

Dining In

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To Go

Eric Asimov

Worlds Beyond Iceberg Lettuce

SALAD bars offer convenience but rarely good salads, at least if the wilted, warmed-over fare found beneath the sneeze guards in New York is typical. Enter **TOSSED**, a decidedly different concept in salad sales, which opened last summer near the Flatiron Building.

This stylish, minimalist restaurant exalts the salad, offering more than a dozen enticing combinations. It also has a design-it-yourself menu. For \$7.95, you select an exceptionally fresh base of greens, like mesclun, arugula or romaine, and add four toss-ins from an extensive list, which includes jicama, avocado, bacon, sun-dried cherries and Jerusalem artichokes.

Tossed draws a fashionable, good-looking crowd, including visitors from modeling agencies in the neighborhood.

It's doubtful, however, that an excellent salad like rock shrimp with citrus chipotle dressing (\$11.95) would qualify for any model's diet. This huge serving — the takeout container is more of a tub than a bowl — includes romaine lettuce topped with a double handful of rock shrimp and then garnished with grilled sweet onions, black bean salsa, little wedges of acorn squash, roasted potatoes and crisp tortilla strips that underscore the Southwestern flavor of the smoky dressing.

Almost as good is a spinach salad (\$9.95), topped with grilled portobello mushrooms, grilled onions, squares of thick bacon and toasted hazelnuts, but marred slightly by soggy croutons.

Beyond salads, Tossed offers terrific sandwiches, like grilled chicken breast with roasted peppers and greens on crusty rosemary bread (\$6.95), and soups like corn chowder enriched with bits of lobster (\$3.95).

For dessert, try the impossibly rich and sweet peanut butter pie (\$5.95).

While Tossed mostly does a takeout business, it's also a pleasant place to sit down and eat.

The printed menu offers a small but well-chosen selection of wines and beers. Unfortunately, all you can see for now is the list. Tossed has not yet received its state liquor license.

Tossed, 295 Park Avenue South, near 23d Street, (212) 674-6700. Free delivery: 14th Street to 30th Street, Second Avenue to the Avenue of the Americas.