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edited by Valerie Block

Hotel spiffs up park picnics

NEW YORKERS
wondering where

their free-concert-going peers find their fancy picnic baskets might try calling Jumeirah Essex House. The Central Park South hotel started offering stocked baskets this summer in an effort to raise awareness of the grande dame, which has new management and is undergoing a \$90 million renovation.

A cool \$150 per person buys the Ultimate Essex House Gourmet, which includes smoked salmon, foie gras, fine chocolates and mini brioche. The \$85 cheese basket is most popular, says **Christian Gradnitzer**, the hotel's executive chef.

Utensils, a blanket, a park map, cucumber-scented wipes and bug repellent are included in attractive knapsacks, purchased from the Central Park Conservancy and good for a \$40 refund if returned.



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