

Let's Go To...

By Melissa B. Stoller

The Madeline Tea

Last winter, my family traveled to Paris where we walked along the boulevards searching for Ludwig Bemelmans' classic character Madeline. Before our trip, we re-read all the *Madeline* books and took notes about Madeline's activities. Once we arrived, we looked for Madeline in the windows of all the old houses covered with vines, looked for horses near the Opera and watched Parisians feeding birds in the Tuilleries Gardens on our way to the Louvre.

Luckily, no one walked on top of any bridges or slipped and fell into the Seine, as Madeline did in *Madeline's Rescue*. We didn't find a dog named Genevieve, and perhaps most fortunately, no one suffered from appendicitis as poor Madeline did.

This winter, we didn't have to travel any farther than Madison Avenue to continue our search at the Carlyle Hotel's Bemelmans Bar, the home of "The Madeline Tea."

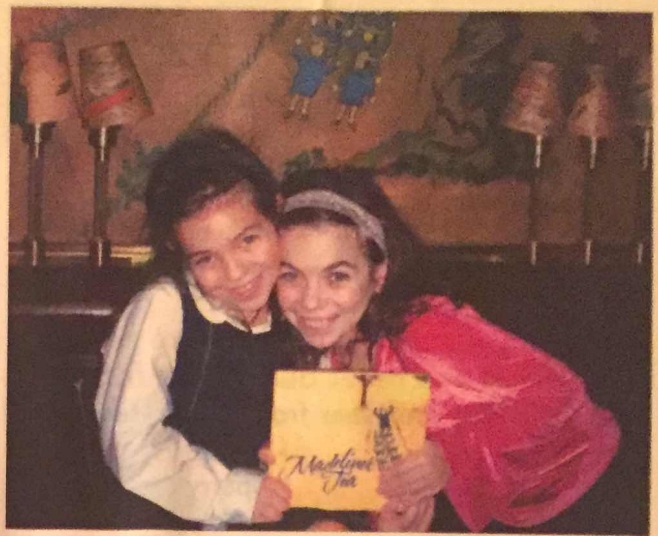
Madeline in New York

Austrian-born Ludwig Bemelmans lived at the legendary Carlyle Hotel for 18 months, and in 1947, he paid for his room and board by creating a mural for the hotel depicting his much-loved character Madeline. Later, the decorated bar room was named in his honor. Simply gazing at the murals would be a dazzling afternoon activity, but now visitors can also enjoy the new Madeline tea.

The outing is sure to appeal to all ages. It's an ideal adventure for tourists as well as local folk. Recently, I experienced "The Madeline Tea" with my mother and three daughters, ages 9, 6, and 7 months (coincidentally, the smallest one is named Madeleine). For my girls, who treasure the *Madeline* stories, it was a perfect after-school treat.

The tea features Madeline-inspired teapots, plates and cups and saucers set on colorful red and yellow linens. Even the menu is adorned with Madeline decorations. The child-friendly offerings include a three-tiered tea stand filled with crumpets and jam, and dishes with Madeline-themed names such as Twelve Little Shrimps in Two Straight Lines, Pepito's Crudites and Dips, Miss Clavel's Tomato and Cheese Please Pizza, and Petite Banana Split Fontainebleau.

Adults can order from The Gallery



The Stoller girls enjoy "The Madeline Tea" at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City.

Café menu featuring a traditional tea as well as other items. My mother and I sampled the tasty London Bridges Fish and Chips, The Eiffel Tower Hot Fudge Sundae, a fruit platter and mint tea. The homemade whipped cream was a delicious accompaniment. The girls were especially captivated by the cotton candy machine and were thrilled to receive large complimentary helpings.

The Bemelmans Bar staff was extremely gracious. They provided a high chair and were very accommodating about food requests. A friendly piano player enhanced the experience by playing our favorite Broadway show tunes. Madeline dolls and books are sprinkled throughout the room and we saw several adults reading to their children. We brought our own dolls and books and read the original story yet again. Take along a camera because you might like to take some fun photographs in front of the murals. Several magical hours flew by as we enjoyed a respite from our busy week.

Now that our search for Madeline in New York and Paris is complete, I think our next stop will be England, as we follow in Madeline's footsteps in Bemelmans' *Madeline in London!* ♦

Melissa B. Stoller is a Madeline fan and New York City-based freelance writer.

When You Go...

• The Madeline Tea

The Carlyle Hotel, 35 E. 76th St. (enter on Madison Avenue directly into Bemelmans Bar), New York, N.Y. 212-744-1600 www.TheCarlyle.com

• Hours

Friday-Sunday, 1-4pm. Reservations are suggested.

• Cost

Madeline's Tea is \$24 per person. A la

carte choices on the children's menu, ranging from \$7 to \$20, can be ordered separately.

• Read All About It

Mad About Madeline: The Complete Tales by Ludwig Bemelmans (Viking Books, 1993) is a compilation of all six *Madeline* books (*Madeline*, *Madeline's Rescue*, *Madeline and the Bad Hat*, *Madeline and the Gypsies*, *Madeline in London* and *Madeline's Christmas*), with an introduction by Anna Quindlen and an essay and extra original sketches by Bemelmans.