



# An October New York STAYCATION -or- VACATION BLITZ

By Demetra M. Pappas

Recently, a colleague in London told me that she was planning a four-day, off-the-beaten-track trip to New York to celebrate her 30th birthday.

Any culture vulture would be remiss to pass on Broadway. There are, however, theatrical goings on, during dinner, at Bond 45 (154 West 45th Street, 212-869-4545, [www.bond45.com](http://www.bond45.com)), designed by Tony Award winner John Lee Beatty. Formerly the Bond Clothing Store (hence the name) and the former wings of the Olympia (Oscar Hammerstein's 6,000 seat theater) it's now a dark paneled, burgundy deco lamp-lit restaurant starring the food and the staff. Starters include a variety of mozzarella options (house-made, cream-filled burrata is worth a trip to the cardiologist), with a visually spectacular antipasto bar that tempts the taste buds with Sicilian eggplant caponata to weep over, colorful roasted red and yellow peppers, and flash-fried cauliflower served with a dusting of Parmesan). Rightly famed for the butterflied veal chop parmagiana (which could serve a family of four), a more modest petite filet mignon (there is also a full-sized option), is served with a sliver of fresh mozzarella and maitake mushrooms along with a Brunello wine sauce. Young children are enraptured with post-dinner offers of chocolate cookies, served from a baking sheet (the adults can also share).

New York CityPASS ([www.citypass.com](http://www.citypass.com)), good for nine days, saves nearly half the price of the combined cost of admissions to participating attraction, CityPASS holders get to skip most main ticket lines at attractions (which also sell ticket booklets for the same

price as advance purchase). In addition to the Empire State, there are passes to Top of the Rock; a choice between Ellis Island and a Circle Line tour; the Guggenheim and the American Museum of Natural History. Those using (or purchasing) the CityPASS at the Metropolitan Museum would be well advised to view "the Art of Dissent in 17th Century China," which combines painting, calligraphy and poetry, all in the name of subversion (Sept. 7, 2011-Jan. 2, 2012).

An evening at "Crossing the Line 2011," the French Institute Alliance Francaise's (22 East 60th Street, 212-355-6100, [www.fiaf.org](http://www.fiaf.org)) prize-winning annual fall festival (until October 16), is a way to experience three curatorial perspectives (fiction/non-fiction, lectures/performances and endurance/resistance/inspiration) from both sides of the Atlantic.

For those in specific pursuit of Americana, next to Wall Street's Stock Exchange and Federal Hall (where General Washington himself took the oath of office) is the recently launched Milk Street Café (40 Wall Street, 212-542-3633, [www.milkstreetcafe.com](http://www.milkstreetcafe.com)). Based on a survey of Trump employees who wanted cooked (as well as takeout) breakfasts, and deli/sushi/sashimi/vegetarian/non-vegetarian salads/cooked Asian and desserts to die for, Milk Street accommodates all, with this arty, airy multi-seating area deliberately barren of ticker-tape.

Trained historian and librarian, Bob

Gelber is a born storyteller, who founded Walkin' NY (212-349-7916, [www.walkinny.com](http://www.walkinny.com)), with guided walks of the Brooklyn Bridge and hipster DUMBO. Gossipy tales, and factual information, make Gelber's walks fun. They also include off-the-beaten track locales, such as Brooklyn Bridge Park, a jewel.

The New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players, affectionately known as NYGASP, will be taking up residency at Peter Norton Symphony Space (2535 Broadway at 95th Street, 212-864-5400, [www.nygasp.org](http://www.nygasp.org)) this autumn for its 2011/2012 season. At the season opener on Sunday, October 16, Artistic Director Albert Bergeret and his merry crew will present a champagne gala performance of G&S favorites and take impromptu audience requests (there is a similar set up for the New Year's gala). In addition to G&S favorites, the Players will offer some less frequently performed options, such as the November 13th performance of The Grand Duke (also known as The Statutory Duel), a comedic opera of an acting troupe engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow the miserly and mean spirited grand duke of a small German duchy.

The perfect gift for the boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife, whose work prevented them from joining in the fun: Reuel Golden's new 560-page provocative photo masterpiece, New York: Portrait of a City (TASCHEN).