



5/21/07

The Underground Gourmet

11:27 am

The Underground Gourmet Taps Pig's Ass As Sandwich of the Week



The Jennifer Lopez of Cuban sandwiches.

Photo: Melissas Hom

Three words the Underground Gourmet never imagined he'd hear bandied about in a nice, respectable restaurant: Pig's Ass Sandwich. And yet, there he was the other night at the brand-new Casellula Cheese & Wine Café surrounded by otherwise upstanding citizens speaking to their waiters in low, excited voices and putting in their orders thusly: "I'd like the Pig's Ass Sandwich, please."

The work not of Beavis and Butthead but two fully grown men (owner Brian Keyser, who ran the cheese program at the Modern, and consultant Ben Granger, who's worked at Arzak in Spain and Geoffrey Zakarian's Town), the Pig's Ass Sandwich, like a lot of good sandwiches these days, is a play on the Cuban. Never mind that said ass is really two types of pork butt (a.k.a. pork shoulder), one that's been brined and glazed with maple syrup like a baked ham, the other one rubbed with a slew of spices and Peet's coffee and then slow-roasted and shredded like pulled pork. Given the restaurant's name, it's no surprise that there are also two types of cheese on a Pig's Ass Sandwich: Fiscalini Cheddar from California and the French wheat-rubbed variety called Fol Epi, not to mention Rick's Pick's pickles. It comes on Sullivan St. Bakery ciabatta cut into strips and then it's meticulously smooched in a sandwich press and served with a cup of chipotle aioli.

Although Casellula only opened a few weeks ago, sales of Pig's Ass Sandwiches have been brisk. "I think a lot of people order it because they want to say 'Pig's Ass Sandwich' out loud," explains Keyser, who says that these brazen exhibitionists usually follow their requests with a giggle. —Rob Patronite & Robin Raisfeld

Casellula Cheese & Wine Café, 401 W. 52nd St., nr. Ninth Ave.; 212-247-8137

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