

Forbes

Fact and Comment

The Forbes 2009 All-Star Eateries in New York

Revenues at the best of the Big Apple fooderies took a hit this year, but thankfully quality did not. While some question whether we are starting an economic recovery and—if we are—how strong it will be, the boom in fine food offerings at these restaurants remains strong. Our gastronomical gurus—ForbesLife editor Richard Nalley; media maven Monie Begley; as well as brothers Bob, Kip and Tim—need no Washington stimulus packages to enlighteningly elucidate where to find the most edifying eats.



Adour Alain Ducasse
Alto
Aquavit
Bouley
Corton
Daniel

Eleven Madison Park
The Four Seasons
Gilt
Gramercy Tavern
Jean Georges
La Grenouille

Le Bernardin
Le Cirque
Per Se
Strip House
'21' Club
Veritas

Only two new restaurants have vaulted into this best-of-the-best firmament: **Corton** combines the magic of seasoned restaurateur Drew Nieporent and maverick chef Paul Liebrandt in its all-white setting, which is at once beautiful and severe, and **Alto**, back again, celebrates a relatively little-known region of Italy, the Alto-Adige; the pastas alone are worth the trip. Returnees are as bright as ever. **Gilt** deserves all the puns made around its name—the gold standard is magnificently set in its kitchens. Ethereal, romantic rooms at **Bouley** are the setting for exquisite, innovative cuisine, with seasonal touches presented by attentive and precise staff. Small, ultramodern Flatiron restaurant **Veritas** boasts the best wine list (3,200 selections) in New York City, not to mention up to three sommeliers on hand to help with pairings. Diners choose between a three-to-five- or nine-course prix fixe menu—it all adds up to “wow.” The food at **Daniel** remains sublime.

New York once had several first-class classic French restaurants. Only **La Grenouille**—vibrant, exquisitely decorated, freshly flowered—is left for awesomely delicious fare that is perfectly presented. No offering gets “fired” and all soars at **Jean Georges**, situated at the Trump International Hotel. **Strip House**'s sumptuous steaks arouse the palate even more than its risqué pics excite the eye. Still on its game, **'21' Club** is redolent of business-as-a-sexy-vocation; its burger and its chicken hash are classics. **Eleven Madison Park**, the jewel in restaurateur Danny Meyer's crown, is humming along under Chef Daniel Humm, recruited from San Francisco's much praised Campton Place two years ago. Among other talents Humm is a master of artistic plate presentation. Fifteen years down the road, self-consciously designed, upscale-homey “farmhouse” **Gramercy Tavern** still has the power to please with its urban-sophisticate version of comfort food.

