

# Wake-up Calls

Here's the latest news on the city's ever-evolving Sunday brunch scene.

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When the weather turns cold, I grow seriously resistant to rolling out of my nice warm bed on a Sunday morning and hauling my copy of *The New York Times* to a restaurant like the **Saddle Ranch Chop House** ([see review](#)), no matter how generous those breakfast platters can be.

But I have friends with delusions of grandeur, and on Sunday mornings, they insist on dressing up and going out in public. **Bob**, for example, is always voting for the expensive buffet brunch at **Benton's Steak & Chop House** at the top of the Westin Crown Center Hotel (1 Pershing Road). That requires me not only to look *nice* — it's a starched-shirt-and-polished-shoes crowd in there — but also to blow a big wad of cash. I hate choosing between an overdue oil change for my car or eggs Benedict in a silver chafing dish.

My friend **Patrick** is a lot more flexible. He'll eat anywhere on Sunday — even **McDonald's** — as long as I'm paying for it. **Marilyn** likes to be fussed over, which is why she loves **Café Maison** (408 East 63rd Street), where the staff dotes on the regulars. Bob likes it, too, because there's a cold buffet in addition to the hot dishes that you order off a limited brunch menu.

That's also how the new Sunday brunch works at **Avenues Bistro Brookside** (338 West 63rd Street), which now offers, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 11 breakfast choices for \$12.95 and five lunch entrées priced at \$15.95. The added attraction is that the cost of those meals includes the well-laden "brunch bar," a table heaped with chef **Joe Birch**'s excellent pastries, fresh fruit, croissants, cheeses and sliced meats, marinated mozzarella balls and various chilled salads.

It helps that the coffee is good and the servers are attractive. If I'm grumpy and bleary-eyed on a Sunday morning, I won't bite into the most luscious cinnamon roll if the java isn't jolting and the waiter pouring it looks like **David Gest**.

The breakfast selections include a traditional eggs Benedict and a takeoff on veal Oscar that adds crabmeat and asparagus to the Benedict (but no béarnaise sauce, alas) and a sexy number called eggs Sardou — made with poached eggs, artichokes and sautéed spinach — that are **worth getting out of bed for**.