



dish du jour

GREAT DINING EXPERIENCES

THE INSIDER

PARKSIDE BITES

- Located deep within Riverside Park, the **Boat Basin Café** (390 W. 79th St., 496-5542) offers burgers, beer and Hudson River views.
- Soups and sandwiches are served in Central Park at the Delacorte Theater's new concession stand, **Public Fare** (enter the park at E. 79th St. or W. 81st St.)
- One block from the promenade next to Battery Park City, **Inatteso Cafe Casano** (38 West St., 267-7000) provides fresh-baked Linzer tortes, Sacher tortes, rugalach, soups, panini and pizza.



Sea Fare

All the beautiful, briny, pristine flavors of the vast blue ocean are distilled into one small dish called *ricci*, an especially memorable appetizer on Chef Michael White's menu of Italian coastal cuisine at **Marea** (pictured). It consists of lush, creamy, warm sea urchin slathered onto a crunchy crostino, coated with a translucent, cellophane-thin layer of lardo (cured pork fat) and sprinkled with coarse sea salt. At this elegant eatery reminiscent of a sleek yacht, much of the fresh fish and shellfish that Chef White uses comes from the Adriatic, Ligurian, Mediterranean and Ionian seas—the four bodies of water that surround The Boot. In addition to a bounteous amount of raw and cooked seafood, pasta and meat are also impeccably prepared, artistically plated, graciously presented and expertly paired with wines from Wine Director Francesco Grosso's 300-bottle wine list featuring about 180 European whites and more than 20 rosés.



» **Marea**, 240
Central Park South,
582-5100



» **Abboccato**,
136 W. 55th St.,
265-4000

La Dolce Vita

Delicate half-moon raviolis (left) are stuffed with a mixture of sweet red beets and pungent Gorgonzola, doused with a buttery sauce and sprinkled with poppy seeds at **Abboccato**, a popular outpost for regional Italian cuisine in the Theater District. Chef/partner Jim Botsacos, American born but with Greek and Italian blood running through his veins, brings to the kitchen a lifelong passion for the cuisine from both sides of his Mediterranean heritage, as well as the festivity surrounding a good meal. Amid warm, rustic décor in the dining room and airy café tables on the sidewalk terrazzo, diners share lively conversation over Chef Botsacos' renditions of dishes such as arancini (crispy risotto fritters with wild mushrooms and truffles), lightly charred and tender grilled octopus with warm Tuscan bean salad and herb vinaigrette, fork-tender braised baby lamb shank with sweet potato puree and Mascarpone and crispy veal sweetbreads in vincotto (dark cooked wine sauce). Desserts are indulgent—rich chocolate mousse cake, smooth vanilla panna cotta with caramelized pineapple. As a finale, a digestivi tasting (\$13) includes a choice of three potent after-dinner drinks to aid digestion.

PHOTO: MAREA, DANIEL KRIEGER