



Photograph: Roxana MarroquinThe Bar Room at the ModernThe Bar Room at the Modern

## The best museum eats

Go for the food, stay for the art.

By Jeanne Hodesh | Monday, June 27, 2009

### The Bar Room at the Modern

Ever since Danny Meyer took over the MoMA's concessions in 2004, things have been looking up. Though dining options include the James Beard Award–winning Modern, we favor its more casual annex. Museum-quality art—*The Clearing* (2003) by Thomas Demand hangs here—provides an elegant backdrop for chef Gabriel Kreuther's Alsatian-tinged menu. Classics like tarte flambe (\$14) and the more contemporary white chocolate panna cotta with

blackberries and raspberry marshmallows and pistachio ice cream (\$12) remind us that art can be edible, too.

### [The Cafe @ RMA](#)

The Rubin's Himalayan exhibitions may run for months at a stretch, but the specials change daily at the Cafe @ RMA, giving you reason enough to drop by whether you're gearing up to gallery hop or just running errands in Chelsea. North Indian finger food like spicy pakoras (\$10), and the Anglo-Indian mulligatawny soup (\$7.50) make for satisfying quick lunches. The excellent potato and pea samosa (\$10.50) packs an entire spice rack worth of heat—dip the corners in salty rhubarb chutney to cool off, though you may wind up slurping the rose-hued sauce by the spoonful. *150 W 17th St at Seventh Ave (212-620-5000)*

### [Garden Court Cafe](#)

The Asia Society's sculptures, ceramics and contemporary multimedia installations cover about as much territory as the Pan-Asian menu in the tranquil Garden Court Cafe. Sip a glass of floral iced tea, like the lili'uokalani, mixed with fruit juices (\$4), while relaxing beneath the flowering trees in the atrium. Meanwhile, a delicately fried crab cake (\$12) with rich cilantro aioli and a side salad of fennel tossed in lime juice is very East-meets--Upper East Side. Though you don't have to visit the museum to enjoy the peaceful eatery, you might not be able to resist. *725 Park Ave between 70th and 71st Sts (212-570-5202)*

### [Caf Sabarsky](#)

The Austrian artist Gustav Klimt was known for his sumptuous "Golden Style," in which portraits of women incorporated the precious metal in as many ways as possible. Though we can't promise the same level of luxury at the Neue Galerie's Cafe Sabarsky, it comes pretty close. The Austro-German museum's destination cafe—located in the former dining room of a Beaux Arts mansion—showcases chef Kurt Gutenbrunner's superb Viennese pastry. Linger over some of the city's best coffee (try the Wiener Melange—espresso with hot milk and a foam crown) with flaky apple strudel (\$9) or bratwurst over riesling-braised sauerkraut with hot mustard (\$14). Unlike Klimt's ladies, you may not feel like disrobing after a feast of this magnitude. *1048 Fifth Ave at 86th St (212-288-0665)*

### [Smrgs Chef](#)

If your summer vacation doesn't include a trip to the land of the midnight sun, get a little closer with a visit to Scandinavia House, the city's home for contemporary art from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Scandinavian culinary culture, meanwhile, comes courtesy of this outpost of Smrgs Chef. The whimsical decor features a white picket fence and silvery birch tree, while the effervescent menu offers fresh lingonberry soda (\$3.50), a house-cured herring sampler with triangles of traditional *lefse* (crepe-like potato pancakes, \$12) and a finale of an airy vanilla waffle served with cloudberry preserves and chantilly (\$6). *58 Park Ave btw 37th and 38th Sts (212-847-9745)*