

GOOD EATING

Fare Plus a Fireplace

Christer's Resembles an Alpine Ski Lodge; Jack Rose Mixes Rec Room and Lounge

Recent unseasonably warm weather to the contrary, winter begins Friday. If the season inspires you to cozy up to a fireplace, these six places can warm the spirit, if not the toes.

ADA **

(212) 371-6060; 208 East 58th Street (Second Avenue); \$\$\$; Review: 1/17/01.

This Westernized reworking of traditional Indian flavors may frustrate purists, but the results disarm criticism. The elegant dining room has a wood-burning fireplace near the door.

BISTRO TEN 18

(212) 662-7600; 1018 Amsterdam Avenue (110th Street); \$; \$25 and Under; 9/19/01.

With its welcoming staff, handsome bar and stone fireplace, Bistro Ten 18 is a neighborhood restaurant that often succeeds. The menu of American regional and Continental dishes offers some fine renditions, like meaty crab cakes and a spinach salad with roasted red peppers and blue cheese.

CHRISTER'S **

(212) 974-7224; 145 West 55th Street; (near Seventh Avenue); \$\$\$; Review: 12/18/94.

A massive stone fireplace makes this inviting Swedish restaurant feel like a rustic Alpine ski lodge, but Christer Larsson, the chef and owner, specializes in seafood, salmon in particular. His smorgasbord is wonderful while his fricadelles (Swedish meatballs made of veal), are hearty and comforting. Desserts like apple leaf, a thin apple tart with caramel sauce, offer perfect endings.

JACK ROSE *

(212) 247-7518; 771 Eighth Avenue (47th Street); \$\$\$; Review: 8/2/00.

Jack Rose is an artful exercise in nostalgia. The smooth dark wood floors and brown leather booths feel like the 1930's. The huge horizontal stone fireplace, polished driftwood accents and rec room paneling evoke

postwar suburbia with a touch of lounge. The restaurant specializes in seafood, steaks and chops.

METSOVO

(212) 873-2300; 65 West 70th Street (between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue); \$\$; \$25 and Under; 2/16/00.

Instead of the seafood commonly found in the city's Greek restaurants, Metsovo, named after a town in northwestern Greece, specializes in hearty stews, roasts and savory pies from the hills that form a spine through that region. The dining room has worn brick walls, a rustic floor, a cozy fireplace and dozens of candles creating a romantic glow.

TAVERN ON JANE

(212) 675-2526; 31 Eighth Avenue (Jane Street); \$; \$25 and Under; 9/6/00.

Tavern on Jane is a convivial, unpretentious neighborhood bar and grill. The skewed angle of the old floor, the nicotine-laminated brick walls and ceiling, and the fireplace create a cheery, almost Dickensian image. Although the atmosphere tends to outweigh the familiar food, the menu is a reliable step above pub grub.

WINE UNDER \$20

Cassis, Cocoa And Harmony

Rupert & Rothschild's elegant 1998 Classique, a South African blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot, outperforms similar, highly touted but pricier Bordeaux reds. The intense cassis flavor and whiffs and tastes of cocoa are lovely. Claret aflicionados will admire the smoothness.

Park Avenue Liquor Shop, 292 Madison Avenue (41st Street), charges \$20.

HOWARD G. GOLDBERG