

FOOD



# FACE-OFF



## 66

VONGERICHTEN'S CUISINE HAS ALWAYS FLIRTED WITH THE FAR EAST. THIS time, instead of infusing his French fare with ginger or lemongrass, he's devoted an entire menu to his interpretation of traditional Chinese cuisine. Richard Meier designed the modern, clean-lined space, where huge fish tanks act as walls and tables have a subtle jade glow. Communal tables and red silk banners give 66 a warm, intimate feeling, which sets the tone for the dining experience; all entrées are served family style. Dim Sum and a noodle bar complete l'expérience.

66, 66 Leonard Street, (212) 925-0202

**Chef-owner:** Jean-Georges Vongerichten  
**Co-owner:** Phil Suarez  
**Cuisine:** Chinese  
**Seats:** 150 (plus 25 in the lounge)  
**Designer:** Richard Meier  
**Staff attire:** Mao grey Kung Fu outfits designed by Vivienne Tam  
**Music:** Compilations of lounge music and some eclectic selections  
**Ingredient that turns up most frequently on menu:** Ginger  
**Favorite dish on menu:** Steamed Lobster Claw with Hue Dew Wine  
**Favorite restaurant**

**when not cooking:** Kai  
**Favorite dish to cook at home:** Open a can of caviar  
**Ice Cream, vanilla or chocolate:** Swirl of both  
**Number of kitchens previously cooked in:** 24  
**Biggest cooking disaster:** Carbonated vegetable broth  
**Most hated food trend:** Zoo food (ostrich, snake, alligator)  
**Favorite place to go when leaving New York City:** Bali  
**Secret junk food indulgence:** Krispy Kreme  
**Desired profession, if not a chef:** Clothing designer  
**Most exciting thing**

**about new restaurant:** Exploring and learning a whole new cuisine and culture. And, working with Richard Meier on his first restaurant.  
**Experimentation the new restaurant allows that others don't:** Woks, dim sum, live fish tanks, duck room  
**Other restaurants:** Jean Georges, Jo Jo, Vong (NYC), Vong (London), Lipstick Café, Vong, (Hong Kong), Mercer Kitchen, Prime, ( Las Vegas), Vong's Thai Kitchen (Chicago), Dune, (Paradise Island, Bahamas), Market (Paris)

PORTRAITS BY FABRICE FRIERE

Perhaps the hardest part of being one of the **world's best chef-owners** is living up to the meticulous standards your other restaurants have set. Chefs Mario Batali and Jean-Georges Vongerichten aim to do exactly that as they each add a new restaurant to their mini-empires. We recently got the scoop on the chefs and their restaurants currently setting the culinary world aflame. By Kristen Wolfe

## Otto Enoteca Pizzeria

AFTER CREATING SEVERAL OF THE BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANTS IN TOWN, Mario Batali was ready for a new challenge. His current undertaking? Making some of the city's best pizza. Since New Yorkers are hard to please in this category, Batali is armed with a new technique he's convinced will do the trick: Each pie—ultra-thin crust, of course—is cooked on a hot griddle and finished under a cheese-melter. In addition to 20 pizzas, Enoteca's menu also highlights home-cured *salumi*, homemade gelato, and a wine list 500 labels long.

**Otto Enoteca Pizzeria, 1 Fifth Avenue, (212) 674-2044.**

**Chef-owner:**

Mario Batali

**Co-owners:** Joe

Bastianich, Mark  
Ladner, and Jason  
Denton

**Cuisine:** Pizza

**Number of seats:** 150

**Designer:** Lisa Eaton

**Staff attire:** Jeans and  
white shirts

**Music:** REM's *Begin the  
Beguine*, and the latest  
Wilco release, *Yankee  
Hotel Foxtrot*

**Ingredient that turns  
up most frequently on  
the menu:** Mozzarella

**Favorite dish on new  
menu:** "Lardo" pizza—

made with slices of  
fat back pig melted  
on top

**Favorite restaurant  
when not cooking:**

Pearl Oyster Bar and  
Toquesville

**Favorite dish to cook  
at home:** Breakfast for  
my boys, Leo and Benno

**Ice cream, vanilla or  
chocolate:** Vanilla

**Number of kitchens  
previously cooked in:**  
"hmmmm....."

**Biggest cooking  
disaster:** I over-salted  
food for Bob Dylan.

**Most hated food  
trend:** I laugh at trends.

I hate nothing but  
durian.

**Favorite place to go  
when leaving New  
York City:** Rome

**Secret junk-food  
indulgence:** Gelato

**Desired profession, if  
not a chef:** Pool boy

**Most exciting thing  
about new restaurant:**  
It's big and it's beautiful.

**Experimentation the  
new restaurant  
allows that others  
don't:** Bread, tomatoes,  
and cheese...faster,  
faster, faster.

**Other restaurants:**  
Babbo, Lupa, Esca

