

The Italian Job

Hot young sommelier Joe Campanale turns reds and whites into gold.

The marathon wait for a table at cozy, six-month-old West Village eatery Dell'anima has become the stuff of city legend. Some folks cooling their heels for two hours for a bowl of risotto might be skeptical about taking wine recommendations from 24-year-old, Converse-clad Joe Campanale. But once the Queens native drops some knowledge about his 200-plus Italian bottles, it's clear this kid is old-school—and impressive. Dell'anima's co-owner, sommelier and general manager spent his undergrad years at NYU being mentored by such foodie superstars as Joe Bastianich (of Italian Wine Merchants) and Mary Ewing-Mulligan (of the International Wine Center). Joe's first postcollege gig was sommelier at Babbo, and he is busy writing a book proposal on Italy's *aperitivo* (cocktail hour) culture. Despite his high-end interests, Joe insists his college years were mostly normal—when he wasn't sneaking off to vineyards in Italy and Spain, that is. "I'd throw down cheap beer," he says. "It's not like I'd go to a party and say, 'Look guys, I brought this vintage Bordeaux!'" No, Joe saved that for his elaborate dinner parties, where he'd pair vintages with homemade pasta: "I was the only kid in the sophomore dorm with a wine rack." —Annemarie Conte

WHO'S THAT GUY?

"Yes, I wear Converse and sell \$500 bottles of wine. It's my place—I can dress how I want."