

An Open Love Letter to Indaco:

Dear Indigo Road & Indaco Atlanta Team,

On behalf of me, all the versions of myself, and one of my homegirls, I would like to express a resounding, most sincere, thank you to every single person involved in making Indaco what it is. I am immensely and overwhelmingly grateful for the experience you have consistently created for me - and most importantly a few of the people I love a lot. For a lot of reasons, there are very few establishments left, or now, that are able to perform at such a high level on a regular basis. The unwavering quality of your food production, the gracefully technical service, and the nearly impeccable dining proscenium all contribute to a perpetually satisfying evening with y'all. Every single time. It is also what makes you one of the most important restaurants in the city right now.

In the first instance, thank you for your food. The ingredients are always clean. The flavors are always sentient and indulgent. The meditation is always evident. Even when things are wrong or done not to specification, I'm always willing to believe the intention is pure. Brightly and beautiful plated, the dishes are specifically cohesive - but also independent and proud. The pizza's great. There are those wood-fired carrots, and the little gem, and the polpette. The bread is wonderfully breathable, pliable even, but also bold and firm. I could go on and on about the spaghetti nero, recent scarpinocc and rigatoni and the ribeye with the lump crab that I had for three weeks in a row. I could. I could, but the food is simply a dominant fraction of this remarkably whole experience.

The other part of this incredible equation is the service - what I've referred to before as the hospitable kinetic - the thermodynamics of human kindness and how it works. "I'll marry all y'all in here right now" is what my best friend said, verbatim after what I believe was only our third or fourth time in the place; that was two months ago. I have now maybe been to one of Indigo Road's most recent hospitality installations now... 10 times? I would check my bank statements for accuracy, but I'd rather not further reconcile with that consequence of my delicious, recent fixation. Either way, I've been enough to know that - while you all may be far from perfect - you are absolutely doing something right.

It is the Angelou effect. It's understanding that people will forget what you say and do, but never the way you make them feel. Even on the rare occasion that my steak is overcooked, the lengths gone to for the sake of guest recovery are none short of efficient and considerate. The service is spectacular at Indaco. You are smiling and waving often times before we have paraded through the broad lobby. I don't even care if they're faking it; the chemistry is immediately impacted seeing how happy y'all are to see - not just us, but all of your guests. Your eyes are truly

open and pleasant. You all are profoundly welcoming. You care for strangers in the most practical, etymological sense of the craft. You are undoubtedly the kind of restaurant that is Atlanta, and that Atlanta itself historically aims to be. It is as inherently hospitable as the peachtree or the railroad itself. It's excellent, really. Thank you.

And lastly, thank you for the subtle artisanship of the building. In many ways, the physical geography of a restaurant is not as consequential as the other elements. It's why we eat at holes in the wall. But the Indaco aesthetic is undramatically smart and clean. It's a perfect stage for a classic show. It's elevated and accessible - in a timelessly, informed casual kind of way. It is always warmly brilliant, and cozy. With the people inside of it and the penetrating city silhouette perspective, it is all beautiful. The chefs are smiling too. The lights are high behind you. You seem to be emitting that very happiness into our food. The oven and expo are dreamy. The uniforms are pristine. It's all beautiful. Honestly, the bathrooms are kind of far, but we could all benefit from a few more steps. The design is so precisely useful and not overly exposing. It just makes every incredible thing even better.

I've been a lot of places and, in full transparency, I have not been some places, too. But I have spent a share of my life's time in restaurants and I know for a fact that y'all are one of the best restaurants in the city. Easily. As a citizen artist, a regular, patron, professional eater (hilarious, correct), it is very much my duty to say so, too. It's an act of yes gratitude, initially - but also truth. There is such a rich, significant truth behind what it takes to produce what you all put together with regularity.

Dinner with somebody you love is unarguably one of the highest forms of art. It's the lived calligraphy and recitation of an almost ancient language. Or at least that's how I feel when I leave. Lol. And I have to say something. It's being written, quite honestly, so that there I never run the risk of forgetting how your food makes me feel. I archive this as tribute to my one of life's many instances in pleasure. Anyway. That is a dialogue for an entirely separate set of letters. No matter, I noticed the messaging from Giuseppe Cipriani on y'all's website and I could not agree more. To serve is to first love indeed. I love y'all. I love your food. And you all love your food. You love your guests and your craft, in a way that our industry, and city alike, will unquestionably continue to benefit from - and require - for our survival. So thank you.

To Sarah, Alphonzo, Kevin, Brendan, Crishana, Chef Alex, Tay, Destini, Jeremy, Tyler, Jack, Elizabeth, Castille, Shawn, Shaquille, Nick, Kara, and every body else whose names I may not recall in this moment. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

PS. I'll see you soon! Hahaha.