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## A Feast to Remember with Jean-Georges Vongerichten

*Posted By Sabrina Chapman on February 23rd, 2010*

The freshly waxed Bentleys purred softly just several yards away. The doorman tipped his hat while opening the over-sized oak doors. As I walked across the 'M' monogrammed carpet into the freshly renovated Mark Hotel on 77th and Madison, it was evident the Upper East Side had dawned upon it's finest hour.

\$150 Million in renovations served the property well and no detail left untouched by the draft table of Jacques Grange. The opening of The Mark Restaurant buzzed with an excitement not normally present



in the sleepy hollow of the UES. Checking coats, Sally Wu, Model Jenna, and I settled in at the bar fluttering in anticipation to be seated for our gastronomical feast. Sipping fresh ginger ale and passion fruit fusion beverages, conversation settled on the past week's Mercedes Benz Fashion Week highlights, including Isaac Mizrahi, Photographer Nick Knight, Custo Barcelona, and the launch of the evening's host Designer Sally Wu's collection Act 1.

Daniel Del Vecchio and Ian Medwin greeted us, and shortly after our table was announced. Passing Designer Vera Wang and her entourage, snuggled into a corner table. After a poof of fresh crisp linen and the soft fizz of the purified bubbles of mineral water, black truffle and jalapeno amuse-bouche and champagne flutes were presented compliments of the kitchen.

Dining upon a Chilled Seafood Plate, a Peekytoe Crab Cake with Carrot Remoulade, we scanned the room; Mick Jagger dined in comfort several seats away. Jean Georges peaked his head from the kitchen and asked how our meal suited our tastes. As we gushing over the flavors and fusions of Pumpkin Ravioli, Sea Bass, and Rack of Lamb, he insisted upon dessert. Souffle, profiteroles, molten chocolate cake and fresh sorbet, we were happily content.

As the crowd thinned, we polished off our last sips of Burgundy and took a private tour of the kitchen with Jean Georges and Pierre Schultz. The kitchen was aflutter with echos of 'cassoulet,' 'are you staying for the cassoulet,' 'you simply must stay for the cassoulet.'

Intrigued and not wanting to miss the 'cassoulet' (which I later learned originates from the south of France and takes 48 hours to cook), we went back upstairs. All of the guests had departed, and we were in the epicenter of culinary heaven after-hours. Fresh Figi and glasses of Red Bordeaux, Cassoulet was placed in the center of each table. Though we had just indulged in 3 hours of dining, we couldn't help but continue the evening in what we would always recall as a feast to remember with Jean Georges Vongerichten and his entourage of culinary experts.

The Mark Restaurant is located at 25 E 77th St, New York (212) 879 – 1864.