

F&B

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The art of **COOKING**

Alain Ducasse

Heinz Beck

Tell their stories

The art of
DINING

*Three winning
concepts in
New York,
Paris, Madrid*

The art of
**COFFEE
AND PASTA**

*Market trends
as told by
illy, De Cecco...*

The **40** **BEST** **NY** **RESTAURANTS**

*chosen by wine list
(and the 50 picks of Italian businessmen
in the Big Apple)*

Churrascaria Plataforma (below) serves Brazilian food together with a 1,250-bottle wine list. Brasserie Cognac (right) has more than 100 varieties on offer. The main room of the Tribeca Grill (facing page).



A DIFFERENT TWIST

Gilt has more than 1,400 labels and 7,500 bottles, mainly from Burgundy, Bordeaux and California. There are 50 selections that come in under \$50 and more than 250 that will put you back less than \$100. There are more than 40 wines by the glass to accompany the contemporary American fare.

Forget that old adage that there is no wine (or anyway any wine that you would want to drink) at a steak house. At **Harry's Café & Steak** and **Del Frisco's Double Eagle** the wine lists are huge. Harry's has a selection for any budget including a great variety of Californian reds to go with European, Australian and South American wines as well as champagne. There is a wide selection of magnums among the 1,175 labels and 15,000 bottles. Del Frisco's wine cellar – 1,630 labels and 20,000 bottles mainly from California and France – is located below street level and features its own private bar area that can fit seventy-five guests.

The **Per Sé** 1,290-label wine list with offerings from California, Bordeaux, Spain, Piedmont and Burgundy offers plenty of affordable choices and a selection of more than 120 half bottles. The "great tasting menu" has nine courses, each of which is served with a different wine. There are 9,000 bottles in the cellar. The cuisine is American with French influence.

At **Le Cirque** guests are fascinated by the 30-foot acclimatized steel and glass "Wine Tower" that holds about 2,000 bottles of red wine. A glass room at the other end of the dining room houses most of the white wine. Bottles (6,700 of which you will find in the cellar) start at \$28 and rise slowly to reach a 1900 Château d'Yquem that will put you back \$12,000. You have 830 labels to choose from as you aim for the perfect match for the French Mediterranean cuisine.

FOR THOSE READY TO TRY A DIFFERENT TWIST ON THE WINE THEME, ETHIOPIA'S T'EJ MIGHT BE WORTH CONSIDERING. It is made from fermented honey and hops and in Ethiopia can be found in any number of places dedicated to serving up the endless variations and just as at any western wine bar, T'ej can be bought by the glass or the bottle. The story goes that the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon toasted with a glass of T'ej when they met 3,000 years ago.

The MOMA restaurant, **The Modern**, has visitors from all over the world and might be the most eclectic dining room in the city. The wine list offers the classic Burgundy, Rhône and European selections, but also interesting choices from California, Washington and Oregon. Since the wine director believes "the magnum bottles add a bit of drama to the by-the-glass game," the selection of 1.5-liter bottles is extensive on the 1,165-label wine list (7,800 bottles in inventory). The cuisine is French American.

At **Tribeca Grill** there are more than 300 Châteauneuf du Papes from the Rhône. There is a special focus on verticals from California with plenty of space given to artisanal producers. More than 70 different zinfandels are offered. It also features selections from the excellent 1990 vintage, the Tribeca Grill's inaugural year. There are 1,810 labels and 24,000 bottles to go with the contemporary cuisine.

The **Veritas** cellar has 3,600 selections and 200,000 bottles encompassing top Bordeaux, Rhône and California reds as well as hard-to-find wines from other areas such as Clarendon Hills Shiraz Astralis 1995 (\$250) from Australia. Bordeaux verticals of all the first-growth chateaus including Margaux back to 1900, Mouton-Rothschild back to 1945 and Lafite-Rothschild to 1953. The cuisine is contemporary.

The **Churrascaria Plataforma** has Brazilian cuisine to go

with 1,250 labels and 23,000 bottles in an inventory that includes Italian, Californian, French, Chilean and Argentine wines.

For Chinese food and a wine list that will dazzle, **Tse Yang** is a good bet with its selection of 1,015 labels and an inventory of more than 10,000 bottles featuring selections from Burgundy, Bordeaux, California and the Rhône.

Megu Midtown serves Japanese food and has 550 labels mostly from France and California.

Fancy, Extravagant, Particular

If you are thirsty for something fancy, extravagant or particular, here are 15 places in New York to find innovative and unusual wine lists.

Alfama, a themed blue and white tiled Portuguese restaurant, features more than 100 wines divided in young "Vinhos

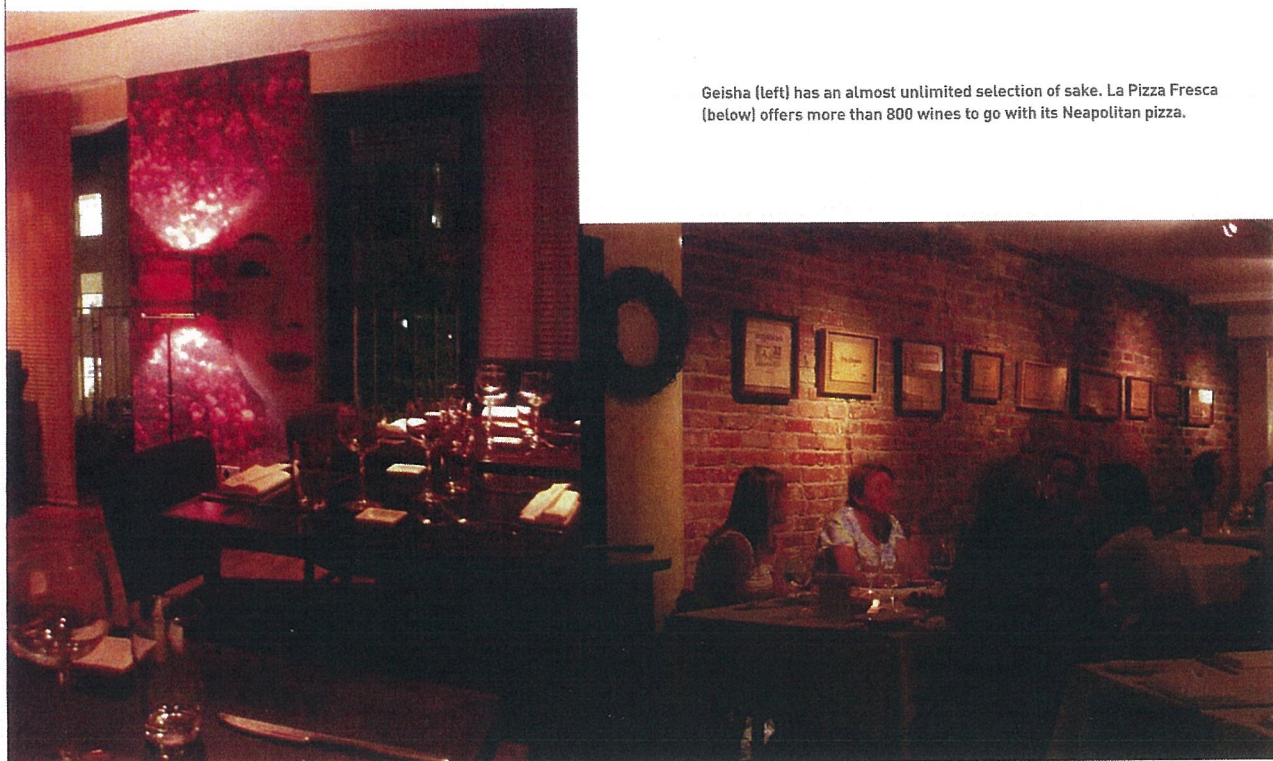
"FORGET THAT OLD ADAGE THAT THERE IS NO WINE (OR ANY THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO DRINK) AT A STEAK HOUSE. AT HARRY'S CAFÉ & STEAK AND DEL FRISCO'S DOUBLE EAGLE THE WINE LISTS ARE HUGE"

Verdes," white "Branco" and red "Tintos," all subdivided into different wine-producing regions and accompanied by detailed tasting notes. **Pylos** honors traditional Greek wines by serving up assyrtiko, moschofilero and retsina white wines and agiorgitiko and xinomavro reds.

For a wine list with more than 100 hand picked organic and biodynamic wines from all over the world carefully paired with vegetarian cuisine there is **Counter**. Biodynamic farming honors the connection of the soil with the rhythms of mother nature. Only natural fertilizers are used for certified organic wines while pesticides and genetic engineering is verboten.

Nelson Blue brings New Zealand to South Street Seaport. The Kiwi focused wine list – highlighting vintners from





Geisha (left) has an almost unlimited selection of sake. La Pizza Fresca (below) offers more than 800 wines to go with its Neapolitan pizza.

the Marlborough and Otago regions – adds authenticity to the traditional Maori ambience.

Hacienda Argentina's wine list features selections from Mendoza and Patagonia. Everything at **Hangawi** including the Korean vegetarian cuisine reflects the harmony of the principles of yin and yang. A few international wines accompany the selection of Korean herb wines as well as black raspberry, takara plum and lychee wines.

Le Marais is one of New York's few kosher steakhouses serving kosher wines and has selections from the Baron Herzog winery in California as well as the Dalton and Kinneret wineries in Israel. **Casa Mono** is a Spanish wine-lover's dream, offering a range of bottles by their designation of origin (D.O.) from the Iberian nation that goes from a \$26 Perlat to the Clos L'Ermite for \$500. A dozen sherries complete the scene.

Queen of Sheba offers exotic meals and a hearty Ethiopian wine selection that includes T'ej, a golden sweet honey-wine that is the national drink. The extract of a native Ethiopian tree, the Gesho, which is similar to hazel, gives T'ej the bitter taste that makes it the ideal drink to complement the spicy food of Ethiopia.

For those seeking the total South African experience, there is **Madiba**. The characteristic potjie briedie, similar to oxtail stew, is served in a cast-iron pot and brings a touch of ritual to the meal. Wines come from many South African regions including Robertson, Western Cape, Durbanville, Stellenbosch and Simonsborg-Stellenbosch ward.

So you have been craving Austrian cuisine and wines of late...no worries because **Wallsé** has both. The most distinctive grapes represented on the wine list are the Blaufrankisch, the St. Laurent, the friendly Zweigelt and the international varietals Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Gruner Veltliner is the most well known grape of the white wines you will find here.

"QUEEN OF SHEBA OFFERS EXOTIC MEALS AND A HEARTY ETHIOPIAN WINE SELECTION THAT INCLUDES T'EJ, A GOLDEN SWEET HONEY-WINE THAT IS THE NATIONAL DRINK"

Zeytin Turkish has about a dozen Turkish wines worth trying such as the Kavaklidere Cancaya and Angora for whites, and Kavaklidere Yakut, Carignan, Alicante and Kalecik for reds.

Just Three Wines, but a Whole Lot of Pork

Finally, perhaps the most extravagant wine list in New York is offered by the award-winning **Daisy May's BBQ**...just three labels. One Pinot Grigio, one Malbec and one Syrah. Not a lot of choice, but you are probably coming here anyway for the signature (and superb) Big Pig Gig menu.

Sake and Cognac

Geisha features one of the widest selections of sake in New York including the easy to drink Junmai made with pure rice, the fruity and floral Ginjo made with polished rice and the high-end Daiginjo produced in very limited quantity with very refined rice. A great selection of "Saketini," sake drinks, plus a superb Sake-Rita (Japanese flavors combined with "sabores latinos") complete the list.

An incredible selection of cognacs can be found at **Braserie Cognac**. There are 102 labels of the French eau-de-vie featured in all its categories: Very Superior or Tres Etoiles, Very Superior Old Pale and Extra Old or Grand Reserve. The list includes reasonably priced choices, but you will also find the likes of Louis XIII de Rémy Martin with its hand-blown crystal decanter by Baccarat. One glass of Louis XIII is more expensive than many of the bottles of wine you will find at the 38 restaurants listed above.

That is our last toast, number 40, so there is nothing left to say but cheers...40 times.