

# **Michelin-star restaurant owned by superstar chef John Fraser is ripping off tip workers: suit**

**The fancy upper West Side restaurant Dovetail, which recently earned a C health grade, has been slapped with a class-action lawsuit that says it violates labor laws by sharing tips with nontip workers and making tip workers toil away on tasks that don't bring in gratuities.**

By [Daniel Beekman](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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**A class-action lawsuit says that the fancy upper West Side restaurant is ripping off its tip workers.**

The fancy upper West Side restaurant Dovetail, which recently earned a C health grade, is doing its workers dirty, a class-action lawsuit said Friday.

Roldan Monzon, a busser and runner at the Michelin-star eatery on W. 77th St. since 2008, claims the hotspot violated labor laws by using a tip pool to share gratuities with nontip workers, including assistant managers.

“It makes me angry. A lot of money they have taken from me,” said Monzon, 37, of East New York, Brooklyn. “But I don't have a lot of options.”

In addition to tip pooling, Dovetail forces tip workers to toil extra hours on tasks that don't bring in gratuities, the Manhattan Federal Court lawsuit claims.

**Roldan Monzon, a busser and runner at the Michelin star eatery since 2008, says the hotspot violated labor laws but using a tip pool to share gratuities with nontip workers such as assistant managers.**

Their “side work” includes cleaning windows, folding napkins, taking out the trash and vacuuming the dining room, the lawsuit alleges. The setup is blatantly illegal because Dovetail tip workers are paid just \$5 an hour, said Brian Schaffer, a lawyer representing Monzon.

With their tips included, the workers are supposed to end up making at least \$7.25 an hour, the minimum wage. “This is just a way for the restaurant to lower its payroll on the backs on its

workers,” Schaffer said. “There is no excuse for a Michelin restaurant of this magnitude, a very well-known restaurant that charges \$40 for entrees. They should know better.”

Dovetail's owner, superstar chef John Fraser, declined to comment Friday.

But Dovetail’s lawyer, Carolyn Richmond, said the eatery intends to vigorously defend the litigation.

**Monzon, who sends money to his parents in Mexico, hopes to recover the money that he has lost.**

“We firmly believe that the restaurant has been in full compliance with all state and federal wage and hour laws and that its position will be vindicated in the courts system,” Richmond said.

Fraser is a kickboxing aficionado who trained in Parisian kitchens and has received praise from The New York Times and The New Yorker.

“Many of the restaurant’s well-heeled clientele linger over their plates with the leisurely contentment of those whose children have long left home,” a New Yorker reviewer wrote in 2008.

**Dovetail made headlines recently after its C grade from city health inspectors became public. It received 35 violation points in May for cleanliness and various other issues, records show.**

Monzon’s lawsuit, which names Fraser and two companies he uses to operate the eatery, seeks back wages, overtime and cash damages for bussers, runners, bartenders and servers going back six years, the period allowed by the statute of limitations in the state.

The complaint also demands that Dovetail mend its ways. Monzon’s lawyers estimate as many as 100 people could join the lawsuit.

“I have to send money to my mother and father in Mexico,” Monzon said. “I hope I can recover the money I’ve lost.”

Dovetail made headlines recently after its C grade from city health inspectors became public. It received 35 violation points in May for cleanliness and various other issues, records show.

It currently has a “Grade Pending” sign in its window, which is allowed until the restaurant has the chance to appeal.

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