



New York Tri-State Area

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New & Notable Restaurants 2010

In May, *Wine & Spirits* held its Second Annual *Top of the List* tasting, honoring the Most Popular Wines in our 21st Annual Restaurant Poll. More than 120 wineries attended, pouring those wines in addition to their own favorites.

It was a lot of great wine, and great wine is always better with food. So we researched the most intriguing new restaurants in the New York Tri-State area. Then, to honor the spirit in which the Most Popular Wines earned their accolades, we invited chefs from those New & Notable Restaurants to dish up small tastes of what they are cooking. Here are some of the highlights.



SD26 | *San Domenico's* *pappa col pomodoro* (Tuscan bread soup) was the sleeper hit of the event. As simple as tomato-dampened bread may be, it was satisfying and substantial on the surface while multilayered in flavor and texture—complexities a glass of **Banfi 2004 Brunello** brought to the fore. Sangiovese grosso played up the acidity and fruit in the dish and drew out its herbal and smoky notes. The surprise match? Tempranillo: The bright **Marqués de Cáceres 2006 Rioja Crianza** in particular, its acidity drawing a parallel to sangiovese's and meeting those tomatoes head-on for a mouthwatering combination.

The Vanderbilt

The Vanderbilt's Veal Tongue Tonatto was one of the more challenging dishes served up at the *Top of the List*, at once delicate and powerful in flavor. Yet the **Duckhorn Merlot**—conveniently situated just across from the veal tongue—had the generosity of fruit as well as the acidity to stand up to the pickles—demonstrating the sort of flexibility that puts this wine toward the top of *The Restaurant Top 50* year in and year out.



Salumeria Rosi | As chef Cesare Casella sliced salumi for guests, he offered wine suggestions as well. "Champagne with prosciutto or lambrusco is perfect," he said. "It gives a sense to be happy." Many people agreed, glass of **Roederer Brut Premier** in hand, although glasses of Argentine malbec—the nearer choice—were just as popular, the soft plumminess of the grape nestling up to the fat in the meat. "For the mortadella, a dry riesling," Casella directed, and wisely: **Chateau Ste. Michelle's 2008 Eroica** opened up the flavors of the meat, while the fat made the wine taste big, rich and ripe. Then again, the savory funk of **Muga's 2001 Prado Enea** played up the porkiness of the salumi in a delicious way...



A Voce | Ricotta mousse sounds so delicate that anything beyond a glass of bubbly seemed like it might be a stretch, but topped with sweet beets in a tangy citrus dressing, *A Voce's* dish was one of the most versatile of the evening. It worked beautifully with the slight, fruity sweetness of the **Lucian Albrecht Crémant d'Alsace Rosé**, of course, but the ricotta's richness also met the satin breadth of **Bastianich's 2008 Vespa Bianco**, a blend of chardonnay, sauvignon blanc and picolit, head-on for a sumptuous pairing. The earthy-sweet beets even allowed it to stretch to meet the slightly vegetal red fruit character of the **Merry Edwards 2007 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir**.

Northern Spy Food Co.

For the *Top of the List* event, chef Nathan Foot transformed part of his weekly half-pig order into a terrine, its sweet meat held together in a tangy gelatin and garnished with housemade pickles. Those pickles sent many wines running for cover, but not the grenache-based **Coup d'Etat 2007 from Andrew Rich** in Washington's Columbia Valley. Grenache's cherry fruit simply didn't back down, nor did it predominate. The pickles just tasted like part of the wine, a sharp vegetal note that highlighted the juiciness of the wine.



Aldea | We never found the man who told **Andrew Rich** that his roussanne was excellent with *Aldea's* Shrimp Alhinho—offered halfway across the room—but we owe him one, as he was spot on. Sure, smoky, high-acid tempranillos from **Ramírez de la Piscina** and **Sierra Cantabria** went well with the pimentón-spiked shellfish, but nothing worked quite as well as the rich almond tones of the roussanne. It wrapped around the plump, Portuguese-style shrimp chef George Mendes served up. The drier **Qupé Roussanne** worked well, too, inspiring several people to draw parallels between roussanne and alvarinho. We'll be making reservations at *Aldea* to check their theory.



Recipe | Chef David Bank brought suckling pig sliders—tender pork cradled in split-top hotdog buns. The sliders craved anything with high acidity, from the spicy **Dr. Loosen '07 Urziger Würtzgarten Riesling Spätlese** to a crisp **Mulderbosch '09 Chenin Blanc** and the earthy, cherry-scented **Cos '07 Cerasuolo di Vittoria**. *W&S* editor Joshua Greene hit on the strangest—and one of the best—pairings of the evening: **W. & J. Graham's 20-Year-Old Tawny Port**. “It’s sort of classical,” he said, by way of explanation, “the wine having acidity

LeFarm | Chef Bill Taibe’s devotion to New England farmers and foragers was clear in the ramp soup he brought to the *Top of the List*, celebrating the wild onion that’s as sought after on this coast as the chanterelle in other climes. The soup demonstrated why an obscurity such as the **Les Crêtes 2008 Valle d’Aosta Petite Arvine** is a sommelier favorite: While other whites wilted in the face of the soup’s earthy, allium punch, the nuttiness of the wine cleaned up the savory onion flavor of the soup, creating a kind of resonance.

Fort Defiance

This Red Hook restaurant had a steady stream of comers for its smoked oysters. Doused in melted butter, spiked with pickled jalapeños and topped with a crunchy flourish of julienned cucumber, they made a refreshing starter for the *Top of the List* event, although opinions of what to drink with them were divided: The exuberant, creamy **Chehalem Pinot Gris**? The saline **Boutari Santorini**? Or a peppery, bracing **Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc**? And that’s not even getting around to the rieslings.

Artisan Purveyors



Grand Central Oyster Bar

No *Wine & Spirits* event is complete without an oyster bar—it’s a hallmark of our annual *Top 100 Tasting* in San Francisco, too. This year, General Manager Jonathan Young showed up himself to shuck like mad. His Kusshis looked like deep-shelled Kumamotos, tiny, sweet-briny muscles cradled in brine. They’d just flown in from British Columbia and were in high demand, urged on by glasses of bubbly from **Veuve Cliquot**, **Louis Roederer**, **Roederer Estate**, **Segura Viudas** and **Lucian**

Albrecht, all of which were pouring nearby. The crowd around the table pushed some oyster lovers farther afield, where they discovered that **Botani’s dry moscatel** from Malaga was an exceptional match—floral notes playing up the delicacy of the oyster—while others favored the rich-on-rich sensation of the **De Conciliis Selim** from Campania.

Artisanal

Rather than doling out cheese cubes, *Artisanal* spooned sautéed mushrooms into a rich, creamy cheese flan. The earthy notes they imparted melded beautifully with the savory black fruit of **The Four Graces 2007 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** as well as any number of Riojas—the older styles in particular, such as **Ramírez de la Piscina’s 1999 Rioja Gran Reserva**.



La Maison du Chocolat & Kumquat Cupcakery

To end, *La Maison du Chocolat* dipped squares of tea-infused chocolate ganache into melted chocolate, then dropped them into a glass of **Roederer Estate Brut Rosé**—the effect was like a grown-up, hedonistic version of an egg cream. Nearby, Keavy Landreth of *Kumquat Cupcakery* in Brooklyn offered up platters of her moist, bite-sized iced cakes, while a happy three-way divide formed over pairing options: straight up, with a glass of bubbly or paired with the caramel-hued, not-too-sweet **Ramos Pinto 20-Year-Old Tawny**.



New & Notable New York Area Restaurant Directory

These 22 restaurants were some of the most exciting openings of late 2009/early 2010. They stand out for quality of food as well as drinks, whether the emphasis is on cocktails or wine.

BROOKLYN



Buttermilk Channel

524 Court St. (btw. Nelson & Huntington sts.) 718-852-8490, buttermilkchannelnyc.com
Doug Crowell defies the trend toward Euro-centric wine lists for locavore menus. His is all-American, with a particular emphasis on New York State wine. It’s in keeping with the food: Dishes like buttermilk fried chicken with cheddar waffles and duck meatloaf with sweet corn pudding keep locals from Carroll Gardens and beyond lining up for tables.

Fort Defiance

365 Van Brunt St. (at Dikeman St.) 347-453-6672, fortdefiancebrooklyn.com
Drinks writer St. John Frizell obsesses over all the liquids he serves, from coffee (ground to order) to seltzer water (dispensed from an updated antique tap) to the drinks he often mixes himself at his little Red Hook restaurant. Georgia-born chef Bobby Duncan turns out fluffy biscuits and gravy to match morning Bloody Marys, lunchtime muffled-tas big enough to excuse a little lunchtime drinking and a hanger steak that warrants sticking around after cocktail hour to delve into the wine list.

Rye

247 S. 1st St. (btw. Roebing & Havemeyer sts.) 718-218-8047, ryerestaurant.com
The 100-year-old oak bar is the star at this Williamsburg restaurant, with cocktails that live up to it in their old-school crafting. Likewise, the menu skews toward drink-friendly

dishes—duck rillettes, short rib sandwiches and grilled sardines—not fancy, but as expertly executed as the cocktails.

The Vanderbilt

570 Vanderbilt Ave. (at Bergen St.) 718-623-0570, thevanderbiltnyc.com
Saul Bolton built his reputation at *Saul*, a white tablecloth restaurant in Brooklyn’s Boerum Hill. At *The Vanderbilt* in Prospect Heights, he leaves the tables bare and focuses on drinks and the food to go with them: housemade charcuterie, pickled eggs, duck rillettes and other salty, flavor-packed little plates.

Vinegar Hill House

72 Hudson Ave. (btw. Water & Front sts.) 718-522-1018, vinegarhillhouse.com
In a quirky old neighborhood of wooden houses hard up against Brooklyn’s Navy Yard, Jean Adamson and her husband run *Vinegar Hill House*. The wood-fired oven is the focus here, turning out hearty plates like thick-cut Red Wattle pork chops and cast-iron roast chicken—excellent excuses to explore the wine list, which is small but deep in obscure French and Italian labels at excellent prices.

MANHATTAN

Aldea

31 W. 17th St. (btw. 5th & 6th aves.) 212-675-7223, aldearestaurant.com
George Mendes takes the Portuguese flavors of his heritage and applies the techniques he learned under chefs such as Alain Passard, Roger Vergé and Alain Ducasse in France; David Bouley and Kurt Gutenbrunner in NYC; and Martín Berasategui in Spain, raising classics like “goose rice” to an art form—and a delicious one at that. The wine list is an honor roll of Portugal’s best, supplemented with a careful selection of French and Spanish bottles.

A Voce

10 Columbus Circle 212-823-2523, avocerestaurant.com
If there’s any reason to visit the Time Warner Center, it’s to taste Missy Robbins’s

lusty Italian food. To drink, there are 7,500 bottles lining the restaurant’s glass walls, including an impressive selection of half-bottles that encourages exploration when it comes to food.

Colicchio & Sons

85 10th Ave. (at 15th St.) 212-400-6699, colicchioandsons.com
Tom Colicchio’s makeover of *Craftsteak* offers the chef’s meticulous cooking in a more casual atmosphere—along with a wider-ranging beverage list. The 25 beers and ciders on tap include Coopers Sparkling Ale—a winemaker favorite from Australia—and Etienne Dupont’s organic cider from Normandy. The wine list features heavy-hitters representing *Craftsteak*’s prerecession days (Borgogno Barolos back to 1961; a bevy of older grand cru Burgundies) and many more affordable options, like Crémant de Bourgogne and lagrein rosatos.

DBGB Kitchen & Bar

299 Bowery (btw. Houston & 1st sts.) 212-933-5300, danielnyc.com
Even when Daniel Boulud tries to go downscale, he still manages to go over the top. Which is okay in the case of *DBGB*, his fantastical blend of Lyonnaise brasserie and NYC diner. The 14 sausage selections are made in-house; the burger gets topped with pork belly confit; the beer selection fills eight pages and the wine list many more, focusing on the fringes of French appellations and on lesser-known names that offer great bang-for-the-buck.

Faustina

Cooper Square Hotel, 25 Cooper Sq. 212-475-3400, faustinanyc.com
Like any hotel restaurant, *Faustina* has its drawbacks. But let the tourists have their burgers. Concentrate instead on chef Scott Conant’s Italian-style dishes—in particular the *crudi*, inventive combinations of raw fish and flavorings—or anything else involving seafood (lardo-wrapped prawns, for instance). Paired with a bottle from a list deep in Italian obscurities, it’s nearly as good as *Scarpetta*, Conant’s rightly celebrated home restaurant on the west side of town.

La Fonda Del Sol

MetLife Building. E. 44th St. & Vanderbilt Ave.
212-867-6767, patinagroup.com

Like a swanky, modern restaurant in downtown Madrid, *La Fonda Del Sol* offers updated takes on the classics. Even better, to match the of-the-minute feel of chef Josh DeChellis's dishes, Nicholas Nahigian has packed his list with Spanish labels rarely found on these shores—and offers monthly wine classes exploring the modern-day wine scene in Spain.

Locanda Verde

377 Greenwich St. (at N. Moore St.)
212-925-3797, locandaverdenyc.com

Andrew Carmellini's prowess at turning out exceptional Italian food is undisputed, but Joshua Nadel's wine list on its own is worth the trip to Tribeca. It's a virtual tour of every undersung, overperforming appellation in Italy. The result is as delicious as it is enriching—mentally as well as wallet-wise.

Maiolino

Gramercy Park Hotel, 2 Lexington Ave.
212-777-2410, maialinonyc.com

Danny Meyer's latest venture takes him from *Gramercy Tavern* right to the edge of Gramercy Park. *Maiolino* is fashioned as a Roman trattoria, where chef Nick Anderer finds many ways to celebrate the little pig (a.k.a. *maialino*)—once Meyer's nickname, now the basis for *malfatti* (a suckling pig ragù with arugula), *coppa croccante* (a terrine with poached egg and lentils) or the special preparation of the pig itself. Sit at the bar for a glass of Prosecco and a selection of artisanal salumi, or order a lunch of pasta with a quartino from Stephen Mancini's well-chosen list.

Marea

240 Central Park S. (btw. 7th & 8th aves.)
212-582-5100, marea-nyc.com

Marea is expensive, no question. But it's worth checking out even if all you do is order a bowl of pasta at the bar and a glass of wine. Chef Michael White is a pasta magician—combine that prowess with the restaurant's focus on seafood and you have bliss in a bowl. Chris Cannon, a partner in the restaurant, has been behind many of NYC's best wine lists, from the low-key *Bar Veloce* to midtown's impressive *Alto*. His bent for lesser-known Italians is on full display here, with Campanian sparklings jousting for position with Champagnes and pelaverga holding pride of place next to nebbiolo.

Northern Spy Food Co.

511 E. 12th St. (btw. A & B aves.)
212-228-5100, northernspyfoodco.com

Nearly everything at *Northern Spy* comes from a farm in driving distance of NYC's East Village—from the kale that makes up chef Nathan Foot's signature salad to the Bobo roasted chicken and Hudson Valley pork. It's fresh, unfussy and incredibly delicious food—and it's perfectly matched by a tight wine list big on Finger Lakes rieslings and Hudson Valley sparkling ciders.

recipe

452 Amsterdam Ave. (btw. 81st & 82nd sts.)
212-501-7755; recipenyc.com

Part of the new wave of restaurants morphing the Upper West Side into a dining destination, this 26-seat dining room is in high demand for the market-driven food turned out by chefs David Bank and Shawn Paul Dalziel. The compact wine list—with most bottles under \$50 and available by the glass—makes it all the more welcome in the neighborhood.



Salumeria Rosi

283 Amsterdam Ave. (btw. 73rd & 74th sts.)
212-877-4800, salumeriarosi.com

The only thing better than great salumi is great salumi with wine. Both are on offer at this Upper West Side salumeria, a retail shop and restaurant chef Cesare Casella opened with the Rosi family of Parmacotto fame. Start with a lambrusco and see where it takes you.

SD26

19 E. 26th St. (at Madison Square Park)
212-265-5959, sd26ny.com

Manhattan wouldn't be the same without Tony May's *San Domenico*, which served sumptuous Italian food on Central Park South for 20 years. The new Madison Square Park location is far flashier than the old space, but the menu is grounded in down-to-earth Tuscan dishes. The 10,000-bottle wine list is impressive enough, but the real fun begins with the 24-bottle Enomatic wine dispenser, offering the option of 1-, 2- or

4-ounce pours of wines ranging from crisp friulanos to Barolo.

Tangled Vine Wine Bar & Kitchen

434 Amsterdam Ave. (at W. 81st St.)
646-863-3896, tangledvinebar.com

Wine is the focus at this diminutive wine bar on the Upper West Side, the list designed to please people who rejoice over the sight of wines like old Rioja blanco from R. López de Heredia poured by the glass. And the food—small pork belly sandwiches, clam pizzettes and the like—makes a terrific excuse for indulging.

Terroir Tribeca

24 Harrison St. (btw. Greenwich & Hudson sts.)
212-625-9463, wineisterroir.com

The new Tribeca branch of Paul Grieco and Marco Canora's *Terroir* wine bar is three times the size of the East Village branch, yet nothing has been lost in the expansion. If anything, it's allowed for greater zaniness, extending from the usual treatises on the greatness of riesling and the next-to-Godliness of Ridge Vineyards' Paul Draper to include tracts on the advantages of keg wine. Order the Finger Lakes riesling and taste for yourself.

Travertine

19 Kenmare St. (btw. Elizabeth St. & Bowery)
212-966-1810, travertinenyc.com

Manuel Treviño was sous chef at *Babbo* before opening his own place—an influence that can be tasted in lusty dishes like cured beef tongue with pickled ramps and Bing cherry mostarda or chewy picci tossed with Italian sausage, fennel and crunchy bread-crumbs. Late night, the place becomes a cocktail destination, with drinks like Seven Minutes to Sunrise, a refreshing mix of cucumber vodka, mint and basil.

CONNECTICUT

LeFarm

256 Post Rd. E. Westport, CT
203-557-3701, lefarmwestport.com

LeFarm regularly draws New Yorkers and locals to its quiet 30 tables in Westport, where chef Bill Taibe has built his menu around produce from his favorite Connecticut farms—as well as a few across state lines. Whether they're drawn by his artisan burrata or pan-roasted foie gras, they're finding some of the best food in Fairfield County. Taibe recently planted the first acre of his own farm to begin growing for the restaurant himself. ■