



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Rave

Brooklyn’s lively Superfine is affordably hipster-chic

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — The neighborhood in New York known as DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) is dense with warehouses and industrial buildings converted into artist lofts, luxury condos, up-scale boutiques, furniture and accessory stores, funky bars, and mix-priced restaurants.

On a recent evening we discovered Superfine, an affordable and lively bar and restaurant located directly below Brooklyn’s entrance ramp to the bridge. The interior is industrial crossed with hipster-chic, with exposed brick walls, a sunken bar illuminated by dangling strands of blue lights, a pool table, and slapdash dining decor where mismatched tables and chairs look like they were rescued from your great aunt’s apartment in the 1950s.

The kitchen is open to the dining area. The menu, written on an erasable menu board, reflects the restaurant’s commitment to

sustainable agriculture and organic products purchased from local suppliers. Offerings change daily, though there’s a core selection of salad, pizza, pasta, fish, and grilled meats. We tried a grilled pizza with bacon, cured olives, caramelized onions, and fresh mozzarella, as well as the homemade sausage and seafood stew.

The bar serves classic cocktails with a twist, such as an Apple Brandy Sidecar and Super Dark and Stormy. The atmosphere is occasionally accentuated by live music from bluegrass to jazz performed on a small stage where silver stars dangle in front of a bright red curtain framed by artificial grass beach umbrellas.

Superfine, 126 Front St, Brooklyn, N.Y., 718-243-9005. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesdays through Sundays (times vary), closed Mondays. Entrees \$14-\$25.

NECEE REGIS

Gearing up

Portable fuel for multiple devices



which comes with nine connectors, recharged my iPod in about one hour. It retails for \$59.99, but currently sells for \$49.95 at Best Buy (888-237-8289, www.bestbuy.com). Or go to www.powerstick.com.

KARI BODNARCHUK

Destinations

ARTS

The reign of Spain on view

THROUGH NOV. 1
WASHINGTON, D.C.
“**The Art of Power: Royal Armor and Portraits From Imperial Spain**”: The leading European power of the 16th and early 17th centuries was Spain. This National Gallery of Art exhibition gives a vivid sense of Spanish wealth, military might, and artistic magnificence of that era. Much of the show is drawn from the Royal Armory, in Madrid, which houses the personal armor of Spanish monarchs. Among the armory’s holdings on display are suits of armor worn by Charles V, Philip II, and Philip IV. Created for use in pageants rather than battle, they are themselves impressive, even sumptuous, aesthetic achievements. More traditional works of art also figure in the show. Artists with paintings, prints, or tapestries in “The Art of Power” include Durer, Rubens, van Dyck, and Velazquez. *Constitution Avenue between 3d and 7th streets, 202-737-4215, www.nga.gov.*

MUNICH
“**Brandhorst Museum**”: Munich’s art district, the Kunstareal, got its newest addition in May with the opening of this museum of modern and contemporary art. It houses the collection of Udo and Anette Brandhorst. Highlights include the largest gathering of Cy Twombly’s art outside of the United States (some 60 pieces) and more than 100 works by Andy Warhol. Other artists in the collection include Joseph Beuys, Georg Baselitz, Damien Hirst, Alex Katz, Gerhard Richter, and Sigmar Polke. *Theresienstrasse 35a, 011-49 (0)89-23805-2286, www.museum-brandhorst.de/en.*

THROUGH SPRING 2010
CLEVELAND
“**From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen**”: Bruce Springsteen turns 60 next month. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum celebrates the event a little early with this comprehensive look at the singer’s career. Among items on display are the Fender Esquire guitar seen on the cover of his “Born to Run” album, the clothes Springsteen wore on the cover of his “Born in the USA” album, and the singer’s 1960 Corvette. *751 Erieside Ave., 216-781-7625, www.rockhall.com.*

SEPT. 4-13
DEAUVILLE, FRANCE
“**Deauville American Film Festival**”: This 35th edition of the



The equestrian armor of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Spain, who reigned from 1519-1556.

festival at the beach resort in Normandy is set to include screenings of more than a hundred films. Filmmakers and actors being paid tribute this year include the late Robert Aldrich; David Zucker, Jim Abrahams, and Jerry Zucker; Robin Penn Wright; Andy Garcia; and Harrison Ford, who will be the festival’s guest of honor. *011-33-231-14-40-00, www.festival-deauville.com.*

SEPT. 10-NOV. 29
NEW YORK
“**Vermeer’s Masterpiece ‘The Milkmaid’**”: This year marks the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson’s discovery of the river that now bears his name and the island that lies at its mouth, Manhattan. Hudson was sailing under Dutch colors, and Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum will observe the occasion by loaning

Vermeer’s much-loved painting to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Met will display the painting alongside the five Vermeers it owns and a selection of other Dutch master canvases. *1000 Fifth Ave., 212-535-7710, www.metmuseum.org.*

SEPT. 23-JAN. 31
LONDON
“**Turner and the Masters**”: J.M.W. Turner, England’s greatest painter, saw himself as consciously competing with the great painters who preceded him. This Tate Britain exhibition displays some of Turner’s finest paintings alongside works that he sought to imitate — or outdo — by such older masters as Claude, Poussin, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Titian. *Milbank, 011-44-20-7887-8888, www.tate.org.uk/britain.*

PLAN AHEAD
OCT. 4-JAN. 18
“**Paul Gauguin: Paris, 1889**”: The Cleveland Museum of Art has assembled this exhibition to honor the centenary of the show Gauguin organized as part of the 1889 Exhibition Universalle, in Paris. It amounted to the unofficial debut of the Symbolist school of painting. The exhibition comprises some 75 paintings, prints, carvings, and ceramics by Gauguin and his contemporaries. *11150 East Blvd., 1-877-262-4748, www.cle-musart.com.*

MARK FEENEY

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online to confirm. Mark Feeney can be reached at mfeeney@globe.com.

Tradition without the tourists in Fiji’s highlands

By Jessica Leving
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

NADI, Fiji — One of the last rigidly preserved vestiges of indigenous Fijian culture, Navala Village is the only place left on Fiji where everyone still lives more or less as their ancestors did — plus the occasional Coca-Cola and satellite television on special occasions.

Years ago, a village chief mandated that no new houses be built unless they were in the traditional thatched-roof bure hut style. No concrete or sheet metal allowed, only bamboo-woven walls and wooden pole supports. Today the village is a picturesque, one-of-a-kind experience treasured by locals and visitors alike.

Far enough into the highlands to deter the throngs of tourists below in Nadi, Navala Village is open to visitors but does not depend on them. For intrepid budget travelers, a visit is best achieved by a bumpy, sweaty ride on the local bus, an open-air Leyland classic that looks as if it hasn’t been updated since the 1970s. The entire journey will take at least half a day — but it will cost under \$5.

My mother and I spring for a taxi. Our driver, an Indian man named Samir, offers us a special rate of \$96 to make the journey there and back. We have a flight to catch the next day, so we accept.

Just a few hours into the highlands the scenery changes dramatically. The drab, square houses and billboards soon fade and the towns grow smaller until finally it’s just us, a breathtaking panorama, and the open road.

First, we pass through the ma-



PHOTOS BY JESSICA LEVING/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

A neatly aligned row of traditional thatched-roof bure huts in Navala Village. At right, a village girl curiously eyes a visitor.

jority Indian city of Lautoka, which Samir tells us is also known as “sugar city” for its sugar mill, the city’s biggest employer. It’s still early, but our stomachs are rumbling, and we offer to take Samir to lunch if he’ll bring us to his favorite local establishment.

“No problem,” he says, and pulls over on an unassuming side street. We hop out, wipe the sweat off our foreheads, and cut through an alleyway to Singh’s Fast Food, a simple Indian food court where we enjoy an assortment of chicken, lamb, and beef curries. The bill is less than \$20 for the three of us.

Around the corner, we browse the vast array of sari shops and dollar stores, then get back on the road and head toward the town of Ba. There, Samir tells us we must stop at the open-air market. Visitors to Navala Village are expected to bring at least a

half-kilo of the mildly narcotic kava root (locally known as “yaqona”) for the “sevusevu,” the traditional welcoming ceremony.

The market is inside an old, dark warehouse behind a sprawling Western chain grocery store. Samir negotiates a deal: under \$8 for an armful of what look like skinny twigs. We spend a few minutes browsing the endless rows of roots and spices, and then continue on the treacherous road to Navala.

From here, the trip can only be made in the dry season. If it rains, the bridges are too low to cross. But if your timing is right, you won’t be sorry. Once out of Ba, nature takes over — it seems we encounter more goats than people. When we do come across anyone, they seem as happy to see us as we are them. Up here, our sputtering taxi earns a friendly wave and a shout “bula,” or “hello,” as we pass.

About a mile from the village, the trademark thatched roofs of Navala come into sight. It’s the perfect place to stop for a photo. As we get nearer, Samir tells us that we must refrain from taking pictures until we pay a \$12 fee to the village headman and present our kava; otherwise, we risk being asked to leave.

The moment we pull up to the village entrance, a tall, shirtless man materializes next to the cab. “Welcome, welcome!” He greets us in a high-pitched, singsong voice. “Bula! You have 25 [Fijian] dollars?”

According to Samir, cutting cane sugar, the main occupation of Navala men, pays less than \$8 a day. Knowing that, it’s easy to see why the villagers are all business when it comes to admission prices and gratuity-giving. Once we’ve paid our entry fee and presented our kava, however, our guide is all smiles and hospitality.

“I am Vili,” he says, introducing himself as the headman, and extends a hand. Samir tells us we are now free to photograph, and we set off on our tour.

The geometrically organized, strictly bure village looks as if it came straight out of National Geographic. Naked children skip around, laughing, and their shouts and giggles are the only sounds other than buzzing flies and some rustling leaves when we’re lucky enough to get a breeze.

As we amble along, Vili and Samir speak quietly in Fijian and my mother and I trail behind in wonder. The walking portion of the tour ends at Vili’s bure. Stepping into the well-designed, one-room house is a welcome relief

from the heat outside. As Vili and a couple of curious villagers prepare the ritual kava drinking, I notice the decorations. The walls are adorned with a few faded photos, newspaper clippings, and brightly colored tapestries. One corner has a distinctive feminine touch, with its draped pink cloth, and plastic purses hanging from the ceiling. My full participation is soon needed for the sevusevu ceremony.

Though the effects of kava are mild, the villagers drink it religiously. Preparation is simple: After crushing the kava root with a mortar and pestle, the powder is wrapped in a muslin cloth and submerged in a large bowl of water until the mixture begins to resemble a puddle of mud. A coconut bowl is then dipped into the pot, and we are ready to try our first serving.

Vili tells us to say “bula” (this time it means “cheers”) and suck it down in one gulp. I close my eyes, tilt my head back, and drink. It tastes like dirt. With a laugh, I wipe the dribbles off my chin as the villagers ceremoniously clap three times and refill the bowl for my mother.

The bowl is passed around a few times, and I begin to feel a small tingling in my mouth, but no other effects. We pass around a second bowl, and stay for nearly another hour of easygoing, sometimes hilarious conversation.

Eventually, the sun begins to hang low and Samir tells us we need to head back to Nadi. On the way, he stops at a fruit stand on the side of the road and buys us fresh coconuts.

“My treat,” he says, demon-

If you go . . .



Bulou Lodge and Backpacker Hostel
About a half-mile past Navala Village on the right, just before the bridge
011-679-666-6644, after beeps dial 2116
Call first to arrange for someone to pick you up from Navala.
Singh’s Village Fast Food Restaurant
40 Vitogo Pde.
011-679-666-6205
Entrees \$5-\$7.
Traditional Market
Market Sub Div, Ba
011-679-667-4600
This is where you pick up the kava root for the welcoming ceremony.

strating how to cut them. The evening is sticky and hot, and the three of us sit peacefully in the back seat of the cab with the doors open as we slurp the sweet milk from the middle of the fruit.

It’s the ideal end to a unique island escape.

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