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BEST OF NEW YORK

In a city of a billion choices, how do you decide where to eat, where to shop, where to get your Limoges tureen repaired? Our annual guide to the best of everything is the best place to start.

BY ADAM PLATT

A FEW YEARS AGO, DURING the first weeks of my strange, accidental career as a restaurant critic, I made a lunch reservation at one of the older, more reputable restaurants on Sutton Place. I made this reservation, as restaurant critics are supposed to do, under an assumed name. I showed up at the appropriate hour and announced my assumed name

BEST INTRODUCTION

TARTARE

GEISHA

33 East 61st Street (212-813-1112)

Spanish-mackerel tartare topped with Iranian Osetra caviar and an egg-caper vinaigrette is one of Eric Ripert's signature dishes at Le Bernardin. One would have thought it impossible to top, but Michael Vernon, a former Ripert sous-chef, has done just that. At Geisha, the exciting new French-Asian-fusion restaurant, the student gives his teacher's dish a bit of an Eastern twist (Ripert, mind you, consulted on the original menu). Superfresh Spanish mackerel is diced and tossed with a combination of coriander and scallion. Pale-green wasabi tobiko crowns the tartare, adding an

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