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Esquire's Best New Restaurants 2011

Our annual list, now in its 27th year, featuring the Restaurant of the Year, the Hall of Fame, a hostess we love, and much more

By **John Mariani**

Millesime

New York



Photo Credit: Deb Wenof

Not since the opening of Balthazar in 1997 has New York seen a true brasserie like the enchanting Millesime. Of bistros the city has plenty, but not big, fast-paced Alsatian brasseries reminiscent of Hemingway haunts along the boulevards of Montparnasse. Millesime exalts classic French seafood, but chef Laurent Manrique adds American flair. First, a tower of shellfish on ice. Quenelles of pike, once a fixture of French dining in New York, are here in all their cream-soaked glory. Then the fun part: You pick a fish: salmon escalope, snapper, etc., and then a sauce: beurre blanc, ginger, etc. Mix and match. The art-nouveau look can never go out of style, and the waitresses' French blouses complete a seductive scene. Linger over cognac and pull out as much of your high school French as you can remember.

92 Madison Avenue; 212-889-7100; millesimerestaurant.com

The Recipe: The Sauce for Every Fish

Sauce vierge (pictured above), by Laurent Manrique

This sauce, called "virgin" because it's uncooked, works on any fish, any style.

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 good ripe tomato, diced small
- 1 tbsp sweet onion, like Vidalia, diced small
- 1 tbsp small capers
- 2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tbsp black olives (Moroccan, if possible), diced small
- pulp of ¼ lemon, diced
- 1 tbsp fresh tarra-gon, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh chives, chopped
- roasted pine nuts (optional)

Combine ingredients in a bowl 15 minutes before serving so the flavors mix. Spoon over fish. Serves 4.