

QUEST

MAY 2010



Mother-in-law from Connecticut

Upper East Side gallery manager

ON THE MARK

BY DANIEL CAPPELLO

IS THERE ANY NEIGHBORHOOD in Manhattan that Jean-Georges Vongerichten hasn't cornered? From Flatiron to Meatpacking, from West Village to Upper West Side, there's a Jean-Georges (you know you're big when everyone calls you simply by your first name, or names, as it were) restaurant to suit your address, and your taste. With his latest installation, The Mark Restaurant, Jean-Georges has breathed life back into a famously quiet and sedate part of town. As part of the recent overhaul and redesign of The Mark hotel itself, The Mark

Restaurant represents a modern soigné sensibility in what can be an otherwise stuffy slice of town.

There's something of a throwback-eighties movement going on in New York these days, and Jean-Georges's The Mark seems to be in step. Downtown's Boom Boom Room (er, Eighteenth Floor) at the Standard hotel offers up sophisticated carpeting, lots of glass, expansive views that feel as if they own the world, and long, sleek wooden bars. There's a little bit of that going on at The Mark as well—the carpeting, the hopping bar scene, the



Thirty-something trust-fund bachelor

High-end shoe publicist

movie-set lighting, the walls of wine on display. It's the glamour of the self-assured New York of almost thirty years ago. Who doesn't want to walk into that kind of room?

Behind the haute design, however, lies the beauty of The Mark Restaurant: a moderately priced menu with comfort-type foods that defy categorization, and a wine list so reasonable that you feel as if you're on vacation in another city. Signature cocktails like the Cucumber Martini and Kumquat Mojito are just in time for summer, and slivers of diver scallops with warm black truffle toast and sweet-pea soup with parmesan shouldn't be missed. The burger, served with brie cheese (brie cheese?), is a surprising delight. There couldn't be a more perfect ending than the Grand Marnier soufflé with mandarin sorbet.

For the most part, Jean-Georges has hit the mark in his latest incarnation. The only thing he might want to reconsider is smoked salmon on a pizza. ♦



Top: Our guesses as to whom you might spot at the bar. This page: A view of the Jacques Grange-designed restaurant, with furniture by Mattia Bonetti and the bronze-and-glass ceiling by Eric Schmitt.