

Concierge Events



Janet Barbash, City Guide Magazine; Erik Pinedo, the Renaissance Times Square



Gabriella Popetti, Westin Times Square

On Feb. 27, concierges dined in a replica of an 18th-century Ninja village, complete with authentically dressed Ninja servers performing magic, at **Ninja New York** (25 Hudson St. btw. Reade & Duane Sts.). Ninja serves traditional Japanese dishes such as sushi and soba noodles, while adding a French or Italian spin to others. Visitors absolutely fall in love with this place and it is easily accessible by the 1, 2, 3, A & C trains just 2 blocks away. After the food and drinks, it was on to the American Airlines Theatre to take in a performance of the new incarnation of the Roundabout Theatre production of **Prelude to a Kiss**, Craig Lucas' romantic drama.



Eli Marcus, City Guide Magazine, flanked by Seiji Miyamoto (left) and Haruo Yazaki, Ninja New York



Sergio Nieto, Hotel InterContinental-The Barclay; Lek Kidkarnbee, Waldorf=Astoria; guest; Mary Hildebrandt, NY Waterway; guest; George Chaves, Fitzpatrick Hotel; Raita Sawai, Kitano Hotel; Jonathan Henthorne, Waldorf=Astoria; Maria Trejo, Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park

On Feb. 20, concierges enjoyed New York City's finest and only upscale Puerto Rican restaurant, **Sofrito** (400 E. 57th St. at First Ave.). They have a beautiful, one-of-a-kind bar that is one of the largest of any fine restaurant. The hip dining room serves a vast selection of specialties from *La Isla*, including Carne Frita (crispy fried marinated pork), Mejillones Calso de Cilantro y Choriz (mussels in cilantro and chorizo broth), Chicharron de Camarones (crispy fried shrimp), and more. Less than a year old, the place is already hopping with a diverse crowd and live music Thurs. through Sun. Thanks to Jimmy Rodriguez and his partners for the delicious buffet and drinks. Next stop was the Longacre Theatre for a performance of **Talk Radio**, Eric Bogosian's powerful piece about a late-night radio host facing controversy as his show reaches the brink of national syndication, starring Tony Award winner Liev Schreiber.



Melody Williamson, New York Palace; Matt Greenstien and Mark Barber, Jeffrey Richards & Assoc.



Guest: Sarah Pesek, the Benjamin



Guest: Raita Sawai, Kitano Hotel



Robert Moss, Dylan Hotel; guest



Timothy Childs, producer, Talk Radio; Michael Monarca and Frederick Bigler, the Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park; Judy Hassen, producer, Talk Radio



John McLain, London NYC; Joy Mishani, The Westin Times Square

FYI News

New York City's Hotel Concierge Newsletter

april 2007

news from the Front Desk

by Peter Johnson



The Les Clefs d'Or meeting was held on Sunday, February 4, at Ferro's Restaurant at the Kimberly Hotel. Prior to the meeting I had the pleasure of chatting with **Mary Murphy**, President of the New York City Association of Hotel Concierges. It is the beginning of a very exciting year as New York will be hosting the Congress of the Americas in August 2007. Having received the Silver Plume Concierge of the Year Award, Mary is now in her fifth term on the board. We discussed how all members of the concierge community should feel part of making New York 2007 one of the most memorable congresses of all as we are the such a destination for travelers from across the globe. We hope to have several fundraisers in the coming months and participation is needed from all.

We hope to raise more money for the charitable causes we support as well, such as: Coalition for Hunger, Dreams Come True, Habitat for Humanity, The Smile Train and Doctors Without Borders, to name a few. One of our main goals right now it to raise the proper funding for the **New York Congress**. Many member hotels have already contributed \$1,000 or more, and we hope that the rest of the member hotels will follow suit. One of the things Mary would like to relay this year is letting people know who we are as an association in a good light. Our public relations is essential. Many Les Clefs d'Or concierges will be attending the International Congress beginning on March 18. We wish them all a productive, safe, and enjoyable journey.

Finally, let us congratulate **Stanley Wong** on his move to the Waldorf=Astoria Hotel. We wish you great luck there, Stanley, and hope you have continued success in your new venture.

If you have any news or events you would like to share with the concierge community through FYI, please e-mail jbarbash@davlermedia.com.

Concierge Corner

Mystery Photo
How well do you know NYC? Can you identify this photo? Be the first to e-mail jbarbash@davlermedia.com with your answer and be mentioned in next month's FYI.
January's photo of the American Merchant Mariners Memorial and Pier A in Battery Park, the last surviving historic pier in Manhattan, which dates from 1884-86, was not identified as of press time.



AquaBus Will Make A (New York) Splash



In April, **New York Splash Tours** (1-8-SPLASH-NY-1; www.NewYorkSplashTours.com) is launching unique half-boat, half-bus amphibious vehicles, offering New York City's first-ever land and water visitor experience. Splash Tours' new AquaBus fleet, designed to evoke the memory of Henry Hudson's famous ship, *The Half Moon*, are built to meet rigid safety and environmental standards. Each AquaBus can accommodate 47 customers, or "shipmates," plus two crewmembers, the captain and first mate, who will dress in period costumes and will conduct a fun NYC treasure hunt onboard. The total trip time is approximately one hour.

The Splash Tour route starts in Times Square, on the east side of Broadway between 47th and 48th Streets, and navigates the streets of Manhattan to the waters of the Hudson River. At the edge of the Hudson, the AquaBus will enter the AquaBus Theater for an exhilarating multi-media experience, complete with the sights and sounds—and rushing wind—of an Atlantic sea voyage. Then the AquaBus splashes into the Hudson River for an explorer's-eye view of the New York skyline. After returning to land, the AquaBus travels back to Times Square.

The land-and-water exploration will operate daily from April through December 2007. Sightseers can purchase individual Splash Tour tickets or a Splash Tour + All Loops Tour Combo including a two-day hop-on, hop-off pass on Gray Line New York Sightseeing double-decker buses and a New York Splash Tour ticket. Reservations are required.

Concierge Events: Bombay Palace



Mitch Born, Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park; guest



Juan Santamaria, W New York-The Court; guest; Peter Johnson, Kimberly Hotel



Eva Olsson, New York Helmsley; guest



Eli Marcus, City Guide; Joy Mishani, Westin Hotel; Priti Singh Diler, Bombay Palace



Guest: David Almada, W New York Hotel



Nam Le, W New York Hotel; Paul Peterson, W New York-Times Square

Bombay Palace has been an especially generous and consistent friend to the hotel-concierge community as they have hosted three concierge nights in the past year alone. The evenings begin in their stylish bar area for cocktails. They proceed to the main dining room, as they always provide seating for everyone as concierges enjoy their lavish & delicious buffet spreads. A special appreciation and thanks must be awarded to General Manager Priti Diler and his staff for their outstanding hospitality.
—Eli Marcus

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Events

Art & Antiques

3/17-3/18: **Spring Pier Antiques Show**, Unconvention Center, Pier 94, Twelfth Ave. at 55th St., 212-255-0020; www.stellashows.com

4/12-4/15: **The Photography Show 07**, 7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. & 67th St., 202-986-0105; www.aipad.com

Dance

3/20-3/25: **Tamango's Urban Tap**, Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., 212-242-0800; www.joyce.org

4/10-4/15: **John Butler: An American Master**, Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., 212-242-0800; www.joyce.org

4/18-21 & 4/25-4/28: **The Nothing Festival**, Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W. 19th St., 212-924-0077; www.dtw.org

Events

3/18: **St. Joseph's Day** with a variety of special dishes, Patsy's Italian Restaurant, 236 W. 56th St. btw. Broadway & Eighth Ave., 212-247-3491; www.patsys.com

3/31-4/8: **Tartan Week 2007**, Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. & Park Ave., 212-340-2210; www.tartanweekny.com

4/1-4/30: **Annual Flower Show**, Macy's, 151 W. 34th St. (6th Ave.), 212-695-4400; www.macys.com

4/7-4/15: **New York International Auto Show**, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. & 34th St., 800-282-3336; www.autoshowny.com

4/19-4/22: **27th Annual New York International Orchid Show**, Rockefeller Center, 50th St. btw. Fifth & Sixth Aves., 212-632-3975; www.gnyos.org

4/22: **Earth Day 2007**, The Great Hill and the Children's Glade, Central Park, Central Park West, 103rd-106th Sts., 212-310-6600; www.centralparknyc.org

4/23-5/12: **Grand Central Spring Gift Fair**, Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St & Park Ave., 212-340-2210; www.grandcentralterminal.com

4/25-5/6: **Tribeca Film Festival**, various locations; www.tribecafilmfestival.org

Exhibit Openings

3/19-5/31: **The Japanese Ikebana Basket: Consummate Artistry in Bamboo**, Flying Cranes Antiques, Ltd., Manhattan Art & Antiques Center, 1050 Second Ave. at 56th St., 212-233-4600; www.flyingcranesantiques.com

3/19-7/8: **Architects of the NYC Subway**, Heins & LaFarge: **The Tradition of the Great Public Works, Part I**, New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex, Grand Central Terminal, Main Concourse, Shuttle Passage, 212-878-0106; www.mta.info/mta/museum/general.htm

3/23-6/30: **Apocalypse Then: Medieval Illuminations from the Morgan**, Morgan Library, 225 Madison Ave. at 36th St., 212-685-0008; www.themorgan.org

3/23-7/1: **Global Feminisms**, Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, 718-638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org

3/23-8/12: **Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War**, Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. & 103rd St., 212-534-1672; www.mcny.org

3/23-9/16: **Pharaohs, Queens, and Goddesses**, Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, 718-638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org

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Russian Tea Room

World-renowned for fine cuisine and spectacular décor, **The Russian Tea Room** (150 W. 57th St. btw. Sixth & Seventh Aves., 212-581-7100; www.russian-tearoomnyc.com) is the perfect destination for diners with refined palates, whether for dinner or a large private party. Ever since members of the Russian Imperial Ballet founded the restaurant in 1926 as refuge for Russian expatriates, it has been an exclusive enclave where actors, writers, politicians, and businessmen planned their next deals and feted their friends' latest Carnegie Hall performances.

The RTR Funding Group, Inc., reopened the Russian Tea Room's doors in November of 2006, retaining the best of its history, authenticity, and architecture while offering culinary masterworks and a menu of 40 vodkas that includes varieties new to the U.S. The restaurant interior still sparkles and glitters. While classic dishes such as chicken Kiev and beef Stroganoff are still available and their signature cocktail, the Moscow Mule (a mixture of vodka and ginger beer), remains on the menu, the new menu is inspired by classical and contemporary Russian fare. When it comes to the caviar menu, your guests can go as high-end as they like, including Caspian Sea osietra and sevruga (prices for the Iranian begin at \$180 for 30 grams), European (\$250), or West Coast (\$100) caviar. Red caviar from salmon and trout is also offered at \$25.

Entrées run from tea-smoked sturgeon to seared rib eye with red-wine sauce. Other options include: juicy anise-scented roast tenderloin of pork with sour cherries in red wine with pearl onions; braised pork stuffed into little cabbage rolls called *golubtzi*, with a form of Russian cream of wheat called *manka*; and a cocoa-dusted seared loin of venison comes with wintry butternut squash, braised Brussels sprouts, seared porcini, and truffle-scented dumplings. As for the aforementioned classics, the Tea Room uses braised short ribs cooked in red wine and served with fresh noodles with wild mushrooms and a truffle essence, for the beef stroganoff, which results in a glorious update of the old standard, and the chicken Kiev recipe includes foie gras, truffled whipped potatoes, and braised Brussels sprouts. The 250-bottle-strong wine list has received high praise, and the innovative desserts include blintzes and buttermilk pannacotta.

Located, as they like to say, "6 minutes and 23 seconds from Lincoln Center and slightly to the left of Carnegie Hall," the Russian Tea Room is open daily for lunch and dinner, breakfast on weekdays starting at 7:30am, and Sat. & Sun. brunch. A pre- and post-theatre menu is also available.



© Albert Bilde

New Tour Times for New York Party Shuttle



New York Party Shuttle (212-277-8019; www.newyorkpartys Shuttle.com) excitedly announces brand-new summer tours. For the first time ever, New York Party Shuttle will be offering comprehensive 3-hour tours of both Downtown and Midtown. With the addition of these new tour times, New York Party Shuttle will now have nine start times every day starting April 15. They will also be including a new 5-and-a-1/2-hour tour at 12:30 daily. The new three-hour tour start times will be 9am, 2:30pm, 4pm, 6pm, 7pm, and 7:30pm. The comprehensive 5-and-a-1/2-hour tour start times will be 8:30am, 10am, and 12:30pm.

These new tours will be in-depth discoveries of their respective neighborhoods. They'll allow New York Party Shuttle's customers more flexibility in designing their vacations—they can take a downtown tour one day then an uptown tour the next, or vice versa. New York Party Shuttle is excited to be offering more options for all their customers and more flexibility for New York's concierges to offer to their guests.

Concierge Event: MoMA

Concierges took in a special reception and viewing of the Museum of Modern Art's retrospective of photographer Jeff Wall, plus the recently-opened Armando Reveron exhibition, on Feb. 22.

The MoMA-hosted reception, for 25-30 guests, was held in the 6th-floor atrium after the Museum closed to the public for the evening. There were guided walk-through tours of the Reveron exhibition and a preview of the Wall exhibition before it opened to the public. MoMA guides gave overviews of each exhibition and remained in the galleries to answer guests questions throughout the reception. Jean Mary Bongiorno, from MoMA Visitor Services, arranged the guided tours for the concierges, and was on hand to answer their questions about the private guided tour programs.

MoMA gave a preview of the upcoming summer schedule, featuring the Richard Serra exhibition in June, and provided attendees with free passes to return to the museum at a later date, along with information about MoMA's lecture series and private guided tours that might be of interest to hotel guests visiting the city.

Union Square Hospitality Group served light fare and wine for the reception.



Jeff Wall's Milk (1984)

Hawaiian Tropic Zone



Celebrated chef David Burke comes to Times Square with **Hawaiian Tropic Zone** (729 Seventh Ave. at 49th St., 212-626-7312; www.hawaiiantropiczone.com), a 16,000-square-foot, three-tier beauty of a restaurant. An amazing two-story waterfall is a feast for the eyes as you enter. An expansive bar area buzzing with patrons sits in front of an enormous video wall displaying scenery from Hawaii. There is a cat-walk above the bar area where beauty pageants are held every hour throughout the evening, allowing guests to vote for their favorite contestants. The contestants are from the lovely staff here, and bikini tops and floral sarongs designed by Nicole Miller are the perfect uniform. This exotic restaurant journey is the vision of Dennis Riese of Riese Restaurants and Adam Hock of PM nightclub. The lush setting in no way overshadows the extraordinary cuisine created by Mr. Burke.

Begin your experience with a "lava margarita" or a "white beach bellini" cocktail. There are over 40 wines by the glass and many other signature cocktails. All the food I tasted was outstanding. Appetizers include a pu pu platter (for the table), Perona Farms pastrami salmon, salad of prosciutto and watermelon, and pepper-seared beef carpaccio. Entrées include sweet pumpkin ravioli, crackling Asian spiced pork shank, bone-dry-aged New York strip steak, filet mignon, double-breasted roasted organic chicken and signature swordfish Benedict. Top it off with a dessert selection rivaling any fine restaurant, including flourless warm chocolate cake, pineapple tart tatin, passion fruit crème brûlée, and David Burke's famous cheesecake lollipops.

This is a perfect choice for hotel guests for pre-theater, post-theater, an evening out, or a private party. In addition to experiencing a gorgeous Hawaiian setting, the cuisine is divine! Tell your friends, tell everyone! — Peter Johnson

Top of the Rock

There are many wonderful ways for your guests to see New York City. However, few can come even close to the view from **Top of the Rock** (30 Rockefeller Plaza, W. 50th St. btw. Fifth & Sixth Aves., 877-692-7625; www.topoftherocknyc.com). The observation deck on top of Rockefeller Center, the brainchild of John D. Rockefeller, was designed to evoke the luxurious upper decks of a 1930s grand ocean liner, furnished with deck chairs, gooseneck fixtures, and large air-conditioning vents intended to look like the stacks on a ship.

Top of the Rock preserves the historic integrity of Rockefeller's creation while incorporating innovative features and new technology. There's 55,000 square feet of space, including three decks featuring outdoor terraces and indoor space. Visitors pass through a multi-media exhibition exploring the history and construction of Rockefeller Center, including a simulated beam where they can imagine they are part of the 1930s construction crew that walked across it, hundreds of feet in the air. High-tech sky shuttle elevators then take them up to the Grand Viewing Room on the 67th floor, a wrap-around space that has north and south views; an additional indoor viewing space is offered in the high-ceilinged Weather Room. There's also the Grand Viewing Decks on the 69th floor, surrounded by transparent glass panels that allow unobstructed visibility of up to 80 miles in all directions. The 70th floor—a mere 20 feet wide and 200 feet long—crowns the building with a 360-degree panoramic view of the city.

Top of the Rock participates in three great discount packages. The new Rock Pass™ combines the NBC Studio Tour, Radio City Stage Door Tour, and Top of the Rock for \$45, a 17-percent savings off the combined general-admission prices of the three venues. Their most popular pass is the Rock MoMA combination ticket, combining admission to Top of the Rock and the Museum of Modern Art for \$30, which is a 20-percent savings on general admission to both venues. Also, the Art and Architecture Tour of Rockefeller Center, a \$20 ticket, now includes Top of the Rock. Passes are available for purchase at all participating attractions. Additionally, the new Top of the Rock GPS Audio Experience is a first-of-its-kind high-tech, audio/visual aid that provides historic facts, anecdotes, photos, music, and descriptions of the many features of the observation deck with a simple touch of a button—essentially an entertaining personal tour guide that goes at your guests' pace and is tailored to their interests.



Mentalist Sam Eaton Opens The Quantum Eye



In the tradition of Harry Houdini, Sam Eaton demonstrates a remarkable evening of old-world parlor mentalism brought into the 21st century in **The Quantum Eye** (Jewel Box Theatre, 130 W. 29th St., 212-868-4444; www.thequantumeye.com), which opened Feb. 9. Eaton performs a succession of impossibilities: predicting behavior, reading minds, and revealing the unknowable. Shows are Fridays at 7 & 9 pm. *The Quantum Eye* is scheduled to run through the summer.

Events

Continued from Page 2

4/14-8/29: **The Shapes of Space**, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., 212-423-3500; www.guggenheim.org

4/27-8/6: **Divisionism/Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia and Anarchy**, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., 212-423-3500; www.guggenheim.org

Family Fun

3/31-4/15: **Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus**, Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. btw. 31st & 33rd Sts.; www.ringling.com

4/5-4/15: **Go, Diego, Go Live!**, Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St., 212-307-7171; www.radiocity.com

Music

3/16: **The New York Pops Presents An Evening of Richard Rodgers**, Carnegie Hall, 57th St. & Seventh Ave., 212-765-7677; www.newyorkpops.org

4/3-4/8: **Sing into Spring Festival: Claudia Acuña Quartet**, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 60th St., 212-258-9595; www.jazzatlincolncenter.org

4/13-4/22: **Manon Lescaut**, Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St., 212-288-9438; www.dicapo.com

Parades

3/17: **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, Fifth Ave. from 44th to 86th St., 212-484-1222; www.saintpatricksdaysparade.com

4/8: **Easter Parade**, Fifth Ave. from 49th to 57th St.

4/14: **Tartan Day Parade**, Sixth Ave. from 45th St. to 58th St.; www.tartanweek.com

4/28-4/29: **Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival)**, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 900 Washington Ave., Brooklyn, 718-623-7200; www.bbg.org

Sports

4/2: **New York Yankees Opening Day**, Yankee Stadium, 161st St. & River Ave., Bronx, 718-293-6000; newyork.yankees.mlb.com

4/9: **New York Mets Home Opener**, Shea Stadium, 123-01 Roosevelt Ave., Flushing, Queens, 718-507-TIXX; newyork.mets.mlb.com

Theatre

3/19: **Inherit the Wind** begins previews (opens 4/12), Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45th St., 212-239-6200

3/22: **Curtains** opens, Al Hirschfeld Theatre, 402 W. 45th St., 212-239-6200; www.curtainsthemusical.com

4/25-4/29: **The Sessions**, The Independent Theater, 530 W. 25th St., 212-226-4151; www.panoptictheatre.com

Trade Shows

4/19-4/24: **American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery**, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. & 34th St.; www.surgery.org

4/24-4/26: **Interphex**, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. & 34th St., 888-334-8704; www.interphex.com; **Pharma MedDevice 2007**, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, 800-518-6672; www.pharmameddevice.com