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Plein Sud, meaning "Far South," is a contemporary Southern French brasserie that brings affordable and authentic cuisine to the glitz and grit of an evolving southern Tribeca neighborhood. Executive Chef, Ed Cotton, was a finalist on Bravo's Top Chef and is a veteran of Todd English, Laurent Tourondel, and Daniel Boulud's empires. Here he's created an open and airy place that's inviting and comfortably chic for late night fare and weekend respite. Plein Sud is ensconced in The Smyth Hotel, a glamorous addition to West Broadway that blends nicely with its surroundings, adding a bit of subdued sparkle.

Plein Sud's weekend brunch includes Brioche French Toast with sautéed bananas and a perfect bit of char, you may need to request an additional ramekin of maple syrup to finish these hearty slices. The Eggs Norwegian includes perfectly cooked eggs layered lightly atop savory smoked salmon. The hollandaise melts nicely across the dish, without cloying the plate as some thicker concoctions have been known to do. The oven baked flat breads are a delight for the senses. The Provencal is an imminently shareable dish with slow roasted tomato, herb goat cheese, and dollops of hearty olive Tapenade. Shaved ribbons of fennel drape the dish.

Chef Cotton eschews the traditional methods for many of the familiar dishes here, which trick the eye and delight the tongue. The Salade Nicoise, with truly buttery butter lettuce, features albacore tuna slow cooked in olive oil. The tarragon vinaigrette lightly glides on the tongue with flavor that does not overpower the other ingredients. The grape tomatoes are a perfect confit of skinless fruit that delights with farm freshness.

Drinks here run the gamut, and their Bloody Mary has just the right amount of spice which so often isn't the case when a bar tries too hard to please. Here though, their Bloody Bull with beef broth, lemon juice, vodka, and Worcestershire is a must—smooth and bold, the flavors will have you wishing every Bloody Mary was made with their recipe.

Iced Coffee is a little more special with several coffee beans floating atop your cream. Desserts include the Tarte Au Citron -- a remarkable lemon curd with seared-to-perfection whipped meringue nestled on a bed of semi-roasted coconut; the accompanying coconut milk ice cream is a smooth and creamy companion for the plate. Their Tribeca -- with caramel, banana cream, and a peanut butter ganache -- is supremely rich, and best shared. Bring a friend or three to enjoy this delicious destination. **N**

PLEIN SUD

words and photos by Glenn Johnson

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Brunch is served from 11am-5pm

on Saturday and Sunday

