

MARCH 10-17, 2008

# NEW YORK

NIGHTLIFE!

FOOD!

CLOTHES!

STUFF!

# BEST

# OF

SPECIAL  
DOUBLE  
ISSUE!

BEAUTY!

REPAIRS!

# NEW YORK

## PLUS

### The Heiress and the Orphan:

Steve Fishman on Libet Johnson's Custody Battle

Joe Bruno's Last Stand *By* Geoffrey Gray

Richard Price's GrAmNo *By* Sam Anderson

\$4.99 USA



0 74470 01912 1

NYMAG.COM

bles, and lard; then plates the most tender portions on a bed of creamy parsnip purée. A light tomato sauce is added to the mix, flavored with more pancetta, plus chopped porcini and a scattering of romanesco. The

delicately meaty dish, more tender than pork and more distinctive than lamb, is an elegantly citified version of an ancient peasant staple, which even a New Yorker can love.

THE  
STEAL

## The Polish & Slavic Center Cafeteria

177 Kent St., nr. McGuinness Blvd., Greenpoint  
718-383-5290

It's not exactly the Google cafeteria, but what this community-center canteen lacks in steam-table style, it makes up for with **cheap, delicious home cooking**. Everything here is made from scratch, and no bulging plate of grub costs more than \$9, with most dishes hovering around the \$6.50 mark. **Chef Monika Trznadel**—who incidentally looks absolutely nothing like the beetle-browed women who traffic in junior-high tater tots—specializes in the kind of rib-sticking stuff you'd expect to find on the bill of fare at a Polish lumberjack camp.

We're partial to the **white borscht**, the **pork meatballs**, the **Gorski mountain cutlet** (thick breaded pork with a fried egg on top), and the **cheese blintzes**. Main courses come with mashed potatoes and gravy, a choice of salad, and a cup of the cherry-flavored juice called **compot**.

There's also enough offal here (**tripe stew**,

**pig's feet, tongue with gravy**) to

feed a small army of  
Mario Batalis.

## Clam Chowder

DOVETAIL

103 W. 77th St., nr. Columbus Ave.  
212-362-3800

Apologies to Manhattan, but when you think best clam chowder, you think New England. You think Nantucket. You think broken-down fish shack. If you're a bookish sort, you think *Moby-Dick's* Try Pots chowder house, where Ishmael gave the plat du jour a rave review. If you're a local yokel, you think Pearl Oyster Bar in the Village. But when you unexpectedly find the dish listed as a \$12 appetizer on a menu by a chef who did time at Napa's French Laundry, you think someone must have forgotten the quotation marks. As it turns out, John Fraser's menu doesn't need them because Fraser, in his inimitable way, strikes a nifty balance between Yankee tradition and Thomas Keller-instilled whimsy. What makes it the best? Good Spanish chorizo standing in for salt pork. Tender Manila clams, and potatoes that are blanched and applewood-smoked, which lends the whole super-creamy thing a remarkable depth of flavor. That this posh porridge is served not with a pack of crackers but a housemade black-pepper croissant doesn't detract either. How do you chase a bowl of chowder with a croissant at a three-star restaurant? You can nibble the buttery pastry daintily between spoonfuls, but Fraser's own preferred method is to nearly

finish the chowder and then swab the bowl with the croissant the same way they clean their pasta plates down on Mulberry Street.

## Pork Belly

ADOUR ALAIN DUCASSE

2 E. 55th St., at Fifth Ave.; 212-710-2277

Sure, we've heard the whisperings on the street. That perennial favorite of portly chefs and dyspeptic restaurant critics everywhere, the pork dish, has finally jumped the shark in this pig-addled town. Well, guess again. "Glazed Berkshire Pork Tournedos" is the name of our favorite entrée at Adour, Alain Ducasse's swanky new restaurant at the St. Regis Hotel. This little hymn to the joys of porkiness is composed of pinkish, perfectly cooked loin; a little postage stamp of braised, candied pork belly; and a wheel of loose, freshly made boudin noir. In grand Ducasse fashion, each ingredient is arranged with painterly precision on the plate, and poured with a rich pork jus delicately infused with juniper. It's a dish designed for the most discerning pork fiend, so devour it with care. And when your neighbor asks plaintively for a little taste, tell him to get lost.

## Tapas Bar

EL QUINTO PINO

401 W. 24th St., nr. Ninth Ave.  
212-206-6900

You could while away an evening at this sleek sliver of a space, but you're

# New and Very Noteworthy

*Our critics' favorite new restaurants.*



## ADAM PLATT

### DOVETAIL

103 W. 77th St., nr. Columbus Ave.  
212-362-3800

Sure, the name is a little precious, and the front door looks out onto the gloomy expanse of a darkened Upper West Side basketball court. But John Fraser's sleek, gourmet interpretations of Greenmarket standards (leg of lamb dabbled with yogurt, pork belly simmered in sherry and shallots) make this little restaurant that rare thing in this era of gourmet franchises and globe-trotting chefs: a neighborhood joint, run by a world-class cook working at the top of his game.



## Gael Greene

### ANTHOS

36 W. 52nd St., nr. Fifth Ave.; 212-582-6900

Anthos means blossom, but it ought to mean anthem, embracing as it does the fierce passion of chef-partner Michael Psilakis for the Greek kitchen: his bravura of crudo, raw shrimp "cooked" in a thrilling tomato elixir, crab finding its soul mate in sea urchin. Yes, such manic creativity can boil over, and it sometimes does. But then a transcendent uni-touched seafood risotto appears, and excesses are forgiven.



## Robin Raisfeld

### DELL'ANIMA

38 Eighth Ave., nr. Jane St.; 212-366-6633

With its loose and lively air and 2 a.m. closing time, Dell'anima makes you feel welcome to stop in anytime for a cocktail, an obscure but rewarding bottle of wine, a few tasty snacks, or a full-fledged meal. And you should: The crackerjack kitchen turns out first-rate pastas like pizzoccheri with Brussels sprouts and Fontina, a vibrantly seasoned chicken al diavolo, and a winter-beating bowl of braised wild boar with polenta and mascarpone—the kind of elegantly simple fare you find yourself craving at all hours.



## Rob Patronite

### RESTO

111 E. 29th Street., nr. Park Ave. S.  
212-685-5585

They say you can take the measure of a chef by how well he can cook something simple like an omelette.

But why not apply the theory to something even simpler like a sandwich? By that standard alone—setting aside for the moment his grander achievements—Ryan Skeen is a culinary wizard. His tête de cochon on toast is like a mad-genius cross between a bánh mì and a BLT, his new grilled cheese (see page 69) redefines the category, and his burger is the greatest thing to happen to ground meat since the Kraft Single.