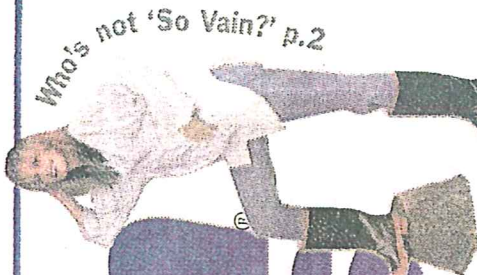


# downtown express



Who's not 'So Vain?' p.2

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## MERCHANTS HOLES UP AT W.T.C.

Merchants N.Y. is opening a new locale on Washington and Rector Sts. The traditional European café boasts outdoor seating for 140, a not-so-enticing amenity in 16-degree weather, but UnderCover can imagine balmy days ahead.

"This is becoming such a vibrant and vital area," boasted owner **Richard Cohn** in a statement about the neighborhood four blocks south of the World Trade Center site. "It's a place where everyone wants to be, but was just lacking this type of casual neighborhood establishment."

He is a positive thinker. Not everyone can see the glitter near the tunnel entrances, highway and garages that plague Greenwich Street South. **Stefan Pryor**, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, last week told us it was a "no-man's land."