

By Gillian Duffy and Anya Sacharow

alfresco

revolution

Beautiful places to eat outdoors,
far from the clamor and din

HERE EXISTS, AT THIS MOMENT IN this city, an unprecedented need for restaurants with gardens. As our avenues get grimmer, a place away from the street, with surrounding greenery, marigolds, or annual pinks, is both soothing and redemptive. But also, in the midst of all this natural wonder, a person can still light up a cigarette (though not always—the new smoking laws dictate that only 25 percent of an outdoor area can be reserved for smokers, and some places forbid it altogether). Three relatively new gardens have raised the standard of Manhattan outdoor dining to a level of exquisiteness heretofore unimaginable. L'udo, an Italian restaurant on Lafayette Street, is at once rustic and unmistakably urban. I Trulli has a sweetly Mediterranean back-country setting and happens to be in the East Twenties. Verbena, on Irving Place, is for skeptics who have never seen the elegant geometry of premeditated flora in any Manhattan backyard—except perhaps the one that Olmstead gave us.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KENNETH CHEN

PRESSED-FLOWER
SCREENS AT
VERBENA.

