



# fine dining

This is the third in a series of 10 Friday articles showcasing 2019's Top 100 Long Island restaurants.

The main criterion for inclusion was quality of food. We also sought a geographic balance between Nassau and Suffolk counties. The restaurants were chosen by

Newsday feedme staff editor **Marjorie Robins** and critic/writers **Peter M. Gianotti**, **Corin Hirsch**, **Erica Marcus** and **Scott Vogel**.

Here are choices for the 10 best fine-dining restaurants of 2019.

## **NOCO KITCHEN WINE AND COCKTAILS** 429 N. Country Rd., St. James, 631-250-9600, nocostjames.com

Polished and charming, NoCo, which stands for North Country, makes you want to eat every dish on its menu. The lively establishment is owned by Joseph DeNicola, whose restaurant group includes Ruvo in Greenlawn, Ruvo East in Port Jefferson and La Tavola in Sayville. DeNicola and the group's executive chef, Anthony D'Amico, offer an eclectic cuisine that takes its inspiration from Italy, France and Asia. Lobster bisque with an ample amount of lobster meat is deeply flavorful, as is the pressure-fried duck leg confit paired with a masa corn waffle and stone-fruit jam. Wine-braised beets with whipped ricotta, toasted pine nuts, grapefruit, mache and more sounds over-orchestrated, but it's addictive. \$\$\$

## **THE 1770 HOUSE** 143 Main St., East Hampton, 631-324-1770, 1770house.com

A local landmark for centuries, The 1770 House joins the best Long Island restaurants under executive chef Michael Rozzi. It's an elegant, delightful spot, full of history and flavor. Spicy Montauk fluke tartare vies with sauteed squid with Calabrian chiles. A chilled sweet pea soup competes with cauliflower bisque enriched with smoked salmon and caviar. Seared foie gras with pineapple chutney could lead you right into the Mecox Bay Dairy cheese selection. But look for the Berkshire pork rib chop and the braised beef short rib, the Australian lamb chops with asparagus risotto and the New York strip steak with marrow sauce. \$\$\$

## **18 BAY** 23 N. Ferry Rd., Shelter Island, 631-749-0053, 18bayrestaurant.com

Adam Kopels and Elizabeth Ronzetti are the husband-and-wife team behind this exceptional country-style restaurant, where the Italian-inspired food is a testament to what's in season. The tasting menu changes weekly in this 18th century house. The stellar dishes have included baked Peconic Bay scallops in any preparation, including enriching hand-cut conchiglie pasta; seared soft-shell crab with sumac yogurt; fazzoletti pasta primavera; cod fritter with curry aioli and lamb ragu; roasted Atlantic halibut with saffron, tomato and baby turnips; braised short rib with cucumber kimchee; and a Painted Hills New York strip steak with grilled heirloom chicories and shallot rings. Memorable dessert: blood-orange



Watermelon salad is refreshing at NoCo Kitchen in St. James.

semifreddo. \$\$\$

## **THE LAKEHOUSE** 135 Maple Ave., Bay Shore, 631-666-0995, thelakehouserest.com

Perched on Great South Bay, The LakeHouse serves superior food with a view to match. Matthew and Eileen Connors carried over their elegant cuisine from smaller quarters at Lawrence Lake. Service sometimes seems pressured, and the room can get noisy. But the food is first-class. That begins with briny, rich Lucky 13 oysters on the half shell, a terrific New England-inspired littleneck clam chowder, and a sinful rectangle of crisp suckling pig backed by Parmesan polenta, honey-glazed pearl onions and a maple vinaigrette. Then, pick the juicy, roasted Berkshire pork chop flanked by near-candied Brussels sprouts and apple-



Hudson Valley foie gras is a highlight on Guy Reuge's menu at Mirabelle in Stony Brook.

chestnut hash; and crisp-skinned breast of Long Island duck and leg confit with a pomegranate-pistachio glaze. \$\$\$

## **MIRABELLE** 150 Main St., Stony Brook, 631-751-0555, lessings.com

Guy Reuge's Mirabelle turned the historic Three Village Inn into a four-star dining destination. He has fashioned a repertoire that includes a nine-course tasting menu and a la carte fare, with accents French and New American, Asian and European. Reuge's vibrant cuisine has taken in a farm-to-table menu, with courses such as chilled asparagus, parsnip and pea soup with chives; Hudson Valley foie gras; and roasted Berkshire pork loin with baby artichokes and red-onion marmalade. He prepares superb charcuterie, from housemade country pâté to rillettes, garlic sausage to salumi. A Berkshire pork chop turns Alsatian with sauerkraut, pork sausage and creamer potatoes. And the duck Mirabelle with seared breast and confit is a classic. Leave room for that almond ginger tart. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

## **NORTH FORK TABLE & INN** 57225 Main Rd. (Route 25), Southold, 631-765-0177, northforktableandinn.com

Under new chef Brian Wilson, North Fork Table & Inn remains a stellar farm-to-table spot, with gracious style and unfussy, richly satisfying seasonal fare. Wilson's winners include gnocchi with crabmeat hazelnuts finished with lemon-brown butter and pea soup





accented with mint, dill and black-pepper yogurt. He deftly pairs seared foie gras with raw tuna, bringing the duo closer with glazed daikon and radish syrup. Yellowfin tuna tartare is balanced with ponzu sauce. Seared octopus finds savory company with chorizo sausage, chickpeas, Kalamata olives and harissa aioli. Claudia Fleming's desserts continue to star as they did when she and her husband and founding chef, the late Gerry Hayden, unveiled North Fork Table. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

**PRESTON HOUSE & HOTEL**  
428 E. Main St., Riverhead,  
631-775-1500,  
theprestonhouseandhotel.com

When The Preston House opened in Riverhead in 2018, it signaled a new era for fine dining in the sometimes overlooked county seat. The four-story boutique hotel made a splash. And the bright, beachy restaurant on its ground floor, housed inside a 1905 home, quickly rose to the top tier of East End dining. This is the domain of chef Matty Boudreau, who uses bounty from local fishermen, growers and food producers for inventive, seafood-centric dishes: Montauk Pearl oysters served with a punchy daikon mignonette; shimmering tuna tartare on a cloud of whipped avocado; a "Down East-style" chowder studded with local clams. Boudreau is deft with meat, too: He cures, braises and smokes pork belly for the excellent house slab bacon, which is served with tomato jam. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

**PRIME: AN AMERICAN KITCHEN & BAR**

117 N. New York Ave., Huntington,  
631-385-1515, restaurantprime.com

From its setting to its cuisine, its service to its style, Prime is an 18-karat entry in Gold Coast dining. The waterfront site delivers a delightful harbor view. On a sunny Sunday,



DANIEL BRENNAN

Sea scallops over pea puree is one of chef Brian Wilson's winners at North Fork Table & Inn.

the a la carte alfresco brunch is all you'd want. And the well-appointed dining room and oyster bar represent the high-end of Long Island eating with great skill and just enough flair. Executive chef James Orlandi's hits range from caramelized figs with prosciutto, almonds and goat cheese to plump crabcakes with Sriracha aioli. But Prime really gets going with main courses: perfectly steamed or broiled lobster, pan-seared tuna, roasted chicken with morel-cream sauce, pan-roasted duck with a honey-mustard glaze and exceptional steaks and chops. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

**SANDBAR**  
55 Main St., Cold Spring Harbor,  
631-498-6188, lessings.com

The charms of Sandbar are many, from effortless style to handsome design, seasonal New American cuisine to attentive service. It manages to be both refined and homey on the plate. Executive chef Guy Reuge creates the menu, as he does at Mirabelle in Stony Brook. Chickpea fries, stacked like Lincoln Logs, will hook you fast: fragile and crisp outside, creamy within. Charred octopus with salsa verde, potatoes, olives, radicchio, arugula and frisee curls tastefully. Duck tacos turn multinational with daikon, rounds of jalapeño and hoisin sauce. Swordfish with vegetable ratatouille and olive tapenade is a deftly cross-hatched catch. Steelhead trout announces a seasonal presence with grilled ramps and lemon marmalade. Chicken potpie becomes the standard. And, yes, consider the Sandbar cheeseburger. \$\$\$

**STONE CREEK INN**  
405 Montauk Hwy., East Quogue,  
631-653-6770, stonecreekinn.com

Christian Mir and Elaine DiGiacommo opened this lovely country restaurant in 1996. It has only gotten better, with itineraries Mediterranean, French and New American, and a mood that balances the vibrant and the serene. Consider Mir's cauliflower vichyssoise; and potato gnocchi with cherry tomato sauce, basil and prosciutto. Savor barbecue duck wings and Long Island duck meatballs with an apple cider reduction. Likewise, a duck foie gras terrine, rice balls filled with Fontina cheese. Choose poached oysters with leeks, sevruga caviar and beurre blanc. Venture vegetarian with a Tuscan farro ragu sparked with pine nuts and basil pesto. Veer Italianate with osso buco and saffron-potato gnocchi. \$\$\$

NEXT WEEK INDIAN

*Fine Dining at its Best*

WITH CHEF GUY REUGE

Newsday  
feedme  
**TOP 100**  
LONG ISLAND RESTAURANTS  
2019  
AWARD WINNER

sandbar

★ ★ ★

"Today, all currents lead to this Sandbar."  
- Peter Gianotti, Newsday

COLD SPRING HARBOR

Mirabelle  
RESTAURANT & TAVERN

★ ★ ★ ★

"The nouveau Mirabelle is exceptional!"  
- Peter Gianotti, Newsday

STONY BROOK

LESSINGS.COM