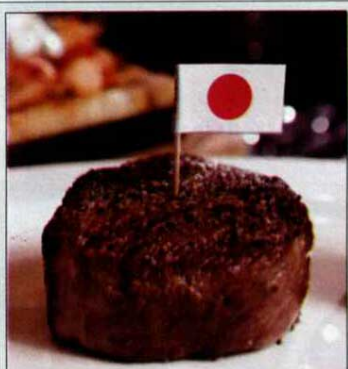


# CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS®

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## KOBE CLUB

68 W. 58th St.  
(between Fifth and Sixth avenues)  
(212) 644-5623



**CUISINE** Steakhouse

**WINES** 175 choices, 14 by the glass

**DRESS** No code

**NOISE LEVEL** Lively

**PRICE RANGE** \$25-\$195

**WINE MARKUP** 90%-200%

**CREDIT CARDS** All major

**RESERVATIONS**  
Recommended

**HOURS** Dinner, Mon.-Sat.,  
5:30-11:30 p.m.

★★★★= Outstanding  
★★★★= Excellent  
★★★= Very good  
★= Good

## Kobe Club makes the cut

TABLE  
TALK

by Bob Lape



**EN GARDE!** The Marquis de Sade would feel right at home in the dark, leather-studded interior, which is punctuated by 2,000 samurai swords suspended from the ceiling.

## Newest steakhouse entrant slashes its way onto scene; wine list reads like a book

**W**ITH THE DEBUT of Kobe Club, two of New York's most impressive meateries now face each other across West 58th Street.

Jeffrey Chodorow's new restaurant and Quality Meats, from the father-son team of Alan and Michael Stillman, may now parry and thrust with swords and butchers' cleavers.

To dine in the Kobe Club's main sanctum is to know how James Bond feels when Ernst Stavro Blofeld's latest diabolical contrivance threatens him with imminent dismemberment. Dodd Mitchell Design of Los Angeles turned Mr. Chodorow's former Mix on its head—from white to very, very dark—suspending (securely, we hope) 2,000 samurai swords from the ceiling, points down.

The Marquis de Sade would love Kobe Club's intimate, sensual, leather-clad décor. The sleek tables are patrolled by a staff uniformed in black, of course.

Kobe lives up to its name big-time, with some of the most remark-

able and lush beef to hit plates here to date. There are dozens of styles for presenting this rich meat, which is bred and raised in Japan, Australia and America with methods that ensure the highest level of fat marbling.

The tartare, prepared tableside, blends beef from all three sources. American Kobe beef cheeks are superb in ravioli bathed in truffle broth. Speaking of truffles calls up another exercise in extravagance: black truffles, sprinkled over extra-thick applewood-smoked bacon.

But back to beef, which can be mixed and matched to compose mighty mains. Two guests may order the Emperor's Flight—a platter with 4 ounces each of filet and strip, plus a 10-ounce rib-eye, all sourced from Japan—for \$295. But then, a 28-ounce Australian Wagyu porterhouse rings the gong at \$390.

As mouth-mesmerizingly marvelous as these dishes are, I must also report that Charlie's sizzling sliced steak—named for Mr. Chodorow's partner, entertainment tycoon Charlie Walk—rests comfortably and deliciously on a bed of roasted Vidalia onions and whole roasted garlic. The dish, for two, is a mere \$52.

There are culinary adventures other than beef. Sumptuous starters (\$11 to \$32) include a crab cake “double stuffer,” a hamburger-formatted bundle of joy served with

garlic and ginger aioli, and sake-cured salmon with tobiko cream cheese and white truffle deviled quail eggs.

Other entrées of note, for good and ill: plump, fresh Dover sole meunière and roasted Kurobuta pork chop with Japanese chili pepper apple sauce. Mustard-rubbed organic chicken proved dry.

Among sides (\$7 to \$14), creamed corn with sake and white truffles is a must, and the varied takes on whipped potatoes—including wasabi and shiso, and lobster and black truffle—may be ordered by the trio. Sounds like a plan.

For dessert, Baked Alaska is decent eye candy and chocolate layer cake meets most standards, but by that time, the digestive system may be screaming, “Stop!”

Kobe Club's list of well-chosen wines is a veritable novella. Rather precious categories are assigned to wines available “by the stem.” Sparklers become Starry Beginnings, whites are headlined Reed and Amber, and reds are grouped under Crimson and Twilight.

Nonetheless, the list, which contains gems like the “earthen masterpiece” of Aldo Conterno's 1995 Bussia Soprana Barolo (\$550), demands to be savored slowly and passionately.

The descriptive fervor—or fever—continues. A Sauvignon Blanc is “intriguing, complex and a bit intellectual”; a Chenin Blanc is “mysterious and ethereal”; and a Syrah is parsed as “fat and dripping

with bacon, licorice, coffee and candied blackberries. Not for the faint-hearted!” Others are “astonishing,” “immense,” “enormously concentrated,” “powerfully seductive” and even “consistently delirious.”

To fully appreciate the wine list might mean plunging headlong into the verbal swordplay, which likens the making of wine that affords “oblivious rapture” to forging a great blade. Holy Toledo!