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EDITOR'S PICK

FEATURED

Best Restaurants 2018: Experts' Picks

Dec 27, 2017



Best New Restaurant: Amis Trattoria, Westport

Alex von Kleydorff

The results are in! We're revealing the best places to dine out in the state, as chosen by readers and a panel of food experts. The response we received was excellent, and our lists are bigger than ever, with more categories and more winners.

Our Experts' Picks are below, and for more great places to eat check out our 2018 Readers' Choice winners. Dig in!

(See our 2019 Experts Picks and the results of our 2019 Readers' Choice poll.)



Best for Overall Excellence & Best Seafood: The Whelk, Westport

Christian Abraham

Best for Overall Excellence

Aranci 67, Wilton • **Arethusa al tavolo**, Bantam • **Aspen**, Old Saybrook • **The Cottage**, Westport • **Fresh Salt**, Old Saybrook • **Millwright's**, Simsbury • **Present Company**, Simsbury • **Shu**, West Hartford/Fairfield • **Union League Cafe**, New Haven • **The Whelk**, Westport • **The White Hart**, Salisbury • **Zinc**, New Haven

“The Cottage in Westport is not as tiny as it used to be but still very intimate in its hard-to-see location on the Post Road. Do whatever you have to in order to make the discovery. Chef Brian Lewis is turning out what may be the most stunning food anywhere in Connecticut.” — Douglas

Clement, *Edible Nutmeg* contributor, former *Connecticut Magazine* editor and writer

Arethusa al tavolo: “Hands down the best dining experience in Litchfield County. Award-winning Arethusa cheese is made just around the corner, and the famous cows producing all the dairy served here live just up the road.” — Lora Karam and Beverley Canepari, *Unlocking Litchfield* and *Unlocking Fairfield*

Zinc: “Great food and service aside, the atmosphere is ideal for a romantic night out in the Elm City.” — Marisa Nadolny, *The Day* food writer

Jesup Hall: “Even locals already familiar with Bill Taibe’s funky brand of culinary magic might be surprised to learn what he can do with a burger. The double-patty options served here, piled with zesty pickles, bubbling with artisanal cheeses, and sandwiched between lofty onion buns, manage to elevate the form.” — Sarah Gold, former *New York Times* dining critic

“Osa is chef Matt Wick’s love letter to Connecticut and hospitality. He pours his soul into the food, starting with the ingredients he either forages himself, or sources from top local producers. Tip: Share a few of the wood-fired small plates and a bottle of one of their delightful Italian wines.” — Alycia Chrosniak, *cteatsout.com* founder and editor in chief



Best New: Taproot, Bethel

©Jeff Kaufman

Best New

Amis Trattoria, Westport • **Butchers & Bakers**, Farmington • **The Cook & The Bear**, West Hartford • **Cricket Car Hop**, Stratford • **Goats N' Roses**, Marlborough • **Grass & Bone**, Mystic • **Himalaya Cafe**, Old Saybrook • **Jesup Hall**, Westport • **Kala Bistro**, North Haven • **Republic at the Linden**, Hartford • **Osa**, Middletown • **Shakahari**, Old Saybrook • **Taproot**, Bethel • **V's Trattoria**, Hartford • **Zohara Mediterranean Kitchen**, West Hartford

Cricket Car Hop: “My childhood spot that had closed and recently returned!” — Daym Drops (Daymon Patterson), YouTube food critic

Goats N' Roses: “This place is in a category of its own — delicious food, outdoor movies, and a duck and peacock that are best friends. This place is next level.” — Chef Plum, host of Restaurant Road Trip on News 8

Grass & Bone: “Remarkable sandwiches with otherworldly ingredients.” — Michael Lee-Murphy, *Connecticut Magazine* writer

“Zohara filled a huge void in Hartford County for Middle Eastern cuisine beyond falafel and gyros. Dozens of small-plate options entice you to graze from across the menu. Try the meshta (“feast”) for an expansive tasting that will have you eating leftovers for days.” — Nick Caito, *Rhode Island Beverage Journal*, formerly of the *Hartford Courant* and *Hartford Magazine*

Best American

The Blue Hound Cookery & Taproom, Ivoryton • **Good News Cafe**, Woodbury • **The Goose American Bistro & Bar**, Darien • **Jesup Hall**, Westport • **Match**, Norwalk • **Mill Street Bar & Table**, Greenwich • **Moxie**, Madison • **Red 36**, Mystic • **Republic at the Linden**, Hartford • **The Spread**, Norwalk

Moxie: “They have really stepped up their game. Roasted marrow bones with cherry compote was a standout. Great bartenders.” — Robert Rabine, *ShoreLine Times* food writer

Best Indian

Coromandel Cuisine, Newtown/Darien/Orange/Southport/Stamford • **House of Naan**, New Haven • **INDIA**, West Hartford • **Indigo Indian Bistro**, Manchester • **Kolam**, Newtown • **Naatiya Indian Restaurant**, Bloomfield • **Priya Indian Cuisine**, Rocky Hill • **Tikkaway Grill**, New Haven • **Utsav Indian Cuisine**, Wethersfield



Best French: Le Fat Poodle, Old Greenwich

Bob Luckey

Best French

Àvert Brasserie, West Hartford • **Bistro Versailles**, Greenwich • **Le Fat Poodle**, Old Greenwich • **Le Petit Café**, Branford • **Luc's**, Ridgefield • **Present Company**, Simsbury • **Sucre Sale**, Ridgefield • **Union League Cafe**, New Haven

Luc's: "Luc's — my French bistro love. The vibe, the eats, the feeling like you're not in Fairfield County are always a winner. All about the mussels and the steak frite, oh, and the cassoulet, too."
— Alicia Ghio, *Local Food Rocks* founder and writer, *Tribuna* newspaper culinary columnist

Best Chef

Tyler Anderson, Millwright's, Simsbury • **Carlos Baez**, The Spread and El Segundo, Norwalk • **Bun Lai**, Miya's, New Haven • **Geoff Lazlo**, Mill Street Bar & Table, Greenwich • **Brian Lewis**, The Cottage, Westport • **Jeffrey Lizotte**, Present Company, Simsbury • **Dan Magill**, Arethusa, [al](#)

tavolo, Bantam • **Bill Taibe**, Jesup Hall, The Whelk and Kawa Ni, Westport • **Jeff Taibe**, Taproot, Bethel • **James Wayman**, Oyster Club, Mystic • **Matt Wick**, Osa, Middletown

Best Italian

Alforno Ristorante & Brick Oven Pizzeria, Old Saybrook • **Aranci 67**, Wilton • **Ballo Italian Restaurant**, Mohegan Sun • **Bar Sugo**, Norwalk • **Carbone's Ristorante**, Hartford • **La Marea Ristorante**, Old Saybrook • **La Tavola Ristorante**, Waterbury • **La Zingara**, Bethel • **Luce**, Middletown • **O.C. Kitchen-Bar**, Rocky Hill • **Olives and Oil**, New Haven • **Restaurant Bricco**, West Hartford • **Roma Ristorante Italiano**, Oakville • **Salute**, Hartford • **Tarry Lodge**, New Haven/Westport • **Treva**, West Hartford

Aranci 67: "With house-made pasta, creative daily specials and some of the best desserts I've ever had, Aranci 67 continues to impress with its old-school, flavor-over-flash menu." — Erik Ofgang, *Connecticut Magazine* senior writer

Best Latin American/Spanish

Cactus Rose, Wilton • **Chango Rosa**, Hartford • **Cibus**, Stratford • **Costa del Sol**, Hartford • **Crave**, Ansonia • **Olea**, New Haven • **Planeta Brazil**, Danbury • **Rubamba**, New Haven • **Valencia Lucheria**, Norwalk

Crave: "The Latino twists to New American food make diners smile and want to come back for more." — Gary Stoller, *shortescapes.net* publisher

Best Mexican

Baja's, Orange • **Don Carmelo's Mexican Grill & Tequila Bar**, Norwalk • **El Mercado**, Hartford • **El Paso**, Plainville • **Mexicali Rose**, Newtown • **Papaya Mexican Grill**, Danbury • **Rincon Taqueria**, Norwalk • **Sayulita**, Glastonbury • **Taqueria Mexico**, Wallingford

Papaya Mexican Grill: "Hole-in-the-wall family joint with some of the best tacos around." — Alicia Ghio, *Local Food Rocks* founder and writer, *Tribuna* newspaper culinary columnist

Best Middle Eastern/Mediterranean

Ambrosia, Cromwell • **Lebanese Cuisine**, Bethel • **Midpoint Istanbul Fine Dining**, New Haven • **Mykonos Mediterranean Restaurant**, Newington • **Noujaim's Bistro**, Winsted • **Tangiers International Market**, Hartford • **Zohara**, West Hartford

Ambrosia: “Little restaurant with crepes made right there, a nice staff, and great Greek iced coffee.” — Jenna Kijowski and Jessica Bishop, CT Ain’t So Bad

Best Asian

Asian Bistro, Rocky Hill • **Great Taste**, New Britain • **Ki Asian Bistro & Sushi**, Danbury • **Midori**, Hamden • **Shu**, West Hartford and Fairfield • **Taste of China**, Clinton/New Haven • **Toro**, Newtown

Shu: “Tucked away in a strip mall by an Asian supermarket in West Hartford, Shu delivers high-quality Szechuan food like no other restaurant in Connecticut. Flavors are intense but well balanced, and stand worlds apart from the usual cadre of Chinese restaurants. A second location is in Fairfield.” — Nick Caito, Rhode Island Beverage Journal, formerly of the Hartford Courant and Hartford Magazine

Best Pho/Ramen

Kawa Ni, Westport • **Mecha Noodle Bar**, Fairfield/Norwalk/New Haven • **Nom-eez**, Bridgeport • **Pho 501**, East Hartford • **Pho Boston**, West Hartford • **Pho Vietnam**, Danbury • **Ramen-Ya**, Berlin

Pho Vietnam: “This small BYOB restaurant is always packed for good reason. One of the original pho hot spots in Connecticut, it was opened by Tony Pham before he partnered with Richard Reyes on the Mecha Noodle Bar concept. Though it lacks the flair of Mecha Noodle Bar, it has the same great flavors!” — Erik Ofgang, Connecticut Magazine senior writer

Best Sushi

Hana Sushi, Manchester • **Ki Asian Bistro & Sushi**, Danbury • **Miya’s**, New Haven • **Sushi Red**, Plainville • **Toro**, Newtown • **Yokohama**, New Milford

Miya’s: “What chef/owner Bun Lai has done in the sustainable food scene is impressive. What he does with his menu is impossible. Yet he does it — and does it like no one else on Earth.” — Steve Wood, ctmq.org founder and writer

Best Roadside

Blackie's Hot Dogs, Cheshire • **Capitol Lunch**, New Britain • **Clam Castle**, Madison • **Clamp's Hamburger Stand**, New Milford • **Costello's Clam Shack**, Noank • **El Pollo Guapo**, Wethersfield • **Heibeck's Stand**, Wilton • **K LaMay's Steamed Cheeseburgers**, Meriden • **Merritt Canteen**, Bridgeport • **Rawley's Drive-In**, Fairfield • **Super Duper Weenie**, Fairfield • **Ted's Restaurant**, Meriden

Super Duper Weenie: "Long before food-truck fare attained hipster cred, Gary Zemola was preaching — and practicing — the gospel of carefully sourced, fastidiously crafted fast food: namely hot dogs, french fries, and relishes and condiments he makes himself in house. There's a reason why people like me keep coming back, decade after decade, and wait like vultures for our orders to emerge from Gary's grill: Nothing tastes as good." — Sarah Gold, former *New York Times* dining critic

Best Deli

A&S Italian Fine Foods, Fairfield • **Bradley & Wall Gourmet Foods**, Madison • **Coffees Country Market**, East Lyme • **D&D Market**, Wethersfield • **Gaetano's**, Stratford/Monroe/Westport • **Harbor Harvest**, Norwalk • **Katz's Deli**, Woodbridge • **Kensington Market**, Berlin • **Rein's Deli**, Vernon • **Rosa's Deli**, Wallingford • **Sierra Delicatessen**, Norwalk • **The Underground Deli**, New Britain • **Wilton Deli**, Wilton

A&S Italian Fine Foods: "A zillion sandwiches are on the menu, and they stack them high whether you ask for cold cuts or veggies. The salads are simple and delicious, and the meats are so attractive that you will wind up bringing some home for dinner or the freezer." — Gary Stoller, *shortescapes.net* publisher

Gaetano's: "Gaetano's is the perfect Italian deli. Select from an overhead menu of sandwich options and you can't go wrong, but dream up anything you want, and you can have it. The prepared food case is stocked with pasta dishes, cured olives, stuffed filets, and anything else they feel like making, and the shelves are lined with ingredients for Italian cooking. Get the Mecoman sub and thank me later." — James Gribbon, *ctbites.com* contributor

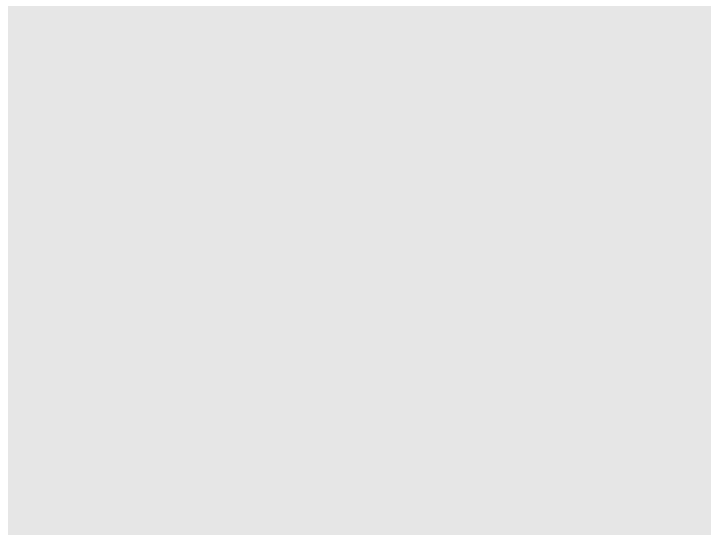
Best Food Truck

Chief Brody's Banh Mi, New Haven • **Eggz**, Bethel • **The Green Grunion**, Danbury • **HAPA**, Stamford • **La Patrona**, New Haven • **The Meat Truck**, New Haven • **Mexcalli**, New Haven • **Munchies Food Truck**, New London • **Nosh Hound**, Stamford • **Rice and Beans**, Danbury • **The Whey Station**, Middletown

La Patrona: “my North, my South, my East and West, / My working week and Sunday rest, / My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song.” — Michael Lee-Murphy (by way of poet W.H. Auden), *Connecticut Magazine* writer

Best Beer Bar

@ **The Corner**, Litchfield • **b Restaurants**,



Best Beer Bar: Cask Republic, New Haven

Christina Hennessy

Fairfield/Glastonbury/Milford/Simsbury/Stamford/West Hartford • **Barcade**, New Haven • **The Beer Collective**, New Haven • **The Blind Rhino**, Norwalk • **Brewport**, Bridgeport • **Cask Republic**, New Haven • **Coalhouse Pizza**, Stamford • **Craft 260**, Fairfield • **Eli Cannon’s Tap Room**, Middletown • **The Hops Company**, Derby • **J. Timothy’s Taverne**, Plainville • **McLadden’s**, West Hartford/Simsbury • **MiKro Beer Bar**, Hamden • **My Place Pizza and Restaurant**, Newtown

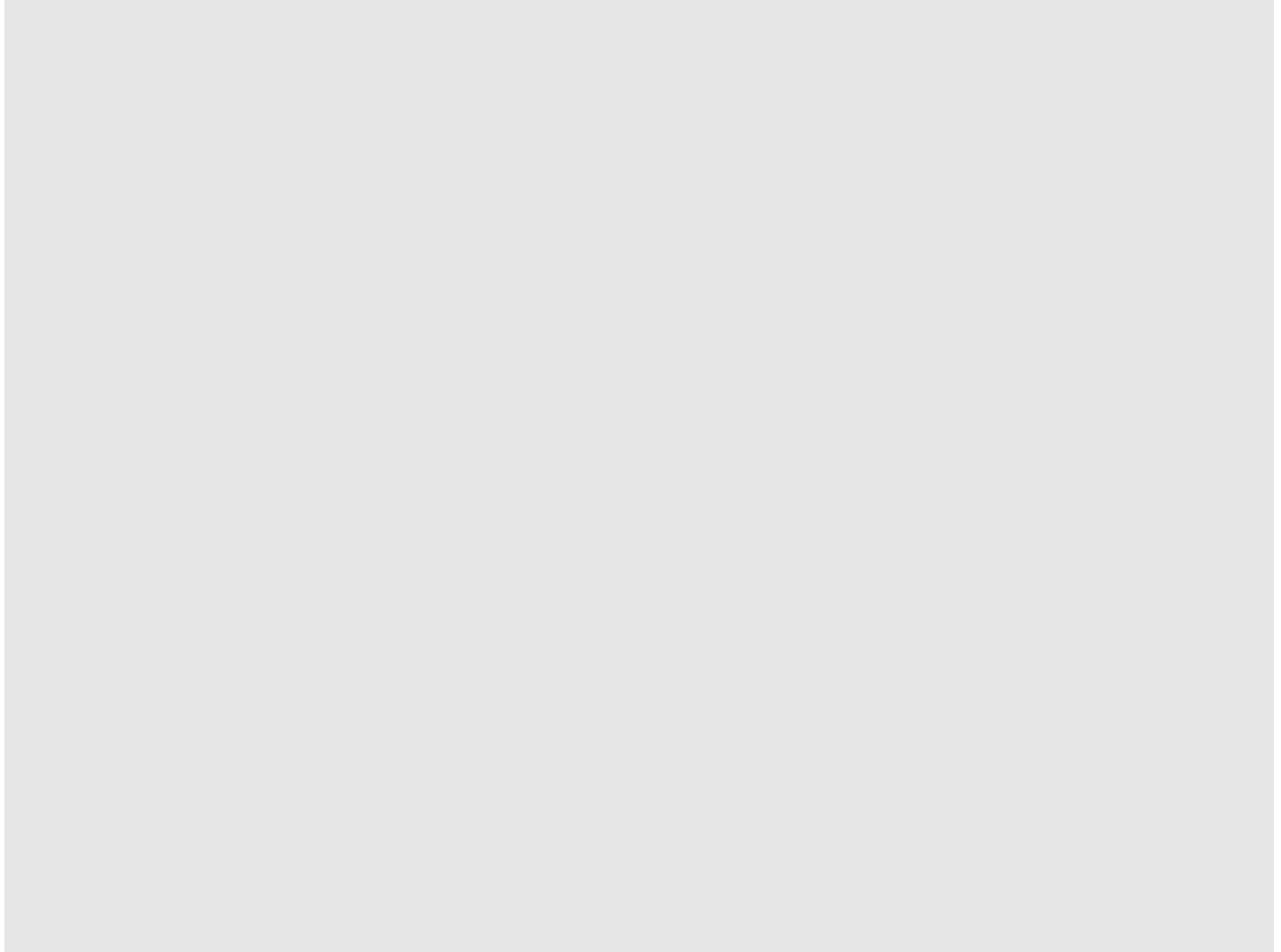
Eli Cannon’s Tap Room: “It’s a bar. It has ... ‘character.’ And it has perhaps the best and most expansive (without being too expansive) and consistently great tap list in the state.” — Steve Wood, *ctmq.org* founder and writer

Best Cocktails

116 Crown, New Haven • **Bin 228**, Glastonbury • **Cure**, Unionville • **The Essex**, Essex • **Geronimo**, Fairfield/New Haven • **Jesup Hall**, Westport • **Little River Restoratives**, Hartford • **M/BAR**, Mystic • **Match**, Norwalk • **Ordinary**, New Haven

Cure: “Man, the cocktail program here reminds me of something that would be in NYC. You can also get a bacon flight. Yup, winner, winner.” — Chef Plum, host of *Restaurant Road Trip* on News

116 Crown: "Toward the far south end of Crown Street, away from the clubs, theaters and most foot traffic is a cocktail bar worth the walk. Herbs and aromatics sit atop a softly glowing alabaster bar, and the cocktail options run from subtle to bracing and bold to those for professionals. Among the latter is the Chantme: gin and chartreuse with a peaty scotch float that's like a vaccination against the mundane." — James Gribbon, *ctbites.com* contributor



Best Barbecue: Smokin' With Chris, Southington

Arnold Gold

Best Barbecue

Bear's Smokehouse Barbecue, Hartford/Windsor/South Windsor • **Chango Rosa**, Hartford • **Chester's Barbecue**, Groton/Clinton • **The Cue**, Danbury • **Hoodoo Brown BBQ**, Ridgefield • **Nat's Real Pit BBQ**, Windsor (*closed as of June 2018*) • **Smokin' with Chris**, Southington • **The Stand**, Branford • **Taino Smokehouse**, Middletown

Hoodoo Brown BBQ: “Often times at barbecue joints, places have a few good smoked meat offerings, but everything that comes off the smoker at ‘The Brown Residence’ is killer, especially the cracklin’ skin pork belly and their juicy, salt and coarse pepper-rubbed brisket.” — Andrew Dominick, *Westchester Magazine* and *ctbites.com* writer

Best Burgers

b Restaurants, Fairfield/Glastonbury/Milford/Simsbury/Stamford/West Hartford • **The Beer Collective**, New Haven • **Bobby’s Burger Palace**, Mohegan Sun • **GoldBurgers**, Newington • **Harlan Publick**, Norwalk • **Harlan Social**, Stamford • **Haywire Burger Bar**, Westbrook • **Jack Rabbits**, Old Saybrook • **Louis’ Lunch**, New Haven • **Match**, Norwalk • **Prime 16**, New Haven/Orange • **Republic at the Linden**, Hartford • **The Spread**, Norwalk • **Ted’s Restaurant**, Meriden

Republic at the Linden: “All those choices... I love the chorizo burger ... sooo good. And the place is just stunningly gorgeous! Shout out to chef Wolf!” — Chef Plum, host of *Restaurant Road Trip* on News 8

Best Steak

Barbarie’s Black Angus, Danbury • **The Capital Grille**, Hartford/Stamford • **David Burke Prime**, Foxwoods • **Joseph’s Steakhouse**, Bridgeport • **JV’s Taproom**, Plainville • **Washington Prime**, Norwalk/Redding



Best Tapas/Small Plates: Barcelona, New Haven/Fairfield/Norwalk/Stamford/West Hartford

Autumn Driscoll

Best Tapas/ Small Plates

Aspen, Old Saybrook • **Barcelona**, New Haven/Fairfield/Norwalk/Stamford/West Hartford • **Cafémantic**, Willimantic • **Costa del Sol**, Hartford • **El Segundo**, Norwalk • **Kala Bistro**, North Haven • **Locali Pizza Bar & Kitchen**, New Canaan • **Olea**, New Haven • **Osa**, Middletown • **Three Sheets**, New Haven • **Zaragoza**, New Milford

"Osa is Chef Matt Wick's love letter to Connecticut and hospitality. He pours his soul into the food, starting with the ingredients he either forages himself, or sources from top local producers. Tip: Share a few of the wood-fired small plates and a bottle of one of their delightful Italian wines." — Alycia Chrosniak, cteatsout.com founder and editor in chief

Zaragoza, New Milford: “Tapas are the answer to entrée-commitment issues, and Zaragoza is the answer to bored-taste bud problems. We love interesting ingredient combos, and Zaragoza does it so well! Also, the cocktails.” — Lora Karam and Beverley Canepari, *Unlocking Litchfield* and *Unlocking Fairfield*

Most Romantic

2 Hopewell, Glastonbury • **August**, New Haven • **The Golden Lamb Buttery**, Brooklyn • **The Hopkins Inn**, Warren • **Le Petit Café**, Branford • **The Mayflower Dining Room**, Washington • **Millwright’s**, Simsbury • **ON20**, Hartford • **Present Company**, Simsbury • **The Restaurant at Winvian Farm**, Morris • **Schoolhouse at Cannondale**, Wilton • **Union League Cafe**, New Haven • **Vue 24**, Foxwoods • **The White Hart**, Salisbury • **Zinc**, New Haven

The Restaurant at Winvian Farm: “Carry on with the romanticism at one of their cottages. Just sayin’.” — Lora Karam and Beverley Canepari, *Unlocking Litchfield* and *Unlocking Fairfield*

Best Desserts

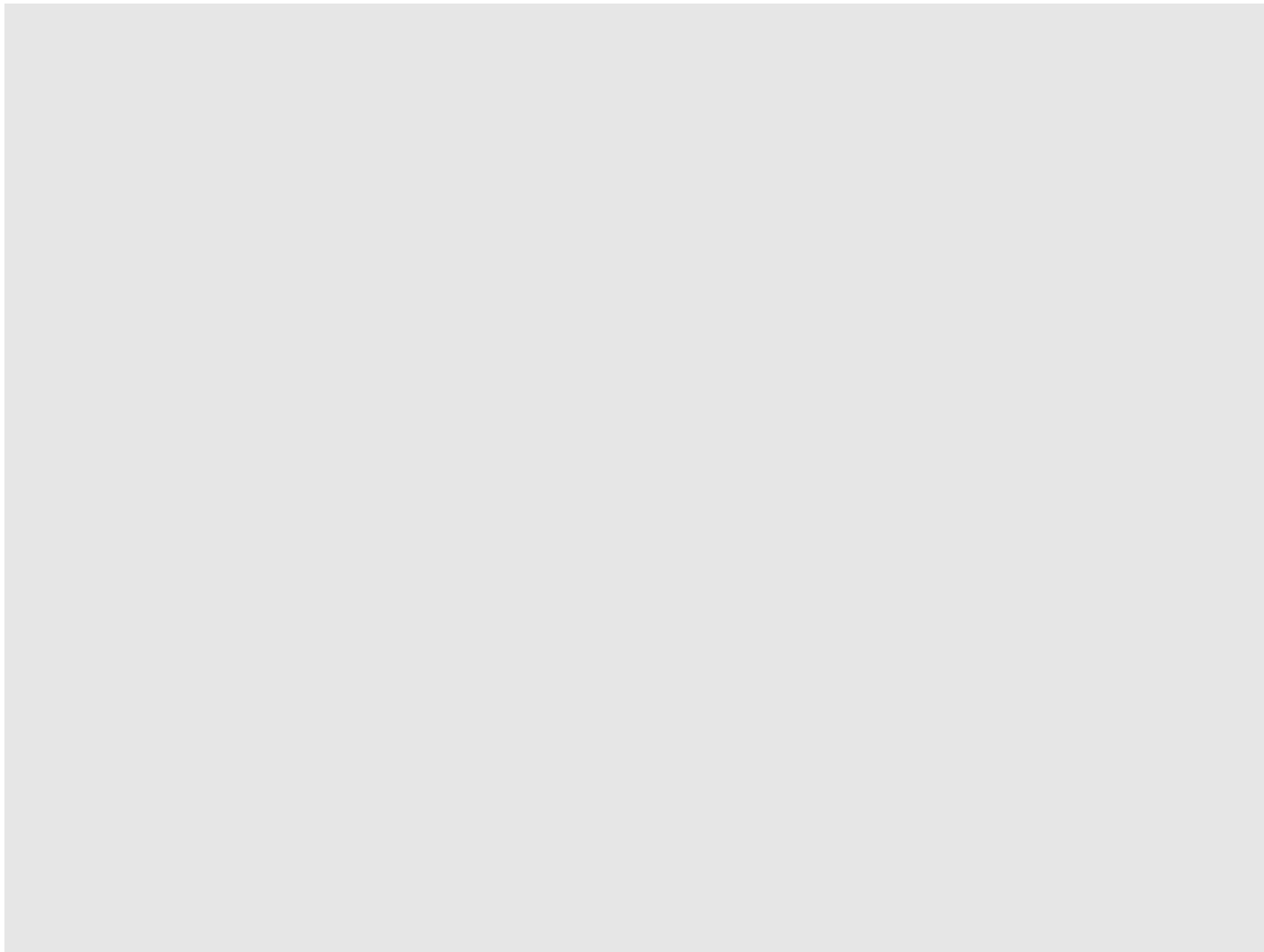
Aranci 67, Wilton • **Arethusa al tavolo**, Bantam • **Cavey’s**, Manchester • **The Drunk Alpaca**, Shelton • **Flatbread Company**, Canton • **Forever Sweet Bakery**, Norwalk • **NoRA Cupcake Company**, Middletown • **Rooster Co.**, Newington • **Savour Cafe & Bakery**, Centerbrook • **SoNo Baking Co.**, Norwalk/Darien • **Union League Cafe**, New Haven

“The pies and cakes at The Drunk Alpaca are the sort of things I want to eat every day. Everyone always talks about a balanced diet and eating healthy, but the grub that The Drunk Alpaca churns out could probably even convince The Rock to give up on his workout routine, put on 300 pounds and change his name to The Boulder.” — Ken Tuccio, host of *First Thing* on 95.9 The Fox

Best Breakfast/Brunch

Cristy’s, Madison/Westbrook • **Dakota Steakhouse**, Rocky Hill • **Fresh Salt at Saybrook Point Inn**, Old Saybrook • **King’s**, Newtown • **The Little Goose**, Fairfield • **Mill Street Bar & Table**, Greenwich • **Mothership Bakery & Cafe**, Danbury • **O’Rourke’s Diner**, Middletown • **Sahadi’s Hotties**, New Britain • **Spicy Green Bean**, Glastonbury • **The Spread**, Norwalk • **Valencia Luncheria**, Norwalk

Valencia Luncheria: “While this is certainly not a traditional brunch, it’s a delicious one. From chorizo omelettes to the utterly addictive green sauce (put it on everything, please) Valencia’s brunch is a great way to start your Sunday morning.” — Adeline Crites-Moore, *Adeline Jessica*



Best Outdoor Dining: The Wharf, Madison

Mara Lavitt

Best Outdoor Dining

Abby's Place, Essex • **The Blue Oar**, Haddam • **Captain Scott's Lobster Dock**, New London • **Elm City Social**, New Haven • **L'Escale**, Greenwich • **Rooftop 120**, Glastonbury • **Shad Row**, Rocky Hill • **Washington Prime**, Norwalk/Redding • **The Wharf at the Madison Beach Hotel**, Madison • **White Horse Country Pub and Restaurant**, New Preston

The Wharf at the Madison Beach Hotel: "Just gorgeous dining right on the water. Fantastic food. Clean, refreshing, local seafood and more." — Chef Plum, host of *Restaurant Road Trip* on News 8

Best Vegetarian/Vegan

Bloodroot, Bridgeport • **Claire’s Corner Copia**, New Haven • **Flora**, West Hartford • **G-Zen**, Branford • **Heirloom Food Co.**, Danielson • **ION**, Middletown • **Shandals Vegetarian Cafe**, Bridgeport • **The Sweet Beet**, Granby • **Three Girls Vegan Creamery**, Guilford • **Udupi Bhavan**, Middletown

Best Hidden Gem

Àvert Brasserie, West Hartford • **Bar Bouchée**, Madison • **Ecco Rooftop Eatery & Bar**, Bethel • **Edo II**, Danbury • **Hidden Valley Eatery**, Washington Depot • **Lebanese Cuisine**, Bethel • **Miss Barbara Jean’s Soul Food Kitchen**, Norwalk • **Nouveau Monde Wine Bar + Bistro**, Sandy Hook • **Oliva on Main**, Bethlehem • **Pappadella’s Restaurant**, Danbury • **The Rustic Cafe**, East Lyme • **Sails Bar & Grill**, Rowayton • **Shu**, West Hartford • **Sushi X2**, Stamford • **Teff**, Stamford

Teff: “The Ethiopian and Eritrean menu might not be familiar to the average restaurant goer, but it’s good. Like really good. The staff knows exactly how to educate you on grub that you might not be familiar with, and you find yourself enjoying an entirely different type of experience while longing for more. Great stuff.” — Ken Tuccio, host of *First Thing* on 95.9 The Fox

Best Pizza

BAR, New Haven • **Brick + Wood**, Fairfield • **Bufalina**, Guilford • **Butchers & Bakers**, Farmington • **Camille’s Wood Fired Pizza**, Tolland • **Colony Grill**, Stamford/Fairfield/Milford/Norwalk • **Domenick & Pia Downtown Pizzeria**, Waterbury • **Fat Cat Pie Co.**, Norwalk • **Flatbread Company**, Canton • **Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana**, New Haven/Fairfield/Danbury/Manchester/West Hartford/Waterbury/Mohegan Sun • **Letizia’s Pizza**, Norwalk • **Lorenzo’s Restaurant**, Sandy Hook • **Modern Apizza**, New Haven • **PizzaCo**, Stratford • **Sally’s Apizza**, New Haven • **Zuppardi’s Apizza**, West Haven

“Three-way tie: Flatbread Company in Canton, BAR in New Haven and Modern Apizza in New Haven. Besides terrific flatbread/pizza, Flatbread and BAR have great, simple salads, and Flatbread’s desserts are decadent. Fans of Modern swear by a certain kind of pizza; lately, I have been addicted to artichoke and spinach.” — Gary Stoller, *shortescapes.net* publisher

Zuppardi’s Apizza: “With its fresh shucked clams and massive chunks of house-made sausage, Zupps deserves a place among the New Haven-style greats. You can also grab Zuppardi’s pies up the road in Derby at The Hops Company. Or head to the pizzeria’s website and order a six-pack of



10-inch pies that can be customized to your heart's content and shipped to someone who will treasure every bite." — Albie Yuravich, *Connecticut Magazine* editor in chief

Best Chicken Wings

The Blind Rhino, Norwalk • **Cheek's Chicken & Waffles**, Manchester • **Dew Drop Inn**, Derby • **J. Timothy's Taverne**, Plainville • **Smokey O'Grady's**, East Lyme • **Walrus + Carpenter**, Bridgeport

Best Affordable

Domenick & Pia Downtown Pizzeria, Waterbury • **Donahue's Madison Beach Grille**, Madison • **Dry Dock Bar & Grille**, Norwalk • **El Mercado**, Hartford • **Lucky Taco**, Manchester • **Mexicali Rose**, Newtown • **Mindy K Deli & Catering**, Old Saybrook • **Pepper Pot**, Southington

"Dry Dock is my go-to lunch spot. Sit me down, give me a bowl of their killer chili and their Nemo sandwich, I'm a happy man. Plus, it doesn't break the bank. I don't need to go take out a personal loan just because I want to eat a meal there twice a week." — Ken Tuccio, host of *First Thing on 95.9 The Fox*

Best Seafood

Liv's Oyster Bar & Restaurant, Old Saybrook • **Oyster Club**, Mystic • **The Place**, Guilford • **Red 36**, Mystic • **Shell & Bones Oyster Bar and Grill**, New Haven • **Stowe's Seafood**, West Haven • **Westfair Fish & Chips**, Westport • **The Whelk**, Westport

THE EXPERTS

Nick Caito, *Rhode Island Beverage Journal*, formerly of the *Hartford Courant* and *Hartford Magazine*

Alycia Chrosniak, *cteatsout.com* founder and editor in chief

Douglas Clement, *Edible Nutmeg* contributor, former *Connecticut Magazine* editor and writer

Adeline Crites-Moore, *Adeline Jessica Social Media*

Andrew Dominick, *Westchester Magazine* and *ctbites.com* writer

Daym Drops (Daymon Patterson), YouTube food critic

Alicia Ghio, *Local Food Rocks* founder and writer, *Tribuna* newspaper culinary columnist

Sarah Gold, former *New York Times* dining critic

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