

BAMbill

July August 2003

ENCORE

FOOD ●●●

By Brian Scott Lipton

The dog days of summer will turn into the cat's meow once you find yourself enjoying a fabulous meal at any of these wonderful new restaurants.

Broadway babies seeking first-rate pre-theater dining need look no further than **Academy** (224 West 51st Street, 212-262-0105). Nowhere else have I sampled delectable scallops lightly crusted with a mélange of capers, olives and sun-dried tomato, or delicious mussels served out of the shell with a fragrant pesto sauce. Pastas here are equally unusual, including ethereal gnocchi made with bread crumbs and sauced with an addictive wild boar ragu or rich-as-can-be rigatoni stuffed with ground veal and topped with a truffle cream sauce. A nicely cooked duck breast is enlivened with a crispy polenta cake and a generous helping of pearl onions. For a finale, the hands-down winner is crespole, a chocolate-filled crepe accented with a grapefruit/grappa sauce that makes a decadent yet refreshing ending to the feast.