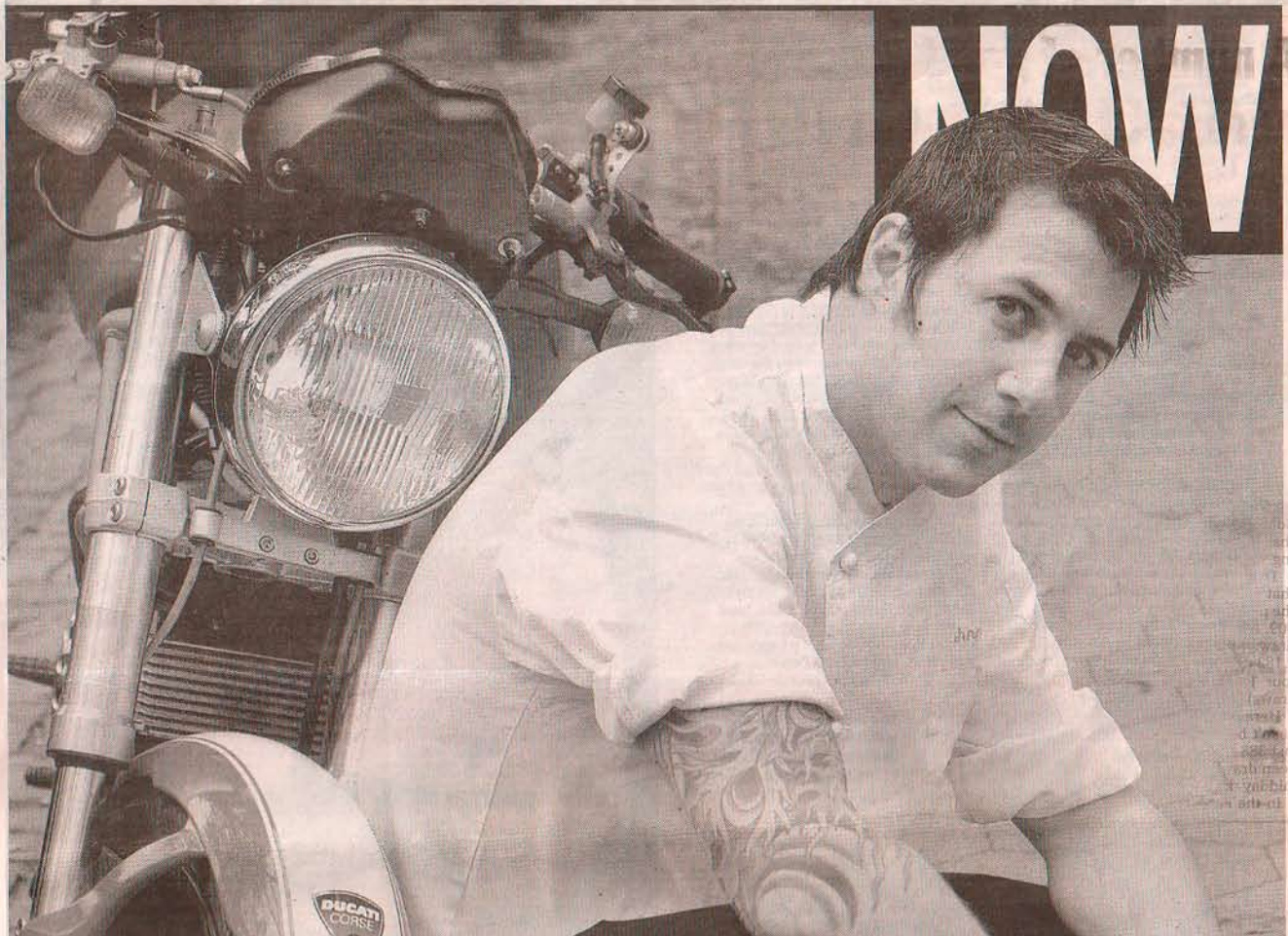


DAILY NEWS



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NOW



MEET NYC'S SEXIEST CHEF

BY PATRICK HUGUENIN

You saw the menu, you rated our culinary contestants, and the results are in.

Johnny Iuzzini, executive pastry chef at Restaurant Jean Georges, is New York's Sexiest Chef.

"It's nice, it's nice," said Iuzzini, reached in the kitchen of the haute Columbus Circle eatery. "We are chefs, and that's the main thing. We care about what we do. And once in a while if we can appear in a different arena, it's nice to be acknowledged and appreciated."

Iuzzini scored 285 votes in the "sizzling" category of our online poll, making the "sizzling" portion of his total votes a whopping 18.62%.

In second place was Crave Ceviche Bar executive chef and co-owner Todd Mitgang, with 15.48% of his votes in the "sizzling" category.

"Second's not first," said Mitgang, "but I'll take it! Actually, I just broke up with my

girlfriend, or should I say she broke up with me ... just kidding!"

Aaron Sanchez, executive chef and co-owner of Paladar and Centrico (and our Now section cover boy on Nov. 6), scorched his way into third place with 10.97%.

"It's nice to be seen in that way," said Sanchez, "and hey, thanks for giving me so much love [on last week's] front page."

CONTINUED INSIDE



Our readers have spoken: Johnny Iuzzini of Jean Georges brings something special to the table. Photo by Susan Watts/Daily News

GOOD LIVING **Gobble up our tips for a tremendous turkey**

10 MEET NYC'S SEXIEST CHEF!

CONTINUED FROM THE COVER

It should be noted that Sanchez and Iuzzini were two of the single chefs in our spread. Although Iuzzini hinted that there might be a special lady sampling his hand-dipped bonbons, he sounded open to possibilities.

"There's always time to date," he said. "I work about 12 to 14 hours [a day], so that leaves about 10 hours for dating. I don't need to sleep much."

Iuzzini found out about his win in the middle of yesterday's grueling sojourn in pastry heaven.

As he spoke, he was putting the final touches on the day's flight of desserts.

"We change the specials every week, so every week my sous chef Emily [Wallendjack], does two new prix-fixes and we taste them just before they go out," he said. "Today, we have ricotta cheesecake, citrus shortbread, maple-roasted apples and a tangerine sorbet."

Iuzzini's victory came after a bit of campaigning that got him spanked by some of the city's most delightfully catty blogs — a rite of passage for those

who step into the spotlight.

Nymag.com's Grub Street selectively excerpted an e-mail he sent to pals about the contest and ran it under the headline, "Johnny Iuzzini's Plea: Elect Me Sexiest Chef!"

Meanwhile, the furies at Gawker labeled the contestant pool "gay, married and/or ugly" and tossed an extra few barbed compliments in the direction of Tailor pastry chef Sam Mason.

"They're brutal," laughed Iuzzini. "I called Sam, and I said, 'So I'm ugly and you're gay, how do you feel about that?' He was like, 'I'm all right with that.' I'm like, 'Yeah, I guess I am, too.'"

At least one pal insists that Iuzzini didn't mind the attention. "He's all about that stuff," says Sanchez.

"It was nice to be included in such a distinguished group of chefs and gentlemen," deadpans Iuzzini, "and to my very good friend and great chef Aaron Sanchez: You got a bigger picture, huh? Now who is Papi?"

COVER STORY



The verdict: Mouth-watering! And Iuzzini's desserts aren't bad, either. Photo by Battman.

10 He grew up in upstate New York and remembers making apples from local farms into pies with his mom.

9 He started his training at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, N.Y., on his 18th birthday.

8 Before he rose to fame as a chef, Iuzzini was a frequent fixture of NYC nightlife, rocking spiky platinum-blond hair and going by the moniker Johnny Quest.

7 During this period, he would sign his beeper messages with the numbers 50538 3838 which, upside down, read "BEBE BESOS," meaning "baby kisses."

6 When he worked for famed chef Daniel Boulud at New York's Restaurant Daniel, Iuzzini and co-chefs Neil Gallagher and Brad Thompson were known as the "Pyramid of Darkness."

5 When Boulud made sandwiches for the Ground Zero rescue workers, Iuzzini used some 40 gallons of Arborio rice to make rice pudding for the workers' dessert.

4 Boulud once gave Iuzzini \$10,000 for a round-the-world trip that took him to Australia, Hong Kong and Italy.

3 Kitchen lore has it that Iuzzini has once (or twice) locked an insolent sous chef in the walk-in freezer.

2 He was the best man at Thompson's wedding last year. He also made the cake, bringing his own baking equipment to the ceremony in Jamaica.

1 He once said in an interview that part of the reason he became a pastry chef is that he doesn't like to cook with meat: "I can't even kill a lobster without saying a Hail Mary for it."

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT JOHNNY IUZZINI

Patrick Huguenin