

Employees File Class Action Wage Lawsuit Against Owners of Clubstaurant Beast Tao

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One of New York's highest grossing restaurants is going to court.

The owners of 58th Street monster Tao are the latest restaurateurs to be slapped with a class action wage suit, *Law 360* reports. The lawsuit alleges that Tao neglected to pay minimum wages to some employees and that certain tipped workers were required to share their gratuities with staffers that were ineligible for tips.

According to the suit, Tao Uptown had non-tipped, back of the house "polishers" and "stockers" who allegedly got money from the front-of-the-house gratuity pool. The suit also alleges that sometimes the tipped bussers were asked to do the polishing and stocking work, even though they weren't paid minimum wage. According to the suit, Tao changed up the operations around 2012, so that the polishers and stockers are paid at an hourly rate above minimum wage now, and they're not in the tip pool. 100 + workers are eligible for the suit.

The complaint demands the unpaid wages plus attorney costs and damages for the employees that were allegedly shorted, although no word yet on how much they're seeking, total. According to *Law 360*, the suit lists Tao Licensing LLC, Madison Entertainment Associates LLC, Asia Five Eight LLC, and Strategic Hospitality Group LLC as defendants.

The entity currently known as Tao Group operates over 20 venues spread across New York, Las Vegas, and Sydney. Its biggest hits in NYC are Tao Uptown (the subject of the suit), Tao Downtown, Lavo, Beauty & Essex, and Stanton Social.