



New York PULSE

THE POST'S GUIDE TO LIVING AND ENTERTAINMENT SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2003

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New York Post, Saturday, November 8, 2003

nypost.com

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Jonathan Bern

Benjamin Leventhal's top 10 date spots

N.Y. Post: Jennifer Weisbord



Ivo and Lulu
558 Broome St., at Varick Street; (212) 226-4399
"Really nice

and obscure. This place has great food and it's way off the beaten track."

Mermaid Inn

96 Second Ave., between Fifth and Sixth streets; (212) 674-5870
"Very relaxed with delicious food. Great for a second or third date."

Le Bilboquet

25 E. 63rd St., between Madison and Park avenues; (212) 751-3036
"This place is very nice and intimate without being too over the top."

Milk and Honey

134 Eldridge St., between Broome and Delancey streets; no phone
"You've got to talk your way in, but if you can, this place is exclusive and sexy."

Balthazar

80 Spring St. between Canal and Crosby; (212) 965-1785
"There's no better place to share a bottle of wine and a steak frites."

Pravda
281 Lafayette St., between Prince and Jersey streets; (212) 334-5015
"Really for a fourth or fifth date, because it oozes cool so aggressively."

La Bottega

Maritime Hotel, 363 W. 16th St. between Ninth and 10th avenues; (212) 242-4300
"The brand-new bar at the Maritime hotel has a courtyard which is ideal for a drink."

Jimmy's Corner

140 W. 44th St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues; (212) 221-9510
"A down-and-dirty bar. It's a bit risky, but I think it's a great date spot."

Le Gamin

183 Ninth Ave., at 21st Street; (212) 243-8864
"This cute French place is never too packed, so you can always hear each other talk."

The High Park

Gramercy Park Hotel, 2 Lexington Ave., at 21st Street; (212) 475-4320
"This has got to be one of New York's best date spots. It has very romantic views of the city."



Impress your date by taking her to (clockwise from top) Balthazar, The Mermaid Inn or Le Gamin.



N.Y. Post: David Perles



Jonathan Bern

Reconnaissance man

Web site spotlights hot date spots for urban Romeos

By TOM SYKES

If you're a girl, leave this page somewhere your boyfriend might see it.

If you're a guy, read it and then hide it so your dates won't figure out how you always find the hot places in town.

The less she knows about shelovesny.com — a super-savvy new dating cheat sheet for guys — the better off you are.

Launched in June by Benjamin Leventhal, a 25-year-old creative director at VHI, the site is aimed at men who like to date chic urbanites, but don't know where to take them.

Yes, you can read about buzz spots like the Biltmore Room and Schiller's Liquor Bar, but

shelovesny.com is more than a list — it's a guide to etiquette and seduction, entertainingly written by Leventhal to an imaginary friend named Matty.

"Matty is a composite image of many guys I know in New York," says Leventhal. "He's every man who's just showed up in New York and needs a little help, a little guidance."

The concept grew out of a series of e-mails Leventhal had with a friend who just moved here and needed dating ideas.

Like an unmarked bar, the very low-tech site is hard to get into. (Tip: Click on the white space about two inches below where it says "she loves new york.")

Leventhal, who frequents old standbys like Balthazar, Le Bilboquet and Bungalow 8, is unim-

pressed by a venue just because it's "five minutes old."

He lives by this credo: "Novelty for the sake of novelty is good for things like coffee cup lids, Matty, not restaurants."

Other advice to Matty: ■ "Use taxis liberally and make the experience of using them as pleasant for the lady as is possible."

■ "You're going to watch 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' with her and like it."

■ And the sign-off to his weekly e-mail bulletin, which goes out to about 1,000 subscribers: "She loves NY, Matty, now go and show it to her."

The electronic dispatches are especially popular. "It's like being part of a club," says subscriber Jordana Zakim, a Man-

hattan events coordinator.

"It's very smart, very funny, and when you figure out what it's talking about, it reaffirms your own coolness."

Another popular feature is the "resy" column, which gauges a restaurant's heat by what time you can get a same-day reservation for two people.

This week, you won't land a table at Lever House until 10:45 p.m. — but Rocco's will seat you promptly at 8:30 p.m. (At the height of the reality-show eatery's short-lived popularity, you couldn't get a reservation at all.)

"The resy is a very simple idea. Everyone can relate to it because everyone has made those calls," says Leventhal, a native New Yorker who lives uptown but has a penchant for

going out downtown.

"The resy is one of my favorite parts of the site," says investment banker Evan Siegal, 26.

"It's a great idea and it's a totally unique way of rating restaurants."

Reviews of new bars fall into unexpected categories such as "the new black" — and are often cryptic.

This week, for example, the new night spots 13 Little Devils, Capitale and Les Enfants Terribles are simply grouped under the heading, "If found, please return me to Midtown (youngish venues lost on the LES)."

So hip it hurts? Absolutely. "I'm not saying anything brand-new or racy," says Leventhal. "It's just that I'm saying it in a different way."

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