

STYLISH & POPULAR

LONGTIME FAVORITE and therefore frequently crowded, **Remi** is one of the pleasantest of North Italian restaurants, and at its best one of the finest. It's also one of the most elegantly decorated with a booze-laden bar

Restaurant Report

area for overflow crowds, distinctive high ceilings, discreet lighting, banquettes against one wall and chairs lining the opposite wall, all flanking starched white-

clothed, candlelit tables. A marvelously executed Venetian mural seductively curves across the entire dining room.

The fare may not always captivate the palate, but is worthwhile nonetheless, offering any number of extraordinary dishes such as eye-popping, tender, succulent veal chop special on a wood platter, accompanied by roasted potatoes and a mini-frypan of crisp vegetables, or the slow roasted rack of lamb deftly simmered in



its own jus served with excellent mashed potatoes, artichoke and eggplant. If rich marrow bones are featured, grab them. Spaghetti Remi cooked extremely al dente coming with oven-dried tomatoes, is fragrant with garlic and hot peppers, and garlicky and herbed Pici—freshly made hand rolled ricotta pasta with fava beans—is soul-satisfying. Paccheri—large cylinder pasta with tomato sauce and fried eggplant is good but would be better prepared al dente as the kitchen usually cooks it, rather than soft as we mistakenly requested.

Chocolate soufflé cake with lashings of freshly made whipped cream is irresistibly rich and beguiling. Assorted homemade cookies are curiously ordinary, except for the illustrious inclusion of almond brittle—a singular sensation. Wine selection is stellar and servers helpfully efficient.

★★★*Remi, 144 W. 54 St., NY. 212-581-4232. L & D. Prix fixe lunch \$20; dinner \$30. A la carte dinner entrees \$22-\$29. Accepts res., AE, DC, IGT, MC, V.*

Scoops: Still time to buy tickets to the **Actor's Fund** fund-raiser honoring Broadway's giant theater magnate **James Nederlander**, celebrating his 80th birthday gala at the NY Sheraton Apr. 29th. Call (212) 245-6570 for tickets and info....A flurry of celebs have descended on the sparkling new W. 58 St. restaurant labeled **Minotaur**.... Down-town's **Giovanni's Atrium** also hosts countless well-known faces.

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WHAT THE ★★★ MEAN

- 0- Farkackt (Beneath contempt)
- 1- Unremarkable but acceptable
- 2- Good
- 3- Very good
- 4- Outstanding

FOR THE RECORD

Restaurant reviews in this column are in no way paid advertising. Restaurants are selected at Landwehr's sole discretion and praised or panned accordingly. Feedback is welcome. Write Landwehr at 823 11th Ave., NY 10019 or call (212) 956-1882 or check-out his web site @www.SheldonLandwehr.com; Email Sheldon@Sheldonlandwehr.com.