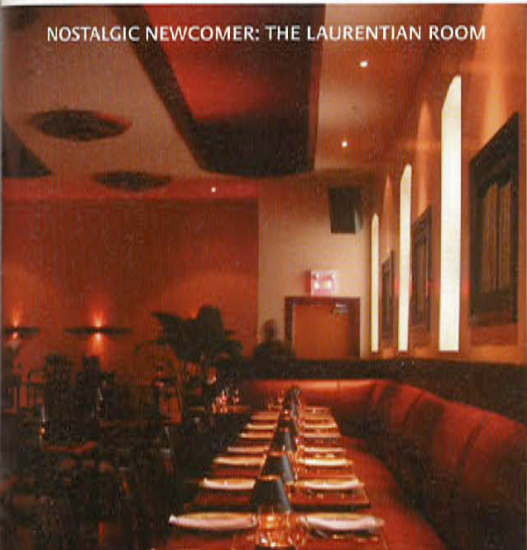


NOSTALGIC NEWCOMER: THE LAURENTIAN ROOM



TORONTO

Luxe Libations

One of Toronto's haute hideaways, **The Laurentian Room**, is filled with character and characters. Multitasking as both bar and restaurant, this Deco-style locale, much like Cinderella, changes around the stroke of midnight, when its auspicious dinner crowd — enjoying an ever-changing menu of eclectic Canadian cuisine — turns into a fashion-savvy flock. Cocktail enthusiasts indulge in a path-not-taken drink menu (juleps, mojitos and caipirinhas are standards) and a champagne-by-the-bottle selection that would make P. Diddy proud. But Laurentian's real clincher is its stunning Al Capone-inspired ambience, which remains true to the jazz joint it once was in the thirties, replete with nostalgic tinted mirrors, raised fireplaces and a sleek thirty-five-foot-long bar the colour of black cherry. Across town, in the swanky King West strip, champion chef Susur Lee has opened up his second stylish — and more affordable — option for foodies and scencesters alike. And with a menu of meant-to-be-shared, delicious, innovative tapas and a décor scheme along the lines of Lucite tables amid Japan-esque murals, **Lee** restaurant is bound to satisfy the eye as well as the palate. — *Elio Iannacci*

The Laurentian Room: 51A Winchester Street, Toronto; 416.925.8680. Lee: 603 King Street West, Toronto; 416.504.7867