

New York
RESIDENT



October 2, 2006 - Dining

Secret Stores Where Top Chefs Shop

By Sylvie Bigar

Ever wondered where the city's top chefs do their shopping? We spoke to a few of them and got them to share their (sometimes) secret sources with us.

Taking a few minutes out of his frantic day—he can serve 260 people at a time—Michael Schulson, executive chef at Buddakan, the new hip cavernous eatery/lounge just north of the Meat Packing area on Ninth Avenue gets all his knives from Korin Fine Japanese Tableware and Chef Knives on Warren Street. “If you ask them, they will also show you their secret catalog with all kinds of wares imported from Japan,” says chef Schulson. “We bought ceramic steamers and designed our own custom-made bento boxes.” But when he needs plastic sheets to make terrines or rubber-made stencils, the chef lines up on Canal Street with taxi drivers needing to recover their seats or buy new mats, at Canal Plastics Center, the plastic gurus.

Patricia Yeo, co-owner and executive chef at Sapa where she specializes in modern French Southeast Asian food wanted to become a biochemist until she took a cooking class and discovered she liked the chemistry in the kitchen more than in the lab. “For kitchen supplies, I go to the Bowery,” she said. “I particularly like Win on Lafayette Street because they have a huge variety of products.” Whether you need a one cup bowl or a 500 cups bowl, they have it all. Don't expect much grace or help though, unless you're wearing whites. For meat, Yeo swears by Florence Prime Meats on Jones Street. In business since March 6, 1936, the butchers still cut everything to order and by hand.

Gotham Bar & Grill's sous-chef, Adam Longworth mentions that Korin also give sharpening lessons. “They carry knives from \$60 to \$6000.” For cookwares and kitchen accessories, Longworth praises JB Prince on East 31st Street. He finds the staff very accommodating and the catalogue self-explanatory and easy to navigate. For the spices, he will send you straight to Kalustyan's on Lexington Avenue. A real emporium, it offers everything you need for Indian or Middle-Eastern

cuisine. "If you want top of the line grocery items, go to Garden of Eden on 14th Street, the store is pristine, they take a lot of pride in the quality of their products. Finally, when you crave Italian food, Chef Longworth has the place to go: "Raffeto's on Houston Street, the best fresh pasta in town." _Michael Lipp, executive chef at Petrossian on 58th Street likes to shop at The Cellar at Macy's. "There are always good deals to be had on knives, blenders and mixers. But a trip to the shops on Division Street in Chinatown can yield great finds too.

Scott Campbell, chef-owner at the now defunct @SQC said he likes the selection of pans on the 2nd floor of Zabar's. "You can get bargains on eBay and Craigslist but for basics, we go to Chef Restaurant Supplies on the Bowery. For produce, nothing beats the big Fairways on 125th Street and for Japanese items, I like Katagiri on 59th Street."

When shopping for Rosa Mexicano restaurants, culinary director Roberto Santibanez often makes the trek to Kitchen Market on lower 8th Avenue for dry chilies, herbs and spices. "But for fresh Mexican produce, I head uptown," said Santibanez, "to the bodegas on Lexington and 102nd Street. They sell all the goods I cannot get anywhere else!"

Andrew Karasz, executive chef at Django in Midtown is as passionate about his shopping as he is about his cooking. "At Kalustyan's, I get a special black pepper papadum that I serve with a foie gras and fig dish," he said. "At Ottomanelli's, I find alternate meat such as sweetbreads and veal kidneys. When it comes to pasta or Italian cheeses, it's Dipalo Dairy on Grand Street." Open since 1910, this latteria has become an institution in what remains of Little Italy, with tons of products lining the shelf and the friendliest attitude. You can taste everything! Feel like fish? Chef Karasz recommends Blue Star Seafood on Chrystie Street. "It's the cleanest place in Chinatown, they're open on Sundays and their prices are fabulous. When I shop for food, I go see what looks good, and then I build my menu around it."