

## Top meals of 2008: These eats were real treats

### MEAL OF THE YEAR

Seafood restaurant Le Bernardin in New York has been my go-to special-occasion place for more than a decade because it almost never disappoints with its food or service. My dinner in May was my best-ever experience there, largely because of the treasures that sommelier Aldo Sohm pulled out of the wine cellar and poured by the glass. Because I sometimes write about wine, he felt challenged to find unusual bottles that would still pair sensibly with the dishes and wouldn't break my budget. He succeeded beyond my dreams by starting with **a vodka made from Vermont maple sap** (paired with smoked salmon carpaccio) and bringing it full circle with Austrian Trockenbeerenauslese dessert wine paired with milk chocolate pot de creme, maple syrup, caramel foam and sea salt.



Sommelier Aldo Sohm at New York's Le Bernardin, where the author had his most memorable meal of 2008.