waste and maximizing the use of farm to table ingredients. In fact, many of the vegetables featured on their mainly

vegetarian menu come from their own backyard garden. It doesn't get much more natural than that. With unique plates such as Summer squash sum tom and carrot crepes, guests are sure to find an experience that is refreshing for both the taste buds and the soul. And for anyone who enjoys a glass of wine with their lunch (and let's



be honest, that's a large majority of us), sommelier Zwann Greys has cultivated a selection of natural, affordable wines. Olmsted is altogether a great choice for any eco-conscious brunch lover.

While it can be difficult to change our habits, these restaurants are spearheading a crusade to make the transition that much easier. There was once a time when we would have had to grow our own vegetables in order to support organic eating, but with options like these, it is easier than ever to make more virtuous decisions regarding our dining habits. And luckily, with the technology of the modern world, finding low-waste markets and restaurants takes little to no effort. While they are certainly more populous in bigger areas such as Los Angeles and New York, the endeavor to create eco-friendly spaces is being taken on by business owners all over the nation. So the next time you find yourself longing to try something new, consider going for an option that will not only be fun and flavorful, but will make you walk out feeling just a little bit better about yourself and the world around you.