

dine

The next 8 hot spots

BY JANE LERNER • Special to amNewYork

Fall is always a blockbuster time for restaurant openings in the city, and the next few months have some serious game changers in store. We've selected a few of the more notable openings, and we explain why they should be on your list of must-try eateries.

FOR THE DESIGN

Lincoln
142 W. 65th St.,
212-359-6500

In what might be the most anticipated opening of the year, Per Se's former main man, Jonathan Benno, debuts Lincoln at Lincoln Center. The menu is Italian, though on Benno's watch this will be no red-sauce joint.

The buzz: Designed by renowned architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the glass structure will have a 7,200-square-foot grass roof in the shape of a hyperbolic paraboloid.

FOR THE CHEF

Osteria Morini
218 Lafayette St.,
212-965-8777

Michael White's new downtown project, Osteria Morini, is a decidedly casual ven-

ture — at least in comparison to Marea, Alto and Convivio. Still, ingredients will be meticulously sourced and the eye-opening Italian wine list will be a perfect foil for the chef's beloved pastas.

The buzz: Whether upscale or comfort fare, of late it seems chef White can do no wrong.

FOR THE HOT NEW SCENE

The Darby
246 W. 14th St.,
no phone yet

Nightlife heavyweights Richie Akiva and Scott Sartiano are going for mid-century glamour at The Darby, located where the nightclub Nell's used to be. There will be a throwback menu from Alexandra Guarnaschelli (Butter) that includes the Darby

Carpetbagger, a filet of beef stuffed with oysters.

The buzz: In its heyday, Nell's was easily one of the city's top hot spots. (Ah, if only the walls could talk.) The Darby will do this tradition right.

FOR INNOVATION ON THE PLATE

Mehtaphor
130 Duane St.,
212-964-4600

At tiny Graffiti in the East Village, chef Jehangir Mehta works wonders in one of the city's smallest kitchens. Mehta should be thrilled to grow into his new digs, Mehtaphor, in TriBeCa's Duane Street Hotel.

The buzz: We can't wait for the chef's latest offbeat small plates, including chili lamb chops with malbec



Asellina



Gina and Pat Neely

chocolate sauce and spicy beef tartare with guacamole sorbet.

FOR BEING SEEN

Asellina
420 Park Ave.,
no phone yet

Brought to us by the One Group, the money-minting masterminds

behind club-restaurants STK and the Collective, Asellina will be the flagship restaurant in the new Gansevoort Park hotel. The menu will be "rustic Italian."

The buzz: Where the One Group goes, the beautiful people are sure to follow.

FOR SEAFOOD

John Dory Oyster Bar
1196 Broadway,
212-792-9000

Another boon for the Ace Hotel: Brit chef April Bloomfield and her Breslin and Spotted Pig partner Ken Friedman relocate John Dory Oyster Bar to the hotel from its original West Village location. This time around, it will be decidedly more casual.

The buzz: The hotel's uber-hip crowd will line up for Bloomfield's take on seafood, including a large raw bar and oysters pan roasted with sea urchin crostini.



Michael White



Marcus Samuelsson



Oyster and sea urchin at John Dory (AMY HOU)

FOR SOUTHERN COOKING

Neelys Pig Parlor
1125 First Ave.,
212-832-1551

Have you seen the Neelys on the Food Network? More sugary than sweet tea, they cook up Southern specialties on their show, "Down Home With the Neelys." You will soon be able to taste their Memphis eats in person at Neely's Pig Parlor.

The buzz: The buzzwords for the couple's first Yankee project are

"pork" and "bourbon." Hard to go wrong.

FOR NYC HOME COOKING

Red Rooster
310 Lenox Ave.,
no phone yet

Marcus Samuelsson's Ethiopian/Swedish background informs his cooking at every level, but his uptown project Red Rooster reflects the NYC where he lives.

The buzz: We can't wait to see what Samuelsson, a local Harlem guy, does with American classics.