



# Best dishes 2012

BY JOAN REMINICK AND PETER M. GIANOTTI

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This has been a tasty year — as in hundreds of tastes. Even in a slow-growth economy, dozens of fine-dining restaurants and more humble eateries arrived, and many others improved during the past 12 months. Here are some of our favorites from the menus of 2012.

## JOAN REMINICK'S CHEAP EATS PICKS



PHOTO BY YANA PASKOVA

The tandoori duck breast is a specialty at Southern Spice in New Hyde Park.

- Juicy, nuanced pepper-crust tandoori duck breast over tikka masala sauce and spinach, also the dark meat chicken Chettinadu curry in a peppery gravy at **Southern Spice**, 1635 Hillside Ave., New Hyde Park; 516-216-5448, [southernspice.net](http://southernspice.net)
- Rousing, inspired fried cumin lamb, as well as complex West Lake beef soup at the authentically Chinese **Yao's Diner**, 2503 Middle Country Rd., Centereach; 631-588-2218
- Fragrant, subtly spicy chicken tikka masala at **The Good Life**, 1039 Park Blvd. Massapequa Park; 516-798-4663, [thegoodlifeny.com](http://thegoodlifeny.com)
- The irresistible "ganga roll" — flaky Indian roti pancake wrapped around roast duck with hoisin and spicy rémoulade — at **Fancy Lee**, 101 W. Main St., Babylon; 631-422-6505, [fancyleeny.com](http://fancyleeny.com)
- Voluptuous, subtly perfumed white truffle tuna at **Sushi Ko**, 2063 Merrick Rd., Merrick; 516-378-9888, [sushikoli.com](http://sushikoli.com)
- Bright, herbal Israeli appetizer plate with falafel, tabbouleh, hummus and babaganosh at **Ahuva's Grill**, 1326 Peninsula Blvd., Hewlett; 516-341-0400, [ahuvagrill.com](http://ahuvagrill.com)
- Deeply comforting roast pork ramen soup; also juicy, hyper-flavorsome yakitori (bacon-wrapped quail egg and shrimp, among many favorites) at **Daisho of Japan**, 308 Main St., Huntington; 631-385-8102, [daishony.com](http://daishony.com)
- Crisp, plump and briny fried Ipswich clams, a recent menu addition at **Old Fields**, 81 Broadway, Greenlawn; 631-754-9868, [oldfieldsgreenlawn.com](http://oldfieldsgreenlawn.com)
- Flaky, fabulous biscuit — big as a softball — with creamy andouille sausage gravy at **Biscuits & Barbeque**, 106 E. Second St., Mineola; 516-493-9797
- Super-smoky, tender St. Louis ribs, as well as equally grand smoked chicken at **Tennessee Jed's**, 3357 Merrick Rd., Wantagh; 516-308-3355, [jeds.li](http://jeds.li)
- Wholesome, satisfying whole-grain cereal served with honey and a mix of strawberries, blackberries and blueberries at **Relish**, 2 Pulaski Rd., Kings Park; 631-292-2740, [relishkingspark.com](http://relishkingspark.com)
- Light yet ever-so-soulful fried chicken and waffles at **Pretty Toni's Café**, 759 W. Merrick Rd., Valley Stream; 516-285-8664, [prettytoniscafe.com](http://prettytoniscafe.com)

## PETER M. GIANOTTI'S FINE DINING PICKS



PHOTO BY RANDEE DADONIA

Sautéed Montauk striped bass, served at 18 Bay on Shelter Island

- Classic Beijing duck and nouvelle kung pao monkfish at **Monsoon**, 48 Deer Park Ave., Babylon; 631-587-4400, [monsoonny.com](http://monsoonny.com)
- Rich butter-poached lobster with citrus beurre blanc and lobster-bisque emulsion; and pressed suckling pig with caraway-lavender honey at **Roots Bistro Gourmand**, 399 Montauk Hwy., West Islip; 631-587-2844, [rootsli.com](http://rootsli.com)
- Deftly done Dover sole meunière; and double-cut pork chop with braised fennel and cherry peppers at **Rialto**, 588 Westbury Ave., Carle Place; 516-997-5283, [rialtorestaurantli.com](http://rialtorestaurantli.com)
- Savory garganelli pasta with pork-shoulder ragu, and semolina-crust fried chicken at **Orto**, 90 North Country Rd., Miller Place; 631-473-0014, [restaurantorto.com](http://restaurantorto.com)
- Refined gorgonzola-and-leek ravioli with tomato-sorrel butter, and penne with spicy oven-roasted tomato sauce at **Nick & Toni's**, 136 N. Main St., East Hampton; 631-324-3550, [nickandtonis.com](http://nickandtonis.com)
- Delicate white-carrot sformato, crisp-skinned Montauk striped bass, and peach-and-cherry cobbler at **18 Bay**, 23 N. Ferry Rd., Shelter Island; 631-749-0053, [18bayrestaurant.com](http://18bayrestaurant.com)
- Zesty lemon chicken, and pork osso buco at **Ciao Bella!**, 1310 Broadway, Hewlett; 516-569-2654, [ciobellahewlett.com](http://ciobellahewlett.com)
- Inviting New York strip steak, and spaghetti and meatballs at **J. Michaels Tuscan Steakhouse**, 688 Fort Salonga Rd., Northport; 631-651-9411, [jmichaelstuscansteakhouse.com](http://jmichaelstuscansteakhouse.com)
- Prime sirloin steak, linguine "Zsa Zsa" with pancetta and fried egg, and deviled eggs with chives at **Hendrick's Tavern**, 1305 Old Northern Blvd., Roslyn; 516-621-1200, [hendrickstavern.com](http://hendrickstavern.com)
- Dazzling spice-roasted lobster with braised onions, saffron and fennel, gnocchi with red kuri squash and brown butter, and autumn-vegetable ragout at **Topping Rose House**, 1 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Tpke., Bridgehampton; 631-537-0870, [toppingrosehouse.com](http://toppingrosehouse.com)
- Pristine sushi and sashimi at **Ginza**, 45 Carmans Rd., Massapequa; 516-882-9688, [ginzali.com](http://ginzali.com)
- Vibrant swordfish "chop," grilled swordfish with sweet sausage in carrot-chive broth, and lobster-and-corn chowder at **The Plaza Café**, 61 Hill St., Southampton; 631-283-9323, [plazacafe.us](http://plazacafe.us)