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# Tom Colicchio-Backed Bowery Grows in New Jersey

By Bridget Shirvell | March 30, 2017



One of the newest local players who are betting vertical farming combined with technology can reimagine and improve modern agriculture.

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Bowery is already growing more than 80 kinds of leafy greens and herbs. Photo courtesy of Bowery.

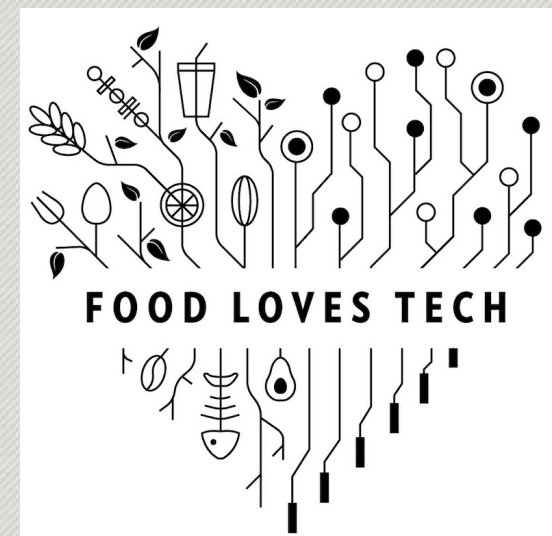
*Editor's note: We kicked off our first annual Food Loves Tech event last summer in Chelsea—here's a recap. We're bringing a taste of the food and farming future back this year, but just across the East River at Industry City. Leading up to the event, this story is part of an ongoing series about technology's effects on our food supply.*

My nose tingles as I chew. An aftershock of wasabi finishes the sharp, tangy bite. Wasabi arugula isn't something you'd usually consider local or in

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season on a February afternoon but thanks to start-up Bowery both those things are true.

Bowery is one of the many indoor urban farms to sprout up in recent years. There's the Bushwick mushroom farm, Kimball Musk's Square Roots shipping container experiment and the massive aeroponics farm in Newark among others. Bowery, who counts Tom Colicchio is an investor, is one of the newest local players who are betting vertical farming combined with technology can reimagine and improve modern agriculture.



“If you look at agriculture it’s at the epicenter of a lot of global issues, we’re doing real damage in the way we’re farming and it’s not sustainable,” CEO and co-founder Irving Fain said. “How do you provide fresh food to urban



environments in a way that's more efficient and sustainable?"

Fain's attempt at answering that question is Bowery, which already has an indoor vertical farm in Kearny, New Jersey with an additional in the tri-state area in the works. The indoor vertical farm and corresponding technology allows them to grow produce, faster and year round using 95 percent less water than traditional farming methods and zero pesticides.

Already growing more than 80 kinds of leafy greens (e.g. butterhead lettuce, arugula and baby kale) and herbs, Bowery's farm system uses a combination of automation and a proprietary custom-built software that they call "FarmOS." It controls the process from seed to store using vision systems, machine learning and a sensor network to provide complete visibility into every stage of plant growth while monitoring the health and quality of the crops 24/7.

"This drastically reduces the risk of error in the growing and harvesting processes and allows us to harvest each crop at the point of perfection," Fain said. "The resources we save using this system, paired with the efficiency of our growing process, allows us to price our packaged greens starting at \$3.49, which is competitive with organic products from the field."

And by constant data monitoring Bowery can not only give the crops

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exactly what they need to grow but also to taste, feel or even have the nutrients someone wants.

“Say we’d like a more spicy mustard green, not only can we do that we can make sure every time we grow that mustard green it tastes the same way,” Fain said.

You can try some of their products at [Foragers City Grocer](#), Colicchio’s [Fowler & Wells](#) and select Whole Foods in the tristate area.

*Photos courtesy of Bowery.*



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*Bridget is the digital strategy editor for Edible Manhattan, Edible Brooklyn, Edible Long Island and Edible East End.*



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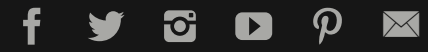
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