

# MANHATTAN

MODERN LUXURY™

[ *THE RESTAURANT ISSUE 2009* ]

## THE DISH!

THE 25 HOTTEST  
RESTAURANTS IN  
NEW YORK CITY  
& THE BEST CHEFS,  
SEXIEST SCENES AND MORE

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*Betsey Johnson's Hipster Comeback &*  
*All the Best Parties*



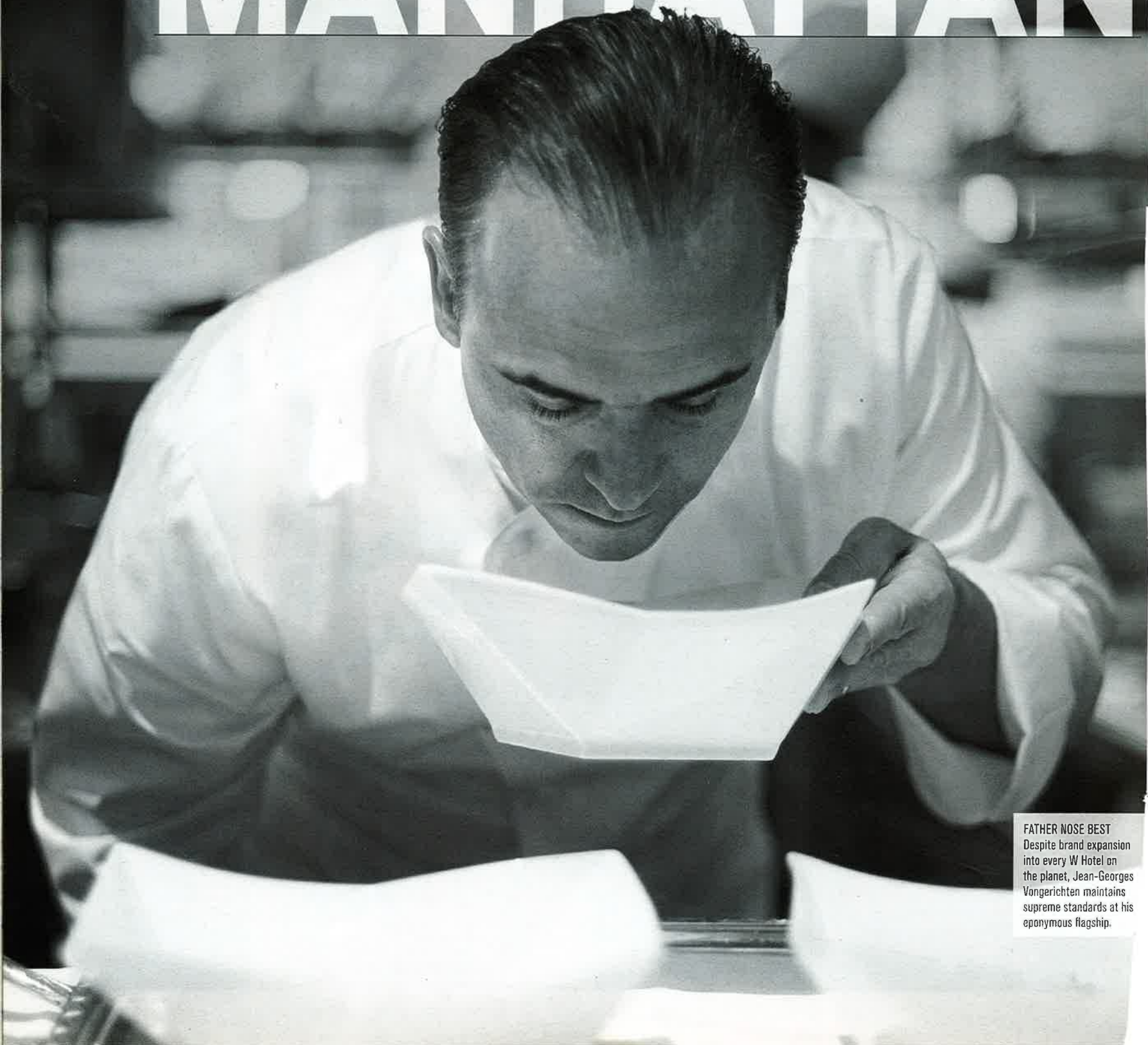
MANHATTAN 7 W. 51ST ST., 8TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10019

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# TO LIVE AND DINE IN MANHATTAN



**FATHER NOSE BEST**  
Despite brand expansion into every W Hotel on the planet, Jean-Georges Vongerichten maintains supreme standards at his eponymous flagship.

## Welcome to our resto rave party 2009—spanning one end of the island to the other!

We've amused, we've bouched and we've eaten more pork than we ever plan to mention to our doctor—but there's no other way to scout out the best restaurants in Manhattan. The following pages are packed with everything from best desserts to best ethnic foods, plus our 25 top resto raves (in no particular order), including classics and newcomers making noise in a relatively rowdy scene. Of course, there's plenty to choose from, and a few are so memorable they managed to garner more than one mention. In the midst of a back-to-basics economy, there's still plenty of room for splurges and New York has its share of spots to indulge. Hungry yet? Dig in, Manhattan. Your table is waiting.

| By Danny Bonvissuto, Jane Lerner, Adeena Sussman and Bret Thorn |

### ← 1. Jean Georges

Somehow, throughout the expansion of his far-flung restaurant empire and the unavoidable resto-cloning criticism, Jean-Georges Vongerichten keeps upping the ante at his Columbus Circle flagship. Granted, dinner is a gastronomic tour de force outfitted with all of the requisite bells and whistles, but it's the longtime, underappreciated prix fixe lunch—\$28 for two courses, \$42 for three—that brings out the bonhomie in everyone from celebs and European tourists to the increasingly wealthy residents of the neighborhood. Every plate, from brilliant fuchsia tuna ribbons on a bed of avocado and chili oil to foie gras dumplings with papaya—not to mention pastry chef/pinup Johnny Iuzzini's deservedly lauded desserts—delivers, and then some. JG, expand all you want. As long as things here never change. **Look for** pastry chef Johnny Iuzzini's tattoos.

1 Central Park W., 212.299.3900, [jean-georges.com](http://jean-georges.com)

## Best Global Grub

### Pinche Taqueria

We won't give you the most common translation of pinche (imagine moving to Guadalajara and opening a deli called "F\*\*kin' Sandwich Shop"), but this straight-from-Tijuana taqueria is one of the first Mexican joints in NYC to get the food just right. Pinche's flavorful pork burritos and super-fresh fish tacos are a substantial addition to downtown's south-of-the-border options. 333 Lafayette St., 212.343.9977, [pinchetaqueria.us](http://pinchetaqueria.us)

### Grand Sichuan

For that tingly Sichuan-peppercorn burn, don't miss NYC's best Chinese. Grand Sichuan's Aui Zhou chicken is pungently packed with chili, bamboo and what the restaurant calls "fresh kill" poultry—it will make you blind to any other option from here on out. We could list 12 other dishes that you shouldn't skip, but you can't miss if you order from the Sichuan section of the menu. 229 Ninth Ave., 212.620.5200, [thegrandsichuan.com](http://thegrandsichuan.com)

### Baquette

Seems like 26 new bánh mì places have opened up in the last few months, but Baquette's three locations might beat them all. This commingling of French sandwich tradition and Asian flavors is bright with pickled carrot, daikon, cilantro and your meat of choice (go the whole hog with pâté, terrine and pulled pork). Garnished with mayo and a sharp hot sauce, this version adds heft to the bánh mì hype. 61 Lexington Ave., 212.532.1133, [baquette.com](http://baquette.com)

### Yakitori Totto

Every last part of the chicken is threaded on a skewer and grilled to perfection at this upstairs enclave in Midtown, making for an easy transport straight to Tokyo. Japanese expats and serious foodies clamor for one of the crowded tables; the menu (loaded with pictures for ordering ease) is filled with meat on sticks and their ideal accompaniments like miso with cucumber or custardy chawan mushi. 251 W. 55th St., 212.245.4555, [torjstnyc.com/totto.htm](http://torjstnyc.com/totto.htm)

### Caracas Arepa Bar

In the worldwide tour of cultures that fill a flaky piece of dough with delectable fillings, the Venezuelans hit upon something truly great with the arepa, a corn cake stuffed with cheese, meat, vegetables, whatever. Caracas Arepa Bar, the packed East Village hot spot, serves the city's finest array of the South American specialty. 93 1/2 E. 7th St., 212.529.2314, [caracasarepabar.com](http://caracasarepabar.com)

