



NEW YORK

Charles "Chuck" Perelmutter works the bar at his new SoHo restaurant, Le Pescadeux.

PHOTOS BY JOE RAY/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



The prescription julep at Fort Defiance, a new Brooklyn bar whose owner is a drinks purist.



Native son Rick Snell plays bluegrass at Jalopy in Brooklyn's Red Hook section.

# small wonders

Where so many things can seem so big, impersonal, and expensive, the city offers intimate, delectable tidbits for the visitor and the native

BY JOE RAY | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Day one in New York has all the rain we need for the Sunday blues. Two of us stand under the awning of a new SoHo restaurant, waiting for friends to show up for brunch.

"Could I get something for you guys?" says the man inside who has just delivered tasty-looking omelets to a table of customers.

"No, thanks. We're waiting for the gang."

A minute later, the man brings out two flutes of champagne. Just like that. Never to be seen on the bill.

Blues? What blues?

The first real feeling that I was in New York had come the night before, at the big window of a 10th-floor Brooklyn Heights apartment. I kept the lights off, and there, across the river, were the skyscrapers of the southern tip of Manhattan. Straight ahead was Ellis Island, and next to that, the tiny off-angle lights of the Statue of Liberty's crown and flame. It was a rush of emotion.

Still, after months in big cities, I'm yearning for something small, personable, and budget-friendly. I want a quiet grandeur to bring New York to a human scale, and Le Pescadeux is a perfect start.

"I base the way I run my restaurant on my mother," says the man with the champagne, Charles "Chuck" Perelmutter, the restaurant's owner. "Dad was a bit of a dry bone, but Mom was a gregarious person. If you take care of the customer, the customer takes care of you."

Perelmutter, 58, explains that his mother, Anne, was the first person to open a fancy food store in his native Montreal, and in terms of gastronomy and an ability to make you feel at home, the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

"Dollars are OK," he says in a light tone, "but I need to be liked."

This isn't Perelmutter's first act; for years, he ran the similarly-named Le Pescadou restaurant. "This way, people know I haven't died," he jokes. Decades ago, however, he came to the city to act. He's known best for what he calls "being the first spoken role in a music video," telling Bon Jovi

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## We looked so savvy, but here's how we made it on the cheap

By Patricia Harris and David Lyon  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

It takes attitude to travel proudly on a budget. Remember that you're not cheap — you're practical, maybe even savvy. We know. For the last two years we gallivanted across Spain writing two guidebooks, pinching pennies while passing ourselves off as well-heeled travelers. As we became experts on Spain, we also became adept in the down-and-dirty side of low-cost travel. But since guidebooks don't address day-to-day vicissitudes, we've kept our coping strategies to ourselves — until now. Welcome to our real-life, behind-the-scenes tips (at least the ones we'll own up to) for surviving and thriving on the road.



Aged cheese can survive in the trunk of your rental car.



The plonk of every place tastes better right there.

### 1. Cheese is your friend

We bought our first Spanish cheese at a rural farmers' market because we thought the woman and her pet goats were cute. The delicious small cheese (about 2 pounds) kept us going for more than a week through afternoon hunger pangs and missed meals. We've been buying aged farmstead cheeses ever since because we can toss them in the trunk of the car and slice off a piece whenever we want. When we tire of the taste, we remind ourselves that it would cost four times as much at Whole Foods, so we should enjoy it while we can. This practice doesn't just apply to cheese-making regions, though there's hardly a corner of Europe that doesn't make cheese. Wherever you go, indulge in a local, traditional food — preferably one that evolved before the advent of refrigeration.



Assemble a feast from the shelves of the grocery store.



Visit churches before Mass, when entry is usually free.



The best museums have great art and good loots.



Taking a nice hotel room can replenish scrimping spirits.

(FROM TOP) DAVID LYON/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE (1, 4, 5, 6); ISTOCKPHOTO (2); PATRICIA HARRIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE (3)

### 2. Everything goes better with wine

Nothing compensates for a long day of getting lost on goat paths in the wrong set of mountains like a cold bottle of white wine. Or a lukewarm bottle of red. The local plonk is inevitably a disappointment when you bring it home, but it always tastes good where it's made. Many wineries in Europe will even fill your screw-top water bottles from a tank that looks like an overgrown gas pump. And it's usually about the same price as gasoline — under \$2 per liter. Of course, you can also buy good wines (already bottled!) at higher prices, but they don't take well to the jostling of constant travel. Drink 'em if you've got 'em. **TIPS, Page M2**

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TC GEIST

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