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Dining out with Sheldon Landwehr

Le Cirque

Prized New York Cafe Reopens

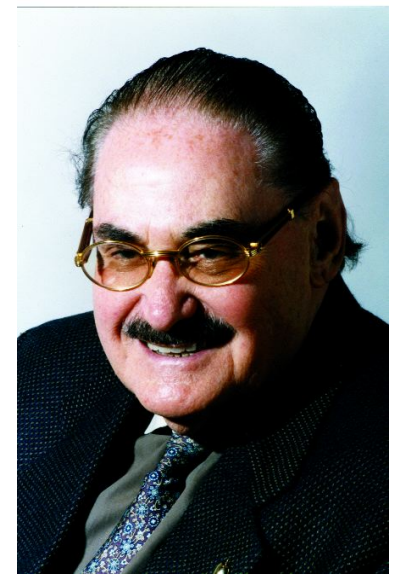


Photo by: Rob Rich

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Le Cirque, a renowned New York restaurant for over three decades, was first inaugurated on Manhattan's fashionable East 65th Street, then became even more prestigious as Le Cirque 2000 at the New York Palace Hotel, and now is ensconced in an \$18 million sanctuary within the newly completed Bloomberg Building, at One Beacon Court (58th Street, twixt Lexington and Third Avenue's). When visiting this elegantly appointed, smaller, albeit aggrandized rendezvous, be prepared to find the following things: a single main dining arena, where 'see-be-seeners' can engage in all the voyeurism they might desire, while absorbing the fascinating circus motif with its towering tented ceiling, plush leather chairs and banquettes finished in blue and gold striped fabric, imposing wall panels of burnished ebony, the whole drenched in mellow lighting, a classic menu, exceptional wines, chic outfitted waiter and waitress service and a check that can reach high altitudes. A portion of warm lobster salad cost \$39, iced Seafood Tray 'Sirio' \$67, incredible sliced smoked Norwegian salmon accompanied by a festive platter of embellishments \$24 (worth double the price). In general, starters range from \$19 to \$78 not including caviar choices. For \$26 be sure not to eschew the singular Sweet English peas and wild mushroom -- a savory trio composed of ethereal chilled pea soup and chanterelles, casserole of peas ala Francaise with morels, and peas ravioli paired with almond mushrooms. On the other hand, perhaps one might prefer the Spring Vegetable casserole or Tuna Tartare.

Such main course choices as grilled or meuniere-style whole Dover sole, roasted chicken for two, steamed Mediterranean Branzino, orange-glaze Long Island Muscov duck, as well as prime steaks and rack of lamb, are on hand. Despite their familiar sound, these dishes take on a special glamour at Le Cirque. Distinguished proprietor, Sirio Maccioni himself presides over the the room as a rule, assisted by two handsome sons Marco and Mauro. A third son Mario runs their Las Vegas venue.

Kitchen performers by Executive Chef Pierre Schaedelin blends seasonings and sauces with dramatic flare, adding a drift of exotic herbs with passionate abandon. The forgoing dishes are merely preliminaries. There are countless other inducements to choose.

Among the selection of unassailable desserts deftly prepared by Pastry Chef Regis Monges, are such Le Cirque standby's as creme brulee, old-fashioned floating island and a dazzlingly delicious, light, crispy, albeit calorie-laden creamy Napoleon. New signature favorites include pot au feu, waffle martini and Caribbean chocolate parfait.

It should be noted that a dress code is enforced in the main dining room. Nevertheless, the code has been relaxed when feeding in the separate, stunningly neoteric bar-lounge dining area. Here a stylish pair of jeans and a jacket are satisfactory.

Le Cirque, 151 East 58th Street, New York. Reservations: (212) 644-0202. Accepts major credit cards.

Buon Appetito !



Trio of Tomato



Warm Lobster Salad



Long Island Muscovy Duck



Executive Chef Pierre Schaedelin



The magic starts here...



Executive Pastry Chef Regis Monges



Summer Cone



Pot au Feu Dessert



Compressé of Young Leeks



Owner of Le Cirque Sirio Maccioni with
Editor-in-Chief Joyce Brooks