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LUNCHBOX | Aquavit

Back to Stockholm

Beating a culinary pioneer at his own game can be tough, and the newest executive chef at Aquavit wisely doesn't try.

Instead of the pyrotechnics associated with former chef and still part-owner Marcus Samuelsson, who fused Swedish cuisine with global flavors and French technique, Marcus Jernmark steers Aquavit toward the homeland. "It's all about going back to the roots, telling the true story of what modern Scandinavian cooking is about," Mr. Jernmark says.

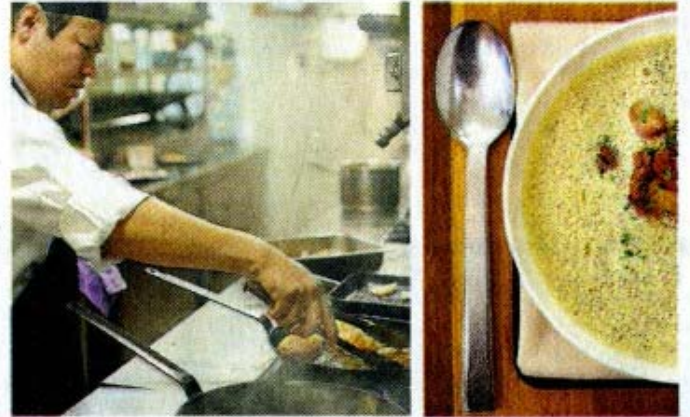
That means a seasonal menu similar to what fine

diners in Stockholm enjoy. Start with a rich chanterelle veloute soup (\$10) or cold smoked salmon with paddlefish caviar on a potato cake (\$12). Try a glass of house-made aquavit, the Scandinavian spirit, with seared Chatham cod (\$25) or classic Swedish meatballs (\$19).

While the menu is new, the bistro area up front remains stylishly modern; the more formal dining area, with scruffy floors and wooden paneling, still resembles a corporate board room.

Aquavit, 65 E. 55th St., serves lunch Monday through Friday, noon to 2:30 p.m.; 212-307-7311.

—Craig Karmin



Above, line cook Oscar Mendez and chanterelle veloute with pork belly and pearl onions. Below, smoked salmon (left), aquavit and beer



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