

INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS

For SOMA's White Issue, our dauntless Urbanites take you from a white-trash bar in San Francisco to a white-hot midtown Manhattan eatery, with ample time to take in the pristine architecture of Chicago's most striking new hotel. Stop in for a pint in one of London's most popular bars, overlooking a central square which, come December, will be blanketed in...you got it...white.

	<p>TOUR D'Y VOIR 6 place du Grand Sablon 32 2 511 40 43</p>	<p>Housed in a 14th Century abbey, this chic eatery is sexy, intimate and impossibly romantic. Bare brick walls, cherubic art, stained glass, and other aesthetic divinities create the setting, while the excellent French menu offers gastronomic adventurers the option of letting the chef create a personal mystery dinner for them.</p>
BRUSSELS	<p>LE FALSTAFF 17-21 rue Henri Maus 32 2 511 87 89</p>	<p>An absolute classic, this dramatic Art Nouveau café is constantly abuzz with a true cross section of Brussels tipplers. Within the prodigious, turn-of-the-century space, the lively crowd downs a sublime section of Belgian beers while chattering on about football, art and the EEC.</p>
	<p>HOTEL AMIGO 1-3 rue D'Amigo 32 2 547 47 07</p>	<p>More luxurious than trendy, the glamorous Amigo is an elegant mix of Spanish Renaissance and Louis XV styles, topped off with all the modern amenities. The service is white glove, the clientele is a harmonious mix of new media and old money. Ken Scrudato</p>
	<p>The Rockwell Trafalgar Hotel, 2 Spring Gardens, London SW1 44 020 7870 2959</p>	<p>Although relatively unknown until its recent accolade of <i>Time Out's</i> Best Bar winner 2002, one thing cannot spoil The Rockwell's new found popularity: its views. Share a platter of fine food and gaze out at London's central square. The bar itself, should you notice, is glamorous and well-designed.</p>
LONDON	<p>Christopher's 18 Wellington Street, London WC2 44 020 7240 4222</p>	<p>At Christopher's, you can pick your mood: for sleek and chic, try Saturdays, when brunch is served in Nordic modernist surroundings. If you're seeking comfort for the morning after, an enchanting spiral staircase carries you to a soothing Bloody Mary Sunday brunch in the dining room.</p>
	<p>Tongue & Groove 50 Atlantic Road, London SW9 44 020 7274 8600</p>	<p>The name would have you guess it's a bit naughty—and you'd be correct. The decor is porno murals and the fruit cocktails are not only the only fruity option. Be prepared to take off your shoes and dance (mostly funk). The place gets far too packed to do anything else. Kerry Olsen</p>
	<p>The Spanish Suite The Clift 495 Geary St. 415.929.2300</p>	<p>It's open season for private parties at The Clift Hotel's Spanish Suite. The sleek white minimalist-meets-opulent décor. Lucky invitees swill cocktails in an enclosed terrace and wolf steaks in a grand dining room. So which floor is it on? Buy me another mojito and we'll talk...</p>
SF	<p>La Table du Chef 3640 Sacramento St. 415.345.8600</p>	<p>Situated snugly in the forgivably snobby Presidio Heights neighborhood, La Table du Chef is an impressionist blender of rich murals and velvety, tiger-print chairs. The menu is staunchly French-brasserie and, financially challenged take note, the crowd is the type that doesn't flinch at a \$29 entrée.</p>
	<p>Butter 354 11th St. 415.339.8735</p>	<p>Is this place still cool? I'd argue it was never cool to begin with, and that was the point: the white trash theme, the microwave snacks, the big plastic straws...Yet the DJs and chic-cheap décor remain vital at Butter. Apparently irony still plays in this town. Heather Bradley</p>
NEW YORK	<p>Rouge 135 East 62nd St. 212.207.4601</p>	<p>The former head chef at Maxim's and Le Chantilly, a guy with his own cooking show on PBS, has decided to return to his French bistro-inspired roots. The decor is formal and the food is as well-traveled as the chef, infused as it is with Asian and Italian-takes on a creative French base. Mikel Jollett</p>
	<p>Voyage 117 Perry St. 212.255.9191</p>	<p>Get comfort food with a trans-continental edge at this new West Village eatery. Indulge in kickass chicken 'n dumplings or a refined filet in a cozy-chic bustle. The inviting décor evokes the mid-90's cigar trend, while the bar buzzes all night. Trite as it may sound, Voyage is worth the trip. Sadie Clement</p>
CHICAGO	<p>The Exit 1315 West North Ave. 773.395.2700</p>	<p>Industrial and Punk still reign in this rickety, windowless black building, as legit an example of the darker side of Chicago as you can ask for without serious fear for your appendages and precious bodily fluids. Despite their purple hair and rubber suits the crowd is affable. Mark Von Pfeiffer</p>