



BRUNO JAMAIS RESTAURANT REVIEW

By Lisa Martinez

February 14 is Saint Valentine's Day, the universal day to celebrate love. It's the day when red roses are sold for more than double. Heart-shaped boxes filled with truffles are bestowed. And gentlemen, you'd better have your dinner reservations confirmed. The Greeting Card Association estimates that approximately one billion valentines are sent each year worldwide, making it the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas! With the ever-changing dating playing field and all of life's wonderful technological advances, it seems our mobile phones and PDA's are getting more one-on-one time than we are, playing footsie in a tandem of text messages and emails. Whatever happened to dinner and a movie? I **recently visited the lovely Bruno Jamais Restaurant on Manhattan's Upper East Side**. The romantic venue was host to a speed-dating event, with forty of Gotham's most eligible bachelors and a bevy of beauties playing musical dining chairs, as it were. For the uninitiated speed-dating is a three-hour event, in which women move from table to table, chatting up their potential suitors for five minutes, while recording comments on a note card before advancing to the next station in search of their very own *Prince Charming*. For those of us with "oh so busy lives," it's an ideal way to have 20-40 dates in one night!

I was born a hopeful romantic! I wrote my first poem at eight. I have no poker face. I cry at movies. I wear my heart on my sleeve. I'm a sap and proud of it! Unapologetically so, yes, I believe in fate and as naïve as it sounds I cling to the notion of "happy endings." With it's warm and inviting setting, **I get the feeling that everyday could feel like Valentine's Day at Bruno Jamais. Mr. Jamais is the quintessential French restaurateur with suave good looks, a charming**



Pictured above: Main Dining Hall

accent, and debonair demeanor. Prior to opening the Bruno Jamais Restaurant and Club in 2002, the 46-year-old Parisian was an important fixture in the culinary world as the Maitre d' at Restaurant Daniel. He is indebted to world-renowned Chef Daniel Boulud for not only teaching him English, but also giving him the opportunity to preside over one of the country's finest venues for classic French cuisine. While at Daniel, he catered to patrons that included world leaders, society matrons, and A-list celebrities.

Following Restaurant Daniel, **Mr. Jamais** moved onto Alain Ducasse and then opened his eponymous restaurant in a beautiful 4,500 square foot townhouse on East 81st street that formerly housed Parioli Romanissimo. The restaurant business is in Mr. Jamais' blood, working

from the age of 15 in his father's restaurants in Paris and eventually moving on to other notable Parisian establishments such as Lucas Carton and Le Doyen. **Bruno Jamais Restaurant and Club** was his first foray as an owner. He says that the most stressful part is,



“maintaining the quality of the food and the dining experience, effectively promoting the establishment to an elite clientele, and the ever present awareness that in the cut-throat world of Manhattan dining, there is no room for mistakes.”

Mr. Jamais was well aware that to please an elite clientele, he had to deliver something extraordinary that surpassed a regular dining experience. To set the right ambiance, he

enlisted renowned architect Tony Chi who combined a clubby living room style environment with the comfortable luxury of a first class dining room. The restaurant received the "Best Restaurant Design Award" by *Hospitality Design Magazine* for 2004. The restaurant is a favorite discreet destination for luminaries such as Keanu Reeves, Former President Bill Clinton, Kim Cattral, Billy Baldwin, Chris Noth, and Spike Lee, to name but a few.



Top left: The Wine Cellar
Left: Fine French Cuisine
Below: Top off one of Mr. Jamais' savory specialties with the chocolate soufflé!

Bruno Jamais was inspired to combine a first class restaurant with a nightclub during his time at Daniel when regular customers would inquire where they could go to drink and dance without leaving the Upper East Side. Mr. Jamais sought to model the ambiance of his restaurant after those in the South of France that effortlessly combine fine food with a sexy, glamorous, and fun environment. He spent a lifetime envisioning his dream restaurant. “I always had an idea of what I wanted. This is the kind of place I would go for a fun night out.” And from the looks of the hopping scene every night, he's not the only one!





Pictured at Left: Speed Dating Event

Remember in grade school, when you would exchange valentines? Relationships were so much simpler back then. In the first grade I had a crush on a boy named Jaan; he bought me a bottle of perfume for my birthday. I was so excited that I dropped it when I ran to share the delight with my mother over his incredibly sweet gesture. In the third grade, Edward was the object of my affection; I tried desperately to impress

him with gizmos and toys. By the sixth grade, a very popular and handsome lothario by the name of Mario caught me attention; I had graduated from video games to high heels and lip gloss. As a teenager, I'd surely been inhabited by the soul of fair Juliet Capulet, penning poems and essays of ever-lasting, eternal love. Fast-forward past adolescence, armed with the reliable platitude of "the way to a man's heart, is his through his stomach", had me stuffing Cornish game hens and baking apple pies! I must say though, that I'm rather enjoying this phase best of all, the one where I slip into my little black dress and I get wined and dined at one of Manhattan's most romantic restaurants!

Bruno Jamais Restaurant is located at 24 East 81st Street, 212-396-3444

SPECIAL OFFER: Bruno Jamais would like to offer our female readers a special promotion. Bruno Jamais is now open on Sundays for the first time in the restaurant's four-year history. On Sundays, Bruno Jamais is open from 6pm-2am with live music and a reduced price menu. Our readers are being offered the chance to drink, dine, and dance at Bruno Jamais on Sundays for 50% off the already reduced priced menu! You must present this page to the restaurant to receive the discount.

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