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FOOD

TOP 10 NEW RESTAURANTS 2005

Ron Beigel - rbeigel@aol.com 01/05/2006 12:02 am

Long Island's ravenous eaters had plenty to celebrate in 2005. Creative American cuisine continued to quietly infiltrate neighborhood spots as young chefs, after cutting their teeth at top Manhattan destinations, move out here to pursue their dream as chef-owners. Slowly but surely, worldly choices abound as the population diversifies and Latin, Asian and Middle Eastern food is becoming more widely available. National barbecue chains staked a claim while down-home barbecue ventures continued to try their luck.

Here, in no particular order, are the Press' *Top 10 New Long Island Restaurants for 2005.*

Azer Baijan
1610 Old Country Rd., Westbury
516-228-0001
Don't let the name stop you from making this an option for friendly Turkish/Med specialties with some Silk Road-inspired flourishes.

Trevi
3357 Merrick Rd., Wantagh
516-783-6837
Chris Vacca spent time cooking with David Burke and it shows in new definitions of basic Italian comforts like chicken, crisp pizza and fine risottos.

Blue Lagoon
677 Rte. 109, West Babylon
631-225-7619
Creative chef John Brill's newest home survived early service glitches and makes this standout in West Babylon a must visit. (Closed for renovations during the month of January.)

Buoy One
1175 West Main St., Riverhead
631-208-9737
There's something about dining in a fish store that I love. Maybe it's the ambience or the knowledge that fish doesn't get much fresher. Or maybe it's just that Dave Girard was a protégé to legendary French chef Bernard Loiseau.

Collage
23 Wall St., Huntington
631-427-5256
Matthew Giuffrida's "Vision Of Fusion" is delectable fun. A knowing staff and an emphasis on wine makes this a winner all around.

6 Degrees
399 Jericho Tpke., Jericho
516-931-2727
Xavier Mayonove, chef de cuisine for many years at the departed French legend, La Cote Basque, is the man of vision and chef at this New American venture. Manhattan's loss is LI's gain

Sarge's Delicatessen and Restaurant
236 W. Jericho Tpke., Syosset
516-677-1900
Those same humongous sandwiches that you've attacked in the middle of the night at the original on Third Avenue in Manhattan can now be found out here. The warm and tender pastrami is unmatched in both counties.

F.O.O.D.
122 E. Montauk Hwy., Hampton Bays
631-723-3663
This tiny roadside shack is the unlikely locale for top continental fusion that can't help but feel friendly due to the tight quarters. (Open Seasonally)

Heirloom
107 Forest Ave., Locust Valley
516-609-2075
Chef/owner Kent Monkan (formerly with Panama Hattie's) calls his labor of love an "American Chef's House."

Farmer Bar Cutchogue Barbecue Company
4805 Depot Lane, Cutchogue
631-734-5410
Worth the drive for that country barbecue experience. As authentic as it gets around here.

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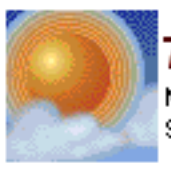
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