

Café d'Artistes

Philip Pelusi, who owns a chain of salons in Pittsburgh, has opened Arium in Manhattan's trendy Meatpacking District that aims to recapture the meaning of the word "salon".

High tea is a formal affair; the Steinway grand piano dominates a corner of the room which is currently exhibiting paintings from New York City artist Jamie Titus; the ethereally large windows in the café bathe the space in light; The Salon at Arium is features state-of-the-art furnishings.

Philip Pelusi is a true Renaissance man—an accomplished hairdresser, a successful salon owner, a manufacturer with a line of 60 high-end products and an avid photographer. In

the 1960s he opened a boutique in his first salon and carried fashions from London designer Mary Quant. Then in 1990 he opened S.P.A.C.E., an advanced educational center called in a renovated church in Pittsburgh's historic Southside where he hosts master classes and seminars in photography for designers from all over the country. Recently he launched his P2 line of products nationally. Now he's exploring new territory. His latest venture is Arium, a collaboration with longtime client, friend and artist Jamie Titus and prominent New York City chef Richard Guier. Located in a ground-floor space in an old warehouse in Manhattan's Meatpacking District, Arium is part salon, part café/tearoom.

Pelusi has always been involved in the arts and intends for Arium to be a true *salon* in the sense that it will unite all the arts, from hair design to fashion shows to poetry readings to a revolving exhibition of world-class art. The goal, says Pelusi, is to support the best artistic and creative talent possible. A Steinway grand piano sits in a corner—Pelusi plans to have students from Juilliard play in the late afternoons when high tea is served in the café with its custom-designed mahogany furniture and elegant white columns. The café is already earning kudos from the press, including *New York Magazine* and *The New York Times*, which called it "an oasis in the Meatpacking District." The menu includes focused selections of wine, champagne, teas as well as lunch selections like quiches, tartlets and scones. Meanwhile, the tea service includes a choice of 90 teas and light courses offered in a graciously formal service.

The Salon at Arium includes stations designed by Titus based on furniture styles from the 1840s, while the décor recalls architecture from the grand salons of the past. Still, Pelusi points out that the stylists are definitely 21st century artisans using the latest techniques.

Pelusi is convinced that he's in the right place at the right time. "This is the first bona fide movement in the city since SoHo in 1974," he says of the Meatpacking District where he's seen rents double since he signed his lease a few years ago. "There are open spaces, and the whole area lends itself to an exciting 24-hour environment." —Marianne Dougherty



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