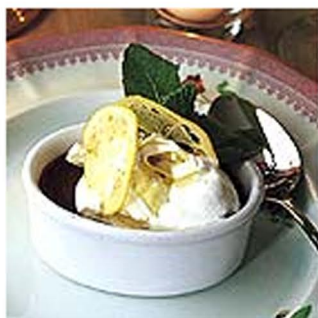




Katy Sparks and Female Chefs in NY

Gothamist will leave Amanda Hesser critiquing to [Eurotrash](#) and, instead, we'd like to take a look at [Katy Sparks](#), the new chef at Upper West Side restaurant [Compass](#), which received 1 star in [Hesser's review today](#). Sparks seemed to be the only reason why [Compass](#) received any stars at all, because while Hesser notes the atmosphere, once "clean and cool," is "worn," the sound level is loud and service is "[a]t its worst, like a T.G.I. Friday's," she says Sparks "is holding her head high, turning out a menu that is distinctively her own." Katy Sparks returning to restaurant cooking was exciting news to Gothamist, not only because we loved her old SoHo restaurant, [Quilty's](#), but because she's one of the few female name chefs in the city, even based on her tiny restaurant. Yes, there's [Lidia Bastianich](#), but where is the new guard? Aside from the many talented female pastry chefs, maybe there's Rebecca Charles of [Pearl Oyster Bar](#), [Patricia Yeo](#), Anita Lo of [Annisa](#), and Sara Jenkins of [50 Carmine](#). Diane Forley left for California...let us know who we're forgetting. Gothamist went to [Compass](#) the day her addition was announced in the Times. Many others had the same idea, and Katy Sparks was circulating in the room (we're pretty sure that's her [in this picture](#), on the left), with many diners telling her how excited they were to see her. The low point of the meal was, in fact, the service: Our server freaked out at a busboy, yelling at him and demanding to know where the receipt from the table the busboy had just cleared gone; it turned out another server had taken the receipt to be rung up. Our server apologized with complimentary champagne, but it was still distressing. So, Gothamist can attest to the crappy time it seems Amanda Hesser had.



Sparks [on her signature oyster dish](#), oysters in gewürztraminer cream with grapes and leeks, ("it made sense to punctuate them with the ingredient that wine is produced from") and [a few of her recipes](#). [eGullet on Compass with Sparks](#). And on Hesser's reviewing, besides [Eurotrash](#) and the [Village Voice](#), the Observer [weighs in](#).