

Find a Mate

BY DAVE FARIES

So you've decided to try this one again, have you? Oh, well—hope springs eternal and all that. Why not just let it go? We've given you great ideas over the past three years, and you've still failed to hook the big one. Granted, some of our suggestions now seem flawed. Our guaranteed pick-up lines, such as "Where did you park? I had to let the valet park my Ferrari," seem stale, and we forgot, when recommending church groups, that the Big Guy can be judgmental. Crashing wedding receptions worked until that damn movie tipped everyone off. Dog parks, alumni gatherings, gay bars and high school cafeterias all had drawbacks too.

Still, it's pretty obvious you alone must accept responsibility for your failure to find one gullible, nearsighted potential mate in an urban area of several million.

Our only fault—besides caring too deeply about the pathetic plight of single types—is that we've never managed to find mates either, mostly because of a stupendous work load, those daily phone calls to our mothers, along with all those charity events we must attend. So this year we decided on a new direction: expert assistance.

Bars 'n' More

Several membership organizations bring single men and women together in a setting conducive to conversation and eventual matrimony. Or at least a little hanky-panky.

Single Gourmet (972-732-8000) holds events at upscale restaurants around the Dallas area. Host Ed Bamberger balances such factors as age and culinary preference to ensure a pleasurable experience. Each outing begins with a meet-and-greet session at the bar to allow guests to settle in. Then everyone finds assigned boy-girl seating in the dining room. That's pretty much it: The host introduces newcomers over a couple of cocktails, and after that, it's up to you.

A couple of things we learned while participating in a Single Gourmet dinner at Ferré in the West Village: Don't order

spinach unless you want the babe at your elbow to gape at the green blob etched to your teeth. Remember all that stuff your mother taught you about table manners. Oh, and avoid "You know, fascists weren't all that bad" as a conversation starter.

Guests attend for many reasons, including camaraderie, networking contacts, the lure of new restaurants and desperation. Bamberger plans a couple excursions each month, along with wine country tours and other special events. His membership ranges in age from 30s to 60s and tends toward the professional.

Resolution Guide 2006

