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A DAD AND HIS DAUGHTERS, LOVING LIFE IN NEW YORK CITY

wednesday, june 6

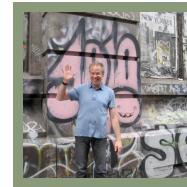
Casellula



It's only been about 18 hours since I polished off the last of my heavenly, cheesy creations at Casellula, but already I'm craving more... especially of that Pig's Ass Sandwich, a definite nominee for my favorite dish of the year.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Casellula is a Cheese and Wine Cafe that

about me



Scott

I'm 44 years old, a divorced dad, living in Manhattan. Five nights every other week my daughters

live with me. Bo is 13, Co is 10, and they are amazing. This is about the stuff we do.

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opened about a month ago in a pleasant, airy room in Hell's Kitchen. The staff couldn't be more excited about the place, manifested both in their friendly, infectious enthusiasm—server Perri sparkled, fromager Tia Keenan stopped by for a chat, as did the host, as did a young man whom I guess was a line cook—as well as in the obvious love that goes into this food. Basically? From start to finish, this was one of the best meals I've had in a while.



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I began with three fun and flavorful Chistorras in a Blanket, spicy, skinny chorizos wrapped in crispy pastry, topped with a lovely radish pico de gallo that was sliced so thin, it was like eating vinegery flower petals. Next came my "composed cheese plate", the excellent Gratinéed Comté—a generous slab, soft and nutty—combined with a pile of rich oxtail rillet, glazed little onions, perfectly pickled ramps and slices of fennel, and enough slices of toast to scoop it all up. I loved both of these dishes. And then my dinner got even better.





It was the Pig's Ass Sandwich that got me in the door to Casellula (New York magazine's Underground Gourmet gave it a rave), and it'll be the Pig's Ass Sandwich that keeps me coming back. Combining fatty, juicy, marinated pork butt with two kinds of heady cheese—cheddar and foie gras (like a swiss)—and sweet B&B pickles, all pressed together on wonderfully crunchy ciabatta and served with a side of chipotle aoli, this pseudo-Cuban sets off beautiful explosions of flavors and textures and amazingness in your mouth. Finally came dessert, an intense Lemon Tart with roasted pistachios inside and out, paired with a mound of goat cheese ice cream which, honestly, I wanted to be more interesting, but which did provide a nice creamy coldness to things.



Casellula is located on 52nd Street, just west of Ninth Avenue. In addition

to the prepared dishes menu from which I ordered (and, by the way, the amount of food I got would have been enough for two), there's also an extensive cheese menu, divided into sections such as Bloomy, Uncooked, Washed and Blue, from which Tia would be happy to prepare a flight or two. This place hasn't really been discovered yet—there were plenty of open tables last night between 7:30 and 8:30—but with food this good, it's only a matter of time. Enjoy it in peace while you can.

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posted by scott at 3:17 pm

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