

dish du jour

GREAT DINING EXPERIENCES » by Bonnie Davidson



Just Ducky

Duck is an ingredient of innovation on Chef/owner Simpson Wong's Asian-inspired menu at Wong. Seated on schoolhouse chairs (the kind with a shelf underneath for textbooks) at communal tables, adventurous diners can experience scallops and crispy duck tongues with cucumber and jellyfish; duck bun with cucumber and Chinese celery; and seasonal vegetables grilled in duck fat. To make the restaurant's signature dessert, duck à la plum (*left*), Pastry Chef Judy Chen infuses ice cream with the flavor of a whole roasted duck (the process takes three days), then serves two savory scoops with star-anise-poached plums, a sugar tuile and five-spice cookie. » Wong, 7 Cornelia St., 212.989.3399



REFINED DINING

Sculpted metal accents the walls of Vitae (*above*); its chain-link motif is echoed on the terrazzo floors. The effect is to create a sense of privacy and exclusivity for the Midtown power lunch and dinner crowds, as they sample Chef/owner Edwin Bellanco's Modern American offerings, including fluke tartare, chicken and ricotta meatballs and veal cheek agnolotti. » Vitae, 4 E. 46th St., 212.682.3562

Raising the Stakes

Upon entering Vic & Anthony's Steakhouse (*below*), guests receive Texas-size greetings—"Welcome to Vic & Anthony's!"—from a phalanx of hostesses and servers as enthusiastic as cheerleaders for the Houston Texans. It makes perfect sense, since the handsome restaurant, outfitted with hand-crafted mahogany woodwork and plush leather furnishings, is the newest link in a popular Houston-based chain, with outposts in Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Here, Executive Chef Brandi McHan is in charge, turning out signature dishes, such as fresh oysters Rockefeller, maple-glazed quail with spicy Sriracha sauce and USDA Prime grain-fed beef (rib eye, New York strip, porterhouse and filet mignon), not to mention seafood and chops, in an open kitchen. Diners can choose to be seated at the high counter overlooking the stoves, for an up close view of all the sautéing and sizzling. » Vic & Anthony's Steakhouse, 233 Park Ave. So., 212.220.9200



Station Master



Fresh lump crabmeat, moist and sweet, is sandwiched between two ultra-thin slices of golden-brown brioche toast. This rich, creamy crabcake (*above*), conceived by Ted Pryor, executive chef at Michael Jordan's The Steak House N.Y.C., scores a

slam dunk with diners enjoying lunch, dinner and weekend brunch at the basketball legend's namesake eatery. As hundreds of shoppers, commuters and sightseers rush through the Main Concourse at

Grand Central Terminal, those perched at the balcony bar or in the dining room can sip, savor and people-watch. » Michael Jordan's The Steak House N.Y.C., Grand Central Terminal, Northwest Balcony, E. 43rd St. & Vanderbilt Ave., 212.655.2300

PHOTOS: WONG; WILLIS CHEN; VITAE AND MICHAEL JORDAN'S THE STEAK HOUSE N.Y.C.; EVAN SUNG