

CRAMER: SEND THOSE MUTUAL-FUND CROOKS TO JAIL!

SEPTEMBER 22, 2003

NEW YORK

big guys wielding big sticks—for a crack at some trendy comfort food. The big cheese-and-mushroom-stuffed burger alone is worth crossing this cultural divide, and the chewy rare hanger steak is remarkable. • 54 W. 21st St. (212-989-0096). (M)

*** 36 BAR AND BARBECUE**
Little Korea isn't lacking for barbecue joints where diners grill their own dinner over portable charcoal pots. But with its quasi-industrial décor and friendly service, 36-92 is a welcome addition to the kimchi district. The menu covers all the basics, from bibimbap to casseroles and stews, but the main attraction is the barbecued black-Angus beef that you wrap in lettuce leaves slathered with sweet pepper paste. • 5 W. 36th St. (212-563-3737). (M)

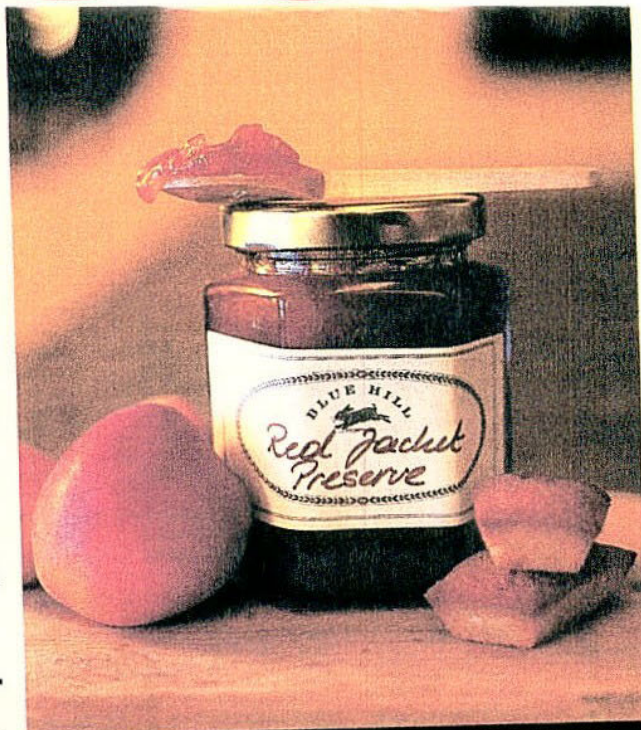
WORLD YACHT DINING CRUISES
Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown, Olives' Todd English, and Park Avenue Cafe's David Burke, among others. Jacket required. • Pier 81, W. 41st St. at the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E)

43RD-56TH STREETS, EAST SIDE

*** D'ARTAGNAN, THE ROTISSERIE**
After years of selling foie gras and game to restaurants, D'Artagnan finally has its own: a high-ceilinged duplex countrified with tiled floors, rough ocher walls, and a cozy bar. Besides signature terrines and charcuterie, there's seriously rib-sticking Gascon fare like cassoulet, terrific spit-roasted chicken, lamb, and "la garbure et son chabrot," a duck-confit soup dense enough to be eaten with a fork. Finish your meal like a true Gascon with a shot of Armagnac blanc from a baseless glass. • 152 E. 46th St. (212-687-0300). (M-E)

DJANGO
With the arrival of chef Cedric Tovar via Town and a series of celebrated French kitchens, this dramatically beaded duplex has gotten a Mediterranean-flavored culinary jolt in the form of ambitious new dishes like pancetta-wrapped cod marinated in black olives, and a lamb duo of rack and braised-shank moussaka. Elegant sidewalk seating wraps around an atmospherically revamped lounge with its own menu of tantalizing tapas, small plates, and exotic cocktails. • 480 Lexington Ave., at 46th St. (212-871-6600). (M-E)

*** EFENDI**
Hit-and-run restaurant-spinner Orhan Yegen has bounced back from his boffo smash and swift exit at uptown Beyoglu, moving on to what he calls



SHOPPING FRUITS OF HIS LABOR

The dwindling supply of local stone fruit signals the end of this so-called summer, but Blue Hill pastry chef Pierre Reboul has harnessed its peak flavor to extend the season with his luscious Greenmarket-fresh preserves. Exceptional Finger Lakes fruit from Red Jacket Orchards has gone into his stunning apricot and apricot-pistachio varieties (\$10 a jar), which are delicious stirred into yogurt or slathered on the buttery financiers he serves with dessert. (75 Washington Place; 212-539-1776.)

sushi and sashimi in nondescript surroundings one flight above a midtown side street. Cognoscenti put themselves and their taste buds in the nimble hands of the sushi chef, who amazes with imported treasures like Japanese aji, sea eel, and prawn-Kuruma ebi. • 7 E. 47th St. (212-317-2802). (E)

*** MALONEY & PORCELLI**
Maloney & Porcelli claims it isn't a steakhouse, but the tide of pinstripe and great hunks of meat suggest otherwise. The best dish, though, isn't steak but a mammoth "crackling" pork shank—which arrives with a steak knife thrust deep into it—and the service couldn't be nicer. • 37 E. 50th St. (212-750-2253). (E)

NINO'S POSITANO
Upscale Italian specializing in food from the south, Positano in particular. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto),

ilege of eating under that vaulted tile ceiling. • Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (212-490-6650). (M-E)

SMITH & WOLLENSKY
Urban cowboys herd together over big steaks with knives to match at impresario Alan Stillman's signature chop-house. The place has that landmark-steakhouse look—bare oak floors, a raffish air, and bustling waiters wearing service stars. There's surf and turf aplenty, improvisations at lunch, and an enviable wine cellar. • 797 Third Ave., at 49th St. (212-753-1530). (M-E)

43RD-56TH STREETS, WEST SIDE

ACQUA PAZZA
Umberto Arpaia, executive chef and owner of Cellini, has smartly refurbished the old Artusi space and installed a menu devoted to coastal Italian cuisine, heavy on market-dependent seafood specials. The name means "crazy water," and refers to the traditional southern-Italian practice of cooking a whole fish in seawater. Arpaia bakes his instead, sanely, in a broth of cherry tomatoes, chili flakes, and white wine. • 36 W. 52nd St. (212-582-6900). (M-E)

BEN BENSON'S STEAK HOUSE
This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. At a time when steakhouses were famous for rudeness and hauteur, Benson's made a point of homeyness. No one's stopping you from checking out the daily seafood and lunch specials, but keep in mind you're in an old-school dining room devoted almost entirely to the assiduous consumption of prime aged beef. • 123 W. 52nd St. (212-581-8888). (E)

* BLUE FIN

How can you tell you're in a W hotel? The striking design; the Rande Gerber bar; and the upscale restaurant, like this stylish Stephen Hanson seafood house at the W Times Square. It's smart. It's handsome. Fiercely noisy with jazz to boot. Chef Paul Sale scores with splendid goat-cheese-and-beet salad, crab cake with celery-root salad, and a silken, often luminous way with fish, plus sushi to match any of the city's touted temples of spicy toro. • 1567 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-918-1400). (M-E)

* BURGER JOINT

The idea behind this secret spot—hidden behind a Wizard of Oz curtain in the lobby of Le Parker Meridien hotel—is to give tourists a cheap, no-frills alternative to room service, and stressed-out natives a place to decompress. To that end, the menu is brief: draft beer, crisp fries, fudgy brownies, and \$4.50 burgers that hit the spot, whether you've just flown in from Tokyo or nudged over from your office across the street. • 119 W. 56th St. (212-245-5000). (I)

RESTAURANTS

ART

MUSIC & DANCE

NIGHTLIFE

THE MIX

KIDS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ELLIE MILLER.