

has its fans, the salt-and-pepper wings can't be beat: The excessive, almost assaultive seasoning shocks and awes the taste buds to a degree approached only by the boldest Chinatown chefs. Naturally, as this is the environmentally conscious City Bakery, the wings come from the happiest chickens from the best of homes, which should only enhance your enjoyment.

PRIX FIXE

360

360 Van Brunt Street, Red Hook, Brooklyn
(718-246-0360)

The prix fixe is usually a lazy man's meal, an easy way to mark time at a restaurant without paying much money, or much attention to your food. But laziness is not an option at 360, where just finding the place (in Red Hook) requires the navigational skills of a Kalahari bushman. Once you've finally arrived, the choices on the daily \$20 menu will make your head spin. Should you indulge in the cream-of-mussel soup as an appetizer, or the impossibly fresh quenelles of steak tartare? For an entrée, maybe you'd like the pork belly, braised for days, to a kind of candied tenderness,

or little nodules of monkfish piled over mounds of buttered cabbage? Remember one thing as you deliberate: At 360, it's all worth the effort.

LOBSTER

DAVIDBURKE & DONATELLA

133 East 61st Street
(212-813-2121)

Really good lobster, as any aficionado knows, rarely goes down without a fight. That seems to be the idea behind the inspired "crisp and angry lobster cocktail," served as an appetizer at David Burke's eponymous new restaurant *David Burke & Donatella's* (Donatella is Burke's partner, Donatella Arpaia). Burke steams his lobster, quarters it, rolls the shells in a mixture of hot red Cajun spices, then spikes them upright, in attitudes of anger and distress, on a large flower holder. The result is an inventive, challenging

HOT CHILI: Daisy May's Sixth Avenue cart.

OVERRATED

Sacred Cow

Everyone knows you don't go to **Peter Luger** for the service or the creamed spinach. You go for one thing only: USDA-prime porterhouse, dry-aged for eons under NASA-like conditions. For this, the Brooklyn relic has been coasting along for decades, so insanely popular that one feels lucky to snag a 4:45 reservation three weeks out. One wonders, though, whether said meat—finely marbled and genuinely beefy, for sure, but also barely charred, perplexingly presliced, and served, as at Tad's, under a greasy sheen of brothy fat—is good enough to outweigh the less exceptional aspects of the meal.

ROB PATRONITE

mess of a meal, an ingenious combination of food art and pure eating pleasure. You'll need many napkins to tackle Burke's whisky dish, and possibly a bib. Have all your friends order it, then engage in that rarest of events: an Upper East Side lobster wallow.

STREET FOOD

DAISY MAY'S CHILI CART

Near 40 Wall Street;
Broadway at 39th Street;
Sixth Avenue at 50th Street

Street food is nothing new in New York, but the people dishing it out sure are. Top chefs and restaurateurs have gone berserk over the stuff: Danny Meyer retired his hot-dog stand, only to announce plans for a burger shack. Gray Kunz and Jean-Georges Vongerichten call their hot new collaboration, *Spice Market*, an ode to Southeast Asian street food. And now a young Daniel Boulud-trained chef named Adam Perry Lang is peddling authentic Texas chili from a pushcart. The movable feast, currently available on Wall Street and in two midtown locations, is made with juicy cubes of hand-cut chuck the size of Vegas dice and stewed in an ambrosial mix of chilies including New Mexican hatch, which are to the heat-seeking cognoscenti what black truffles are to Alain Ducasse. A twelve-ounce cup comes with a terrific homemade hot sauce and a fresh flour tortilla; the optional side of beans is Lang's concession to tourists from Cincinnati. It's a bargain at twice the \$6 price, and the most exciting thing to happen to New York street food since falafel.

WINE BAR

IN VINO

215 East 4th Street (212-539-1011)

Luigi Iasilli, proprietor of the well-loved trattoria *Max* and its new wine-bar spin-off, has nothing against Chianti, or Barolo, or Barbera. He just forgoes them in favor of their lesser-known, overlooked brethren, the wines of Southern

