

Gene's Restaurant
73 West 11th Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenue)
New York, NY 10011

Good Food Is in the Genes...but There's a Cell Problem

I had been hearing for a long time from many people about how wonderful this West Village restaurant is. I finally tried it and all the fuss is justified.

Gene's has been open since 1919 and maintains the kind of old school New York charm that seems harder and harder to find these days. Best of all, they offer a prix fixe lunch for \$19.95 and prix fixe dinner for \$29.95 that include appetizer, entrée, dessert, and coffee or tea. Of course, the great prices would mean little if the food wasn't good, and thankfully the food is excellent.

For my appetizer, I had the chopped liver, which was rich and satisfying, served with raw onion and Melba toast. It was not like traditional chopped liver, however, having more of a smooth liverwurst quality. But I love liverwurst, so I was happy with the dish, which is really chicken pate. Two of my dining companions had the minestrone for a starter, which was quite good, with lots of nice pasta in a tasty tomato broth.

I chose filet of sole Meuniere for my main course. The substantial serving was buttery, lemony, and served with nice potatoes and vegetables.

I was too stuffed to eat dessert but I did taste the chocolate mousse cake, which was sinfully rich.

This is not the kind of place you go to for a quick bite. The atmosphere is sophisticated yet relaxed. You can literally spend the whole afternoon here having a leisurely lunch, but you will feel like you need a nap afterwards.

My only quibble with Gene's – and it is a big one actually – is that disrupting our quiet lunch was some fat slob whose cell phone rang and took the call at his table. He was so loud and rude, I had to resist causing a scene. I summoned our waiter over and told him he should not allow this. The waiter smiled and laughed and acted like a jerk. He said there was nothing he could do. Oh, really? How about tell the guy to take his call outside? If I was not with three others celebrating a birthday, I would have walked out of the restaurant. In retrospect, I should have taken my cell phone and tried to be louder than the moron at the other table.

I have no tolerance for cell phones or children in nice restaurants. And I have no desire to spend money in restaurants that do nothing about them. Would I go back to Gene's? Probably, because the food is delicious and reasonably priced. But I will not forget poor management and service for refusing to silence a customer who was disturbing others. This was reflected in the tip. Actually, now that I think of it, screw Gene's. Go to La Petite Auberge instead – they have a similar \$19.95 prix fixe lunch and I have a feeling

they would not tolerate someone yakking away on a cell phone and drowning out the sounds of Edith Piaf.

A restaurant's top priority should be the comfort of its diners. Gene's obviously did not care about ours. Don't go here.

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