

Diner en Blanc, secret French dinner party, debuts in NYC as guests await location

BY AMANDA P. SIDMAN
DAILY NEWS FEATURE REPORTER

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Diner en Blanc's flash-mobbed dinners have taken place in major cities like Amsterdam, Montreal, Berlin and Paris - but will debut in New York City on Thursday.

There are dinner parties, and then there are diner parties. On Thursday, 1,000 lucky New Yorkers will get to take part in the 23-year-old French tradition of Diner en Blanc, making its Big Apple debut.

The soirée will function much like it does in Paris, where diners, dressed in all white, will attend a picnic-style dinner party.

Everyone brings his own food, tables, chairs and glassware to a secret but public location, which is revealed shortly before the start of event.

Although in New York diners won't be allowed to bring their own alcohol as they are at the European dinners, guests will be able to order up to two bottles of wine per table on site.

That's not deterring Aymeric Pasquier, whose father founded the event and who is excited about bringing the fête to Manhattan.

"New York seemed like an obvious choice as the next location," says Pasquier, who has flash-mobbed the dinner in Lyon, Amsterdam, Munich, Zurich, Berlin and Montreal. "New Yorkers are so open to new trends, it's the ideal place to launch something new and exciting. If New York likes something, the States will follow."

The boîte always occurs in a public space, which diners are expected to leave just as clean as it was before they arrived.

"Part of the purpose of Diner en Blanc is for diners to get a chance to experience a public space in their city in a different way," says Pasquier. "It's a way to appreciate the beauty that exists in our own backyards."

Although he was tight-lipped about the premiere venue, he did hint that it's a space that will easily be viewed by pedestrians and the passing public.

"The point isn't to be isolated," he explains. "It's meant to be integrated into the New York City community."

Like all good dinner parties, this one has had its share of drama. Because of an overwhelming demand for tickets on their site's server, 30,000 people were accidentally given tickets, although there were only 1,000 spots available.

"We didn't expect such an enthusiastic response," says Pasquier. "To get such a positive feedback before our first event was very surprising."

But as Pasquier knows, the real test of the event's popularity will be tonight, when New Yorkers decide whether to make the event a tradition of our own.

"Right now, we only have expectations and possibilities," says Pasquier.

"But as of tomorrow, hopefully we'll have a new home."

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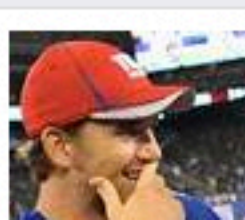
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