

## Tales of New York...Speakeasy's, Thanksgiving & Idiot Savant!

I ♥ NY.

Thanksgiving is a beautiful holiday for so many reasons... the one that stands out most for me is that it allows people in the catering industry a slight reprieve before the onslaught of the Holiday events leading up to Hanukkah, Christmas & New Year.

For this reason my partner Jill & I took off to New York for the whole week. We wanted to experience NY from a casual 'je ne sais quoi' platform..... without much preparation, without the nightly plan of decadent meals, without guide books, theatre line ups or the obligatory charted shopping plan but rather with a mysterious approach that we negotiated daily by ear or happenstance – admittedly somewhat challenging for me given that I am an obstinate and obsessive event planner in all aspects of my life. I will say that I gave it my best shot and *mostly* prevailed with my un-planning. Here are some of the unplanned New York highlights we came across...

Les Ambassades Patisserie-Café in West Harlem, a vibrant warm & cozy little café that lit the whole street up on Frederick Douglass Blvd near 119<sup>th</sup>, serving delicious croissants, eggs, espresso & more.



Wall Street 2 Filming in Tommy Guns Salon on Ludlow in the Lower East Side near our hotel... We were told that Ludlow was briefly transformed into a London Street for the scene. Street signs & propping confirm. Michael Douglas was to arrive but alas NY was calling us.... We will see the movie!



Thanksgiving Day: Our friends DeDe & Hal gave up their Boathouse Central Park reservations and joined family in Long Island. We totally scored on this front because neither one of us had ever been to the Boathouse, let alone be handed a reservation confirmation for Thanksgiving Lunch... I might say thee most coveted seats for Lunch in NYC on that day. I knew the location would meet with our expectations for the occasion but I was not sure that the food would. We were pleasantly surprised. It was a lovely menu, beautiful surroundings & exceptional service. [http://www.thecentralparkboathouse.com/sections/menus/menus\\_thanksgiving\\_upto8\\_.htm](http://www.thecentralparkboathouse.com/sections/menus/menus_thanksgiving_upto8_.htm)

The long walk back to our hotel was perfect. It was such a fantastic mild and beautiful day in Central Park....



OK So let's talk about Coffee. 'Abraço' is the short answer. I cannot say I stumbled upon this tiny coffee joint as I would never take the chance of going without fine coffee for even a short period of time. Living in San Francisco has spoiled me rotten in this arena. I was told about this delightful joint from my friend Richard. No coincidence one of the former partners in San Francisco's Bluebottle Coffee runs this place on East 7<sup>th</sup> at 1<sup>st</sup> avenue on the Lower East Side. It is exceptional. The coffee could not be more perfect. Only 7 blocks from our hotel I must say this was a daily 'walk of joy'.

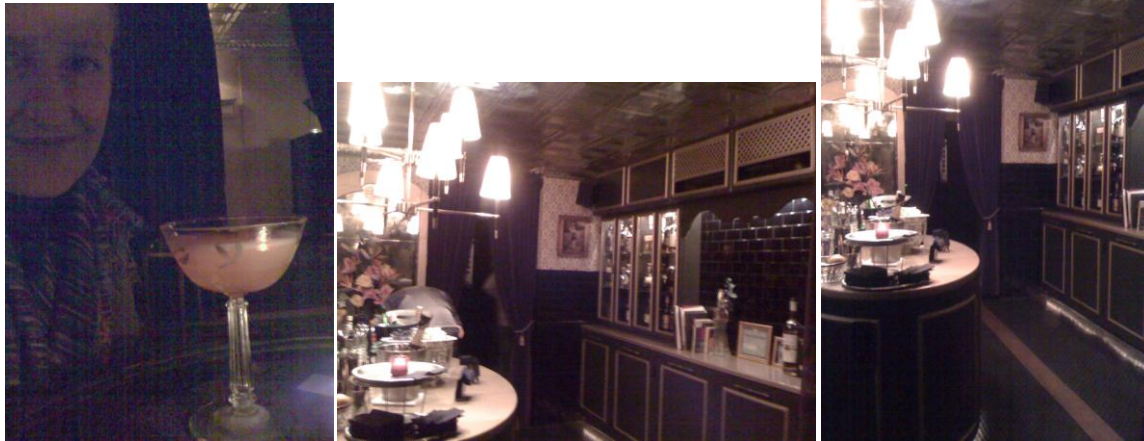


Speaking of Beverages.... There is a sleuth of really unique and over the top speakeasy's in Manhattan. These are some of my favorites:

1. Madame Geneva. Beautifully crafted specialty cocktails know for their 'Jam' concoctions, this speakeasy is located on Bleecker between Bowery & Elizabeth Street but one has to enter through the secret door in the adjoining Double Crown restaurant. The nice thing about this establishment (unlike most of the others) is that you do not need a reservation and it opens early should you want to have a special beverage of the adult nature before dinner.
2. Milk and Honey (718.308.6775) text this no. to make reservations. This started the speakeasys or so they say...Neighborhood: West Village 22 7th Avenue S / between Carmine St & Leroy St)
3. PDT (212.614.2728) call to make reservations. Go through the hot dog shop and the red phone booth. Neighborhood: East Village 113 St. Marks Pl / btw 1st and A (between 1st Ave & Avenue A). This place is tiny and reservations must be made the day of the visit, it's almost impossible to get a table. It is hidden behind the phone booth at Crifdogs. It is a "speakeasy" style bar with very tight confines, interesting old-school based libations

And one of my favourites:

4. Raines Law Room- new spot, but super old school feel. Neighborhood: Flatiron 48 West 17th St / between 5th Ave & Avenue Of The Americas). Slightly hidden entrance on 17th street. Beautifully appointed speakeasy, excellent drinks & service. The only negative was that when leaving we were charged \$2 each to retrieve our coats. The host asked us on arrival if he could hang our coats (as do most establishments in NY without charge that I know of) and did not mention a fee until we were leaving. Nonetheless, I would return for the expertly made drinks & the atmosphere.



Some other interesting tidbits from my trip:



Reality check! Classic Party Rentals cruising around Manhattan.



The beautiful St Regis Bar... home of the original Bloody Mary. We stopped in here on the way to the Boathouse on Thanksgiving Day for a – you guessed it, a Bloody Mary. Delicious.



Bryant Park near 42<sup>nd</sup> <http://www.bryantpark.org/amenities/thepond.php>

This is a real find in the middle of Manhattan. Unique shopping & restaurants, Ice skating or just taking a break from the hustle bustle.

Favorite word of mouth restaurant: Degustation Wine & Tasting Bar  
5th St. (Second Ave.) We loved this unpretentious tiny restaurant with only about 18 counter seats, beautifully executed Spanish food with exceptional service & amazing wine list.



Most unique Play I have ever seen: Idiot Savant.

It's a wild 80 minute ride featuring Willem Dafoe that leaves you wanting to visit the aforementioned Speakeasy's rather promptly. Exhilarating.

[http://www.publictheater.org/component/option,com\\_shows/task,view/Itemid,141/id,987](http://www.publictheater.org/component/option,com_shows/task,view/Itemid,141/id,987)

Something we did plan – our hotel. Thompson LES. It was perfect for two reasons.... 1. It's proximity to everywhere with the subway across the street. We really felt that the location was excellent & 2. Our view. It doesn't get better in NYC. Check it out:

