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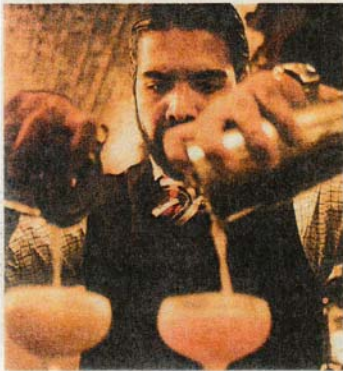
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36 HOURS *New York City*



FROM LEFT Mixing cocktails at the Clover Club in Brooklyn; music at the Bell House in Brooklyn; the rooftop Salon de Ning in Manhattan; makeup time for actresses in "Boeing-Boeing."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASHLEY GILBERTSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

By SETH KUGEL

THOUGH New Yorkers were recently brought up short by the financial crisis, with no one quite knowing just how bad it would be, one thing this city has going for it is its resiliency. Yes, there are worries about 401(k)s and mortgage payments — and perhaps a second thought about spending time in clubs with \$300 bottle service — but there are still plenty of reasons not to stay at home watching CNBC, from new restaurants featuring ever-more inventive menus to hipster hangouts colonizing yet another part of Brooklyn. Historians might look back at 2008 as the year that Wall Street tanked; trend-seeking visitors may remember it as the year they had their first sip of a black maamba.

Friday

4 p.m.

1 Lower East Side Art

In the last few years, the Lower East Side has emerged as among hottest gal-

THE BASICS

New York is served by three major airports: John F. Kennedy International, La Guardia and Newark Liberty International. A taxi ride from J.F.K. into Midtown will cost a flat fee of \$45, plus tolls and tip; around \$35 (including tolls and tip) from La Guardia; and about \$50 (including tolls and tip) from Newark. There is also train service from both J.F.K. and Newark airports: the AirTrain JFK (\$5 each way), which links to either the Long Island Rail Road or the New York subway system in Jamaica, and the AirTrain Newark (\$15), which takes passengers as far as Penn Station. There are also bus and shuttle services.

For those with money to burn (i.e., those who have been keeping their savings under the pillow rather than in the stock market), the Plaza Hotel (Fifth Avenue at Central Park South; 888-850-0900; www.fairmont.com/theplaza) reopened this year after a renovation that turned most of the iconic building into apartments but left 282 hotel rooms that start at \$755.

Down Madison Avenue in Murray Hill, Morgans Hotel (237 Madison Avenue; 212-686-0300; www.morganshotel.com) also reopened after renovations, which include a lobby installation by the French design collective Trafik. Rooms start at \$299.

One company betting on New York's future is the Wyndham Hotel Group (www.wyndhamworldwide.com), which has five hotels under construction in Manhattan, three scheduled to open later this year: one in Chelsea, one on Maiden Lane in the financial district and one in Midtown.

lery scenes in the city, but for visitors the best sites can be tricky to find. Now, a colorful map by the area's Business Improvement District and GalleryBar — hot off the presses on Sept. 24 — plots 54 galleries and art institutions, Web sites included. They range from the (relatively) established Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural and Educational Center to brand-new, like gallery nine5, open this year. The map is available in hotels and at www.lowereastside.com. If it's the art of shopping that you're interested in, there are plenty of shops nearby that should satisfy that craving, among them the superhip Upper Echelon Shoes (100 Forsyth Street; 212-925-8330), which sells casual designer shoes. (P. Diddy wore them to the BET Awards last year.)

8 p.m.

2 Three Stars, Part 1

So far, the Times restaurant critic, Frank Bruni, has awarded three stars to only five restaurants that opened in 2008. Among them was Scarpetta (355 West 14th Street; 212-691-0555; www.scarpettanyc.com), the new Italian spot that shows off Scott Conant's refined mastery of the tomato (Mr. Bruni particularly praised the spaghetti al pomodoro). Linger over dinner either in the buzzing back dining room or the friendly bar area and then walk around the neighborhood whose hotness was only slightly tempered by its obligatory appearance in "Sex and the City."

11 p.m.

3 Shanghai 1930

The roof space of the Peninsula Hotel got an overhaul this year, and after adding Chinese daybeds on the patios and Chinese contemporary art on the walls, reopened this May as the Salon de Ning (700 Fifth Avenue; 212-956-2888; www.salondening.com). Sure, naming a high-end bar after a completely fictional 1930s Shanghai socialite and art collector is verging on absurd. But especially if you land one of the few lucky tables overlooking the Museum of Modern Art sculpture garden and order a gin and elderberry-liqueur flavored Ninglet, though, you'll forget the gimmick and appreciate the place for what it is: not a nostalgic throwback to 1930s China but a depiction of upscale New York 2008.

Saturday

11 a.m.

4 Brunch Beyond Mimosas

The chef Máximo Tejada introduced freestyle Latino cuisine in Rayuela (165 Allen Street; 212-253-8840; www.rayuelanyc.com) in 2007 on the Lower East Side; now he has followed up two blocks north with Macondo (157 East Houston Street; 212-473-9900; www.macondonyc.com), where he brings pan-Latin dishes inspired by street food



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into a setting that bursts with downtown energy. Among the choices: Spanish churros with chocolate, a Peruvian quinoa and octopus salad, the Dominican farmer's breakfast of mangu, fried cheese, fried eggs and fried salami. Having a cocktail is a good idea even if you don't normally drink before noon: the drinks come small but cheap (\$7.50), perfect for brunch and with combinations creatively tropical, like guava and rye or tamarind and tequila.

3 p.m.

5 Controversial Rebirth

Last month, the museum formerly known as the American Craft Museum (a.k.a. that other museum near the Museum of Modern Art) reopened with a new, grander name — the Museum of Arts and Design — into 54,000 square feet of space at 2 Columbus Circle (212-299-7777; www.madmuseum.org). The redesign of the exterior, with its terracotta tiles and ribbons of glass, was piloried by many architecture critics. Judge for yourself and then check out exhibitions like "Second Lives," works from contemporary artists who turn common objects like telephone books and eyeglasses into art.

7 p.m.

6 Three Stars, Part 2

How often do you get a chance to eat in

a three-star restaurant without 1) making reservations and 2) spending an arm and a leg? Jean-Georges Vongerichten, whose other restaurants can cost you multiple metaphorical limbs, brought in the celebrated Japanese restaurateurs Yoshi, Masa and Taka Matsushita as partners to open Matsugen (241 Church Street; 212-925-0202; www.jean-georges.com), where walk-ins have a 32-seat communal table reserved just for them. Among the highlights: freshly made soba noodles of three different thicknesses and various sauces (most under \$20) and appetizers like house-made "firm tofu" (\$10), which has a custard-like consistency.

10 p.m.

7 Over to Brooklyn

One of the best trends in recent years has been the bars dedicated to reviving the high art of the cocktail, helping New Yorkers erase a decade-long hangover from awful flavored martinis. This year the trend jumped East River, bringing the Clover Club (210 Smith Street, Cobble Hill; 718-855-7939; www.cloverclubny.com) to Brooklyn. The dark wood, leather banquettes and pressed-tin ceiling evoke old school with a light touch. Best of all, drinks with names like the black maamba are all \$10 or \$11, a pleasant surprise for anyone used to paying that much in Manhattan for a generic gin and tonic.

ONLINE: READERS' THOUGHTS

Ever been to New York? Share your suggestions on where to stay, where to eat and what to do.

nytimes.com/travel/newyorkcity

Midnight

8 It Tolls for Hipsters

It wouldn't be 21st-century New York if some new Brooklyn neighborhood weren't getting buzz as the next hipster landing pad. Bell House (149 Seventh Street, Gowanus; 718-643-6510; www.thebellhousesny.com), opened in September, helping introduce the Gowanus area — with its requisite dark streets and industrial spaces — as the latest candidate. Its first month featured an almost undefinably eclectic lineup, from burlesque to hip-hop to the moody New Zealand guitar band the Veils, to play in a cavernous hall fitting about 400. If the show of the night is not to your liking, retreat to the much smaller-scale, warmly lit and comfy-slick bar to analyze how the scene is shaping up.

Sunday

Noon

9 Burger Brunch

You don't really need five napkins to clean yourself off after the house specialty burger at 5 Napkin Burger (630 Ninth Avenue; 212-757-2277; www.fivenapkinburger.com), bursting as it is with juice and rosemary aioli and caramelized onions; do your part for the environment and lick your fingers instead. The June opening of this Hell's Kitchen (a.k.a. Clinton) spot, and its subsequent crowds, show that the New York appetite for upscale hamburgers did not level off in 2008.

3 p.m.

10 Post-Burger Revival

Just because it's new doesn't mean it's not old. Critics raved about the revivals of the musical "South Pacific" and the play "Boeing-Boeing," and both won Tony Awards — "South Pacific" for best musical revival and "Boeing-Boeing" for best revival of a play and best performance by a leading actor in a play. "South Pacific," a Rodgers and Hammerstein classic (at the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center; tickets at Telecharge, 212-239-6200; www.telecharge.com), opened on April 3 and was called "rapturous" by the New York Times critic Ben Brantley. "Boeing-Boeing" (Longacre Theater, also Telecharge) opened on May 4 and quickly outlasted its original 1965 Broadway run (a mere 23 performances). Mr. Brantley called it "deliciously, deliciously innocent," pretty good for a comedy about an American in Paris juggling love affairs with three flight attendants.



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