



Resort/Dining News You Can Use

(Written by RICH SMITH)

GOING UP WITH THE SHIP. The unsinkable Maritime Hotel on Ninth Avenue in New York City's West Chelsea district has been the subject of much talk over the years for behaving both nautically and nice. But now it's sailing straight for a sea of brand-new buzz thanks to the chef helming its onboard restaurant, Matsuri. Tadashi Ono has authored a bold new cookbook, "The Japanese Grill." In it, the Tokyo-born master chef reveals tricks galore for marrying open-flame brazing with an array of Asian ingredients to produce tantalizing Japanese dishes as well as more familiar American fare and succulent fusions of the two. The Maritime Hotel is so named because it occupies a seafarer union's former landmark headquarters designed to resemble a ship, inside and out.

FASHION DISASTERS AVERTED. Nightmare scenario: you're visiting Chicago and just finished dressing for an important night out when you clumsily spill wine on your best clothes. No time for dry cleaning and no time to go out shopping for replacement threads. At The Elysian, Chicago's premier luxury hotel, guests in such a bind can now dial the front desk to request an emergency "Style Kit" containing a select ensemble of high-fashion apparel from some of the best-loved designer brands, including (for women) Donna Karan, Jimmy Choo, Wolford, and Lanvin, and (for men) Zegna, Hermes, David Yurman, and Gucci. Meanwhile, renowned stylist Eric Himel will be standing by to advise guests about putting the kit's elements to best effect or to discuss other fashion concerns.

SUITE YOU OFF YOUR FEET. Now open at the La Concha resort in Puerto Rico is a dazzling \$100-million all-suite guest tower near the water's edge along San Juan's glorious Coronado Beach. Each marvelously sleek and stylish suite features a full balcony, pullout couch, and high-tech amenities. Added recently as well are "spa suites," which include an outdoor terrace hot tub. La Concha earns Four Diamonds from the AAA ratings book and is considered a nightlife destination among the island's in-crowd. The resort even has its own sound, available on the new "Candela by La Concha" CD (a seductive collection of remixed popular local music).

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING. Guests checking into the high-tech Pod Hotel in New York City can now stroll up to the lobby's 3-D virtual map of Manhattan, touch the interactive screen to pull up a neighborhood-by-neighborhood bird's-eye view of restaurants, shops and shows, then keep touching to drill down for up-to-the-minute details about whatever most intrigues. The system's info base is updated continually through a partnership with social mapping service Mapcidy, which gathers data from bloggers plugged into doings around the city. The ultra-hip Pod Hotel caters to stylish spendthrift travelers. Reuters Newswire's blogger community voted it one of the planet's Top Ten tech hotels.

ELEGANT FINE-DINING ON A BUDGET. Thinking twice about how you spend your money these days? You need only think once when you drop in Sunday through Friday at the celebrity chef restaurants on the grounds of the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City, NJ. Just launched: easy-on-the-pocketbook menus at Wolfgang Puck's American Grille, Michael Schulson's Japanese-style pub Izakaya, and Michael Mina's Seablue. Three-course meals on the special menus offered by each are locked in at \$39. During warm-weather months, patrons can sit by the Water Club's outdoor pools to enjoy music, signature cocktails, and gourmet frozen treats from fresh fruit purees. During cold-weather months, the Water Club is the place to be for cozying in front of the crackling fireplace while sipping spiked hot chocolate after dinner.