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NEW YORK

## Chef's Favorites *Hearty Winter Fare*

### Marea

**Recommended: Prix Fixe**

Price: \$89

Style: Italian (Seafood)

Number of Courses: 4

Neighborhood: Columbus Circle

**Michael's favorite winter ingredient: Chestnuts**

The newest in the family of Italian restaurants owned by Chris Cannon and Chef Michael White, Marea's upscale seafood-centric cuisine and Central Park South location have procured its place as the golden child among its brothers: Alto (Northern Italian) and Convivo (Southern Italian). The pre-economic meltdown standards of fine dining present in both the pricing and selections of bounty from the sea, earned it three stars from *The New York Times* and three more from *New York Magazine's* Adam Platt, who called it a "glittering seafood establishment." There is however a wonderfully affordable way to meander through the vastness of White's cuisine offerings, and it is even recommended at the bottom of the first menu page – get ready for an \$89 seafood excursion.

The menu at Marea is hewn from a plethora of options. But putting together your four-course experience will begin with a hard choice as the first course can come from either the *crudo*, *ostriche*, or *antipasti* sections – which consists of almost 30 different dishes. The *crudo* (raw fish) at Marea has been the source of many a digression among critics and diners, and is also the subject of a 20-seat bar equipped with back-lit honey-colored onyx and shiny wire chairs. The *ostriche* (oysters) section comes with six raw oysters from a selection of multiple locales, and the real beauty, the *antipasti* section, is home to such creations as crispy monkfish cheeks in gooey poached egg, mushroom, and garlic. From here, it's on to the much less staggering choice of handmade pasta, an entrée of fish or meat (go with the fish – the branzino, black bass, or turbot if they've got them) and of course the meal is ended by the choice of desserts crafted by the same celebrated sweet maker at Alto and Convivo, Heather Bertinetti.

