



THE GQ EYE

GQ ON STYLE

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Talking Shop with Andrew Tarlow of Marlow & Sons and the Wythe Hotel

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Photo: Corrie Vierregger

For years, Cracker Barrels cornered the market on the restaurant-as-retail shop concept. Then came Andrew Tarlow, who opened Marlow & Sons and Diner in the sleepy, industrial neighborhood of Williamsburg, before the Brooklyn artisanal food and dry-goods store boom. Charmingly tarnished and sylvan, Marlow & Sons stock leather goods and local apples, staff willowy hipsters, and curate menus of whole animal offerings right down to cowhide bags. GQ met up with Tarlow on a Friday afternoon in Williamsburg at his latest project with Brooklyn developer Two Trees, the Wythe Hotel, where his restaurant fans will find his sleekest restaurant yet, Reynards, and its upstairs bar, Ides. Soft spoken, slightly tousled, and eloquently spare, Tarlow appeared sockless in a casually cut gray wool suit (of mysterious origins) to talk shop.

Andrew Tarlow: You're not going to ask me who makes my suit, are you?

GQ: Now I have to. Who makes your suit?

Andrew Tarlow: They're custom, but I'm not going to tell you who makes them. Because maybe he wouldn't make them anymore.

GQ: Really? You don't think he'd want you to pimp him out? Well, it looks good. Tell me about this project.

Andrew Tarlow: We handle all the food and beverage inside of this hotel. We thought about it from the ground up, and about, how do we—as people who care about food, and hospitality and our guests—think about those things inside a place where people sleep? Even just in this short period of time—we saw people this morning, who were hanging out at the bar last night, come over and say good morning and have a cup of coffee. That sort of constant. It's like having people sleeping at our house.

GQ: Do you have a room set aside for you?

Andrew Tarlow: I'm staying at Room 308 for the next three nights. 308 has a door connected to the room next to it that has bunk beds in it, so my kids are sleeping there. My son and his friend have their own room with bunk beds for the night.

GQ: Sleepover! That sounds like fun. What kind of people do you think you'll attract to the hotel?

Andrew Tarlow: I would assume people who care about food and are inside this sort of food community. Certainly the art and the music communities as well—the convergence of all those things. The nice thing about that, especially in the food capacity, is that it transcends age. It doesn't have to be everyone our age, or older than us. When you think about it in those terms, it could be anybody, ideally.

GQ: What is your connection with the arts and music community?

Andrew Tarlow: I know we're doing the Frieze Art Fair, and we have the Food Book Fair coming up. We publish a food journal called Diner Journal, so we'll be a speaker there. We have a partnership with Vice and Brooklyn Brewery and Brooklyn Bowl and a ton of bands coming through. We have a band room set aside on the sixth floor where the bar is. We have two rooms—one has four bunk beds and one has six, it's sort of seen as a tour bus in the sky. A lot of bands from Brooklyn Bowl have already booked and certainly all of the other venues in the neighborhood have reached out to us.

GQ: Do you think they'll sleep in bunk beds?

Andrew Tarlow: I don't know. That or they'll have to sleep on the floor, or maybe they won't sleep.

GQ: Do you have other partnerships in the Brooklyn food community?

Andrew Tarlow: We're working on a chocolate bar with Mast Brothers. We've been talking about making our own beer for the hotel and using Brooklyn Brewery Radius on tap as a jumping-off point. We've got Brooklyn Radius bottle conditioned for all the rooms right now.

GQ: Speaking of rooms, what's room service like?

Andrew Tarlow: We're not doing room service. The notion

is that I see the restaurant as being the focal point and the meeting point of the hotel for traveling guests and certainly the local people in the community who live around here. So the notion is that we really want those two worlds to collide and be together and use this big grand bar and this place as the centerpiece for that. It's not very interesting having people eating hamburgers alone in their rooms while watching TV. The idea is that people come to a table and gather around in a communal space and whether you know everyone you should feel like you will get to know everyone.

GQ: You have a strong aesthetic which has trickled down into the rest of the Brooklyn. You were one of the first to do this sort of place in Williamsburg. How is the Wythe different? Did you draw from anything specific for inspiration?

Andrew Tarlow: I didn't draw from anything specifically. There were some basic features that influenced it. That this is such a big, grand room had a huge input into the design. We also wanted to make it feel somewhat found so that floor could have actually been here. so that it had a sense of place, like "Oh, this is New York." We're not trying to transport you to Thailand or something. We exposed all the brick and all the wood on the ceilings. It all existed. When we took down a big piece of the building, we resalvaged a lot of the wood.

The farm room is seen again as a place where people gather so it feels like a café where we can sit and talk and not feel like, "We have to have dinner." It's where lunch can turn into drinks, can turn into dinner, can turn into coffee in the morning. Whenever I create a space we try to think about how we attract people to that room, especially our staff. They spend forty to sixty hours a week there and how do you build a room that people want to congregate in? How do you attract that? You do it by making it beautiful, obviously, and if i can get the staff to want to be there, I almost feel confident that I can get the rest.

GQ: What's the story behind Reynard's, the restaurant's name?

Andrew Tarlow: Reynard's is an old French/German character from the Middle Ages. Reynard was a fox who was a mischievous creature, and he got into all kinds of trouble with his friends—other animals. We wanted to play with the idea of something that was French and a little something else.

GQ: What about the name of the bar, Ides?

Andrew Tarlow: Well, the real reason comes from my daughter's real name, which is Ides. She was born in the middle of this past March. But I also like the idea of the ides—you know the old saying, "beware the ides of March." Maybe you should beware the Ides.

GQ: Let's talk about your style. Do you have an everyday uniform?

Andrew Tarlow: Yes and no. I have pants that my wife [Kate Huling] designed that I wear a lot, and I will change my everyday uniform every three to six months.

GQ: What is it now?

Andrew Tarlow: Today it's this suit. I've worn it two days in a row. But lately, in this past month I've been wearing more construction-like clothes, not quite a T-shirt, but certainly not pressed and button-down things. In terms of clothing, I have to think about it. Do I want to present myself as a business-y guy, or a more casual guy? But do I really want to be someone who looks like they shop at J.Crew? There is a lot of thought. I usually try to find something that's right and run with that until it gets old or until I see it other places.

GQ: What are the pants like that your wife designed?

Andrew Tarlow: She designed a pair of pants that we worked on together. They're just cut really well. I have three in blue, one in white, and one in tan. I have a brushed cotton and a regular cotton version. We sell them at Marlow Goods. We've been working on a clothing line. We started with leather goods and moved into sweaters and home accessories like rugs—things made from the wool of sheep. We've been working on a woman's sailor pant, men's pants, a men's shirt, and woman's shirt. And my wife is working on a shoe. It's only at this moment, one of everything. We start small and take the time to figure it out, work out of the details, and connect all the dots. One of the reasons we haven't done the cotton pant here in New York is because the cotton is actually grown in Texas organically, sent to Japan to a mill, and then back to New York to be made.

GQ: Those sound like some pants. Are there any shirts in particular that you love?

Andrew Tarlow: Most of my shirts are custom. My father used to be in the custom shirt business, and I have quite a few of his shirts that he doesn't wear anymore. My uncle is still in that business and makes those shirts for me.

GQ: Do you have accessories you wear every day?

Andrew Tarlow: Shoes. I have a beautiful bicycle, a Rivendell. It's from a custom bike shop in California. I switch out the handlebars in the winter, so I'll switch it back to drop bars soon. This [Marlow Goods] leather briefcase is probably my biggest accessory. They're all made from the animals we use.

GQ: I'm still so curious about your suit.

Andrew Tarlow: That's the next interview.

Favorite places to shop: Brooklyn Tailors (*the mysterious source of his fine suit*)

Listening to: Beach House

Reading: Dirt, by David R. Montgomery

Hotels: "My wife and I usually rent houses because we travel with our four young children."