

FREE INSIDE: 48-PAGE INDEXED POCKET GUIDE TO RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Time Out

New York

NEW ANNUAL GUIDE

Eating & Drinking

2000

★ La Fourchette

1608 First Ave at 84th St (212-249-5924).
Subway: 4, 5, 6 to 86th St. Tue-Sat 6-11pm;

Sun 11am-11pm. Average main course: \$28. AmEx, DC, MC, V.

La Fourchette's upscale trappings—a beautifully appointed dining room, glassed-in gazebo and serene patio—serve as a fitting stage for chef Marc Murphy's imaginative, high-quality French cuisine. Whether you order meat, fish or fowl, expect fresh, perfectly cooked ingredients and a subtly elegant presentation. Try the squab wrapped in Swiss chard leaves with black truffle sauce; the crisp, unusually flavorful roasted chicken; or the pan-seared cod with leeks, oyster mushrooms and lobster coral sauce. When they're available, the grilled langoustines—tender, sweet and slightly charred—should not be missed.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.

73 Eighth Ave between 13th and 14th Sts (212-924-9755). Subway: A, C, E to 14th St; L to Eighth Ave. Mon-Thu 5pm-2am; Fri 5pm-3am; Sat 7pm-3am; Sun 7pm-2am. Cover: Free-\$15. Average drink price: \$6. AmEx, MC, V.

When Otis Rush, Hubert Sumlin or other titans of the blues come to town, they often settle in at this smallish West Village club. The opening acts can be startlingly bad, but the chance of seeing the likes of Johnnie Johnson at close range makes this club a must-visit for blues aficionados. The free open jams are worthwhile—if you like to hang around with stockbrokers and/or stiff yuppies.

Merchants, N.Y.

1125 First Ave at 62nd St (212-832-1551). Subway: N, R to Lexington Ave; 4, 5, 6 to 59th St. Mon-Wed 5pm-2am; Thu, Fri 5pm-3am; Sat 11:30am-3am; Sun 11:30am-2am. Average main course: \$16. AmEx, DC, MC, V.

The food is much better than it needs to be at this trio of bar-restaurants. Divided into a bar, living room and dining room areas, Merchants' dark-wood interior and scattered couches and armchairs help create a refined atmosphere without the membership dues. Goat-cheese-stuffed roasted breast of chicken and the roasted maple-soy-glazed salmon are the best dishes among the entrées, but don't overlook the unusual salads, such as the asparagus and portobello, or the lime-and-chili-pressed chicken. All locations serve a full menu until late at night, and the East Side Merchants features a downstairs lounge with live jazz.

Other locations • 521 Columbus Ave at 85th St (212-721-3639). Subway: B, C, 1, 9 to 86th St. 11:30am-4am. • 112 Seventh Ave between 16th and 17th Sts (212-366-7267). Subway: 1, 9 to 18th St. 11:30am-4am.

Art Bar

52 Eighth Ave between Jane and Horatio Sts (212-727-0244). Subway: A, C, E to 14th St; L to Eighth Ave. 4pm-4am. Average drink price: \$5. AmEx, DC, MC, V.

Art Bar is a lot like your typical struggling artist: moody, dark and a little conflicted. The front room has the usual dive scene, with a game on the tube and a boisterous crowd gulping the Jägermeister on tap. The rear lounge's soothing Oriental rugs and collection of velvet-draped antique furniture attracts neighborhood bohos. The walls are hung with the work of up-and-coming artists, but the centerpiece of the room is a glass-screened brick fireplace.

restaurants, bars reviewed by our critics



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