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Restaurant Preview: The Standard Grill

While enjoying a glass of rosé and some pommes frites this past weekend at Shelter Island's Sunset Beach, all the buzz around me centered on **Andre Balazc**'s latest (and decidedly more urban) culinary venture, the Standard Grill in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. Nestled in the Standard Hotel, below the newly opened High Line, the restaurant opened its doors for friends and family tastings this week, and, much to my surprise and delight, this Scene editor made the short list.



On the exterior, the venue boasts an outdoor beer garden of sorts, complete with Ping-Pong tables —yes, it's a veritable day drinker's Eden. Inside, the subway-tile French bistro bar area gives way to the main dining room, which morphs into more of a steak house style, complete with red leather booths. As one might imagine, preview weeks tend to bring out a whole who's who: In one corner **Jann Wenner** and crew sampled cocktail concoctions courtesy of former Employees Only mixologist on staff, while **Aerin Lauder**'s table looked like they ordered up a smorgasbord of **Chef Dan Silverman**'s (formerly of the Lever House) menu favorites, like lamb and roasted chicken for two. **Bonnie Morrison**, **Ash Carter** (putting in his due-diligence time for the old man, it seems), **Billy Daley**, **Kate Schleiter**, and a gaggle of models rounded out the room, which was giving off just the right vibe, not overly rowdy or too subdued. Bottom line: There's something here for everyone, really. And for your tip? Don't skip dessert. Order the Alabeye, a molten chocolate brownie smothered with a giant marshmallow. Perfection.

—*Sylvana Soto-Ward*