

NEW YORK POST

IT'S A DUNNE DEAL IN A CELLAR



October 29, 2006 -- 'HOME IS heaven and orgies are vile/ But you need an orgy, once in a while,' wrote the incomparable Ogden Nash. And there I was dining the other eve with the son-in-law of the poet, the photographer **Freddie Eberstadt**. It's a small world.

OH, HOW well I remember the 1950s when New York, recovering from World War II, was still young and how my pals and I tried constantly to be admitted to '21,' which was *the* place to go. Keepers on the door used to wave us away saying, "86 - no way!" (They knew hicks when they saw them.) The venerable restaurant, once a speakeasy in the days of Prohibition, is still going strong, and now they greet me with open arms, not even bothering to give me a coat check. (I like it better these days!)



GRIFFIN DUNNE
He'll get a Real Deal Award.

The other recent eve, financier **John Coleman** gave a birthday dinner at '21' for his friend the writer **Dominick Dunne**. A charmed crew was led through '21's' main room into the kitchen and down some steep steps into a basement. Here a long wire key unlocked a massive two-ton door made up to resemble a brick wall. Through this vast unwieldy opening we stepped further down into the private wine cellar

dining room where '21' once hid its booze from the feds.

And here we had an actual six-course dinner just as in the old days when people ate a lot. Lots of famous wines were served, and I felt compelled to drink for two because my pal Dominick no longer imbibes. The guest list included **Carolina** and **Reinaldo Herrera**, **Nancy Biddle**, **Tita Cahn**, **Karen Lerner**, **Peter Brown**, **Casey Ribicoff**, Messrs. **Coleman** and **Eberstadt**. Dominick sat between his famous sister-in-law, **Joan Didion**, the prize-winning author, and his good-looking son, **Griffin Dunne**.

Griffin was with the handsome Australian **Anna Bridgeman**, stylist to the stars and friend of **Nicole Kidman**. Griffin will, on Nov. 15, receive the Real Deal Award from Scenarios USA. He just wound up directing **Diane Lane** in "Fierce People" and is ready to helm **Uma Thurman** and **Colin Firth** in "The Accidental Husband."

Dominick, meantime, is mostly in Connecticut winding up his novel, to be called "A Solo Act," due next spring. I gave him a New Yorker cartoon of two bikini-clad beauties dashing along a beach with one of them saying, "I never thought turning 80 would be so much fun!"

THE BOX-office sensation **Will Smith** is in N.Y.C. filming "I Am Legend," and he already has another sensation in the can. "Pursuit of Happiness" is one of those sure-fire Christmas deals . . . And **Ridley Scott** is filming here for the said-to-be funny "American Gangster" with **Russell Crowe** and **Denzel Washington** . . . I've recorded the phone turn-off announcement for the hilarious play "The Little Dog Laughed" opening at the Cort on Nov. 13. This sardonic comedy, set in New York but telling all we need to know about Hollywood, has two important cast members from off-B'way - **Julie White** and **Johnny Galecki** . . . If you go to the new Le Cirque, you often get to see one of the most beautiful girls in town. She's the grandchild of **Sirio** and **Egi Maccioni**, **Stella**, age 14 months. The Maccionis are training Stella in the restaurant biz, and she is irresistible. Tonight, they'll celebrate Egi's 70th birthday with sons **Mario**, **Marco** and **Mauro** in attendance. (I dare you to tell them apart!) **Kevin Kline** was there recently being joined by pal **Meryl Streep** . . . **Arlene Dahl** . . . my favorite auctioneer **Jamie Niven** . . . **Ron Perelman**, who has sworn off wearing neckties, but why does this billionaire do that? . . . Canadian lawyer **Laura Accurso** with **Nancy Curry O'Shaughnessy** and interior designer **Nancy Rutigliano**. Stella Maccioni has been in this column four times and in **Bill Cunningham's** photo page twice. We are cutting her off for publicity!

THE FEISTY Feminist Press group laid on some high-level awards recently at Tavern on the Green, and, in spite of a quirky sound system, big names sparked by **Jane Fonda** and **Gloria Steinem** got their points across. These women have high expectations for the coming elections. They are, one and all, devout, dedicated, adamant and yes, sentimental.

The best talkers were Jane, a masterful speaker who looks better than she did when she was young . . . Planned Parenthood's dynamic **Cecile Richards** extolling her famous mother, Ann . . . the brave reporter **Amy Goodman** of "Democracy Now!" . . . playwright **Eve Ensler**. Some poems were read to us by the appealing **Grace Paley**.

Now a word about the Tavern - in some ways this giant tourist attraction is like being in hell with electric lights. Waiters that night were ruthless; they tromped all over us. Once, I wouldn't mind - but it was an evening of being pushed, stepped on and bullied out of the way by men with trays. I want to keep going to Tavern on the Green, but this place has to change its ways when it comes to service and how its help treats customers.

THE WEALTHY **Lily Safra** owns a gorgeous Fifth Avenue apartment, but her friends should know when she comes for two weeks in December, she'll stay in a redecorated suite in the Lowell Hotel. California's **Michael Smith** has done this magnificent \$8,000-a-night abode.

Mrs. Safra no longer spends much time in Monaco where her husband Edmond died in a 1999 fire. She is still a citizen of that little country, made so by the late Prince Rainier himself.