

DINING

Rockland restaurants we love: 13 places worth visiting before summer ends

Jeanne Muchnick Rockland/Westchester Journal News

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There are lots of reasons we love restaurants — and in many cases, it's not just because of the food. It's the friendly bartender who always knows your order, or the sense of community that envelops you the minute you walk through the door.

Restaurants are where we go to meet friends and family, to celebrate birthdays, toast new jobs and mourn old ones.

But now, as the industry struggles to survive due to the coronavirus pandemic, we love them more. Even with razor-thin margins, they're hanging on, re-adjusting menus, setting up new protocols and doing all they can to stay in the game — and keep diners safe, happy and well-fed.

Here's a few of our favorites and why we love them.

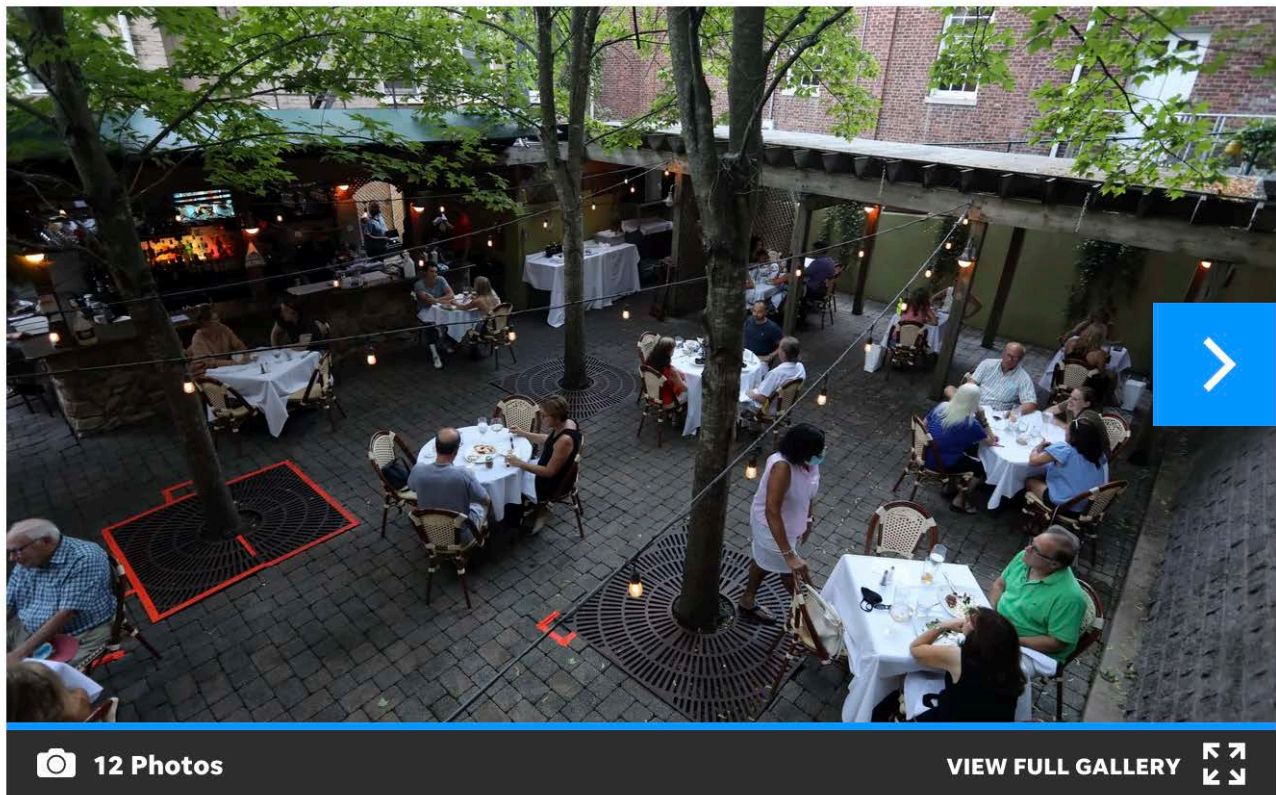


The backyard garden at Sidewalk Bistro in Piermont July 29, 2020. *Peter Carr/The Journal News*

For the (socially distanced) backyard

Sidewalk Bistro in Piermont has always delighted with its people-watching sidewalk seating but its shaded backyard, now outfitted with arrows for social distancing, is where the real magic happens. Filled with string lights and lots of greenery, it feels like an airy Parisian garden filled with bistro tables dressed in white cloths. Feast on mussels — there are three options here — or try the Wasabi salmon or Alsacienne pizzette and relish this little lush oasis. Another reason to love it: It's now open seven days a week.

Go: 482 Piermont Ave., Piermont, 845-680-6460, sidewalkbistro.com



Sidewalk Bistro in Piermont

The backyard garden at Sidewalk Bistro in Piermont July 29, 2020.

For the tacos

Tacos make people happy, which is what we all need now. Eight-month-old Craft Taqueria in New City makes them fresh to order, with precision, thought and lots of bold flavors. Even the masa is made from single-origen heirloom corn imported from Oaxaca, Mexico. Fillings include steak, chicken, shrimp, octopus, spring harvest (seasonal vegetables) and more, though our pick is the tuna tartare made with sushi-grade yellowfin tuna, soy-ginger dressing, daikon radish and mango-wasabit guacamole.

Go: 170 S. Main St., Suite 11, New City, 845-499-221, crafttaqueria.com

For the beach

Pier 701 Restaurant & Bar, with its tiki bar ambiance, is a perennial summer destination, but now there's more beachside seating. Owner/Executive Chef Denis Whitton had the area extended in light of the coronavirus pandemic and the need for more outdoor space. It's the ideal spot for digging your toes in the sand and enjoying chilled oysters on ice with a cold glass of chardonnay. Bonus points for the Instagram-worthy backdrop of the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge.

Go: 701 Piermont Ave., Piermont, 845-848-2550, pier701ny.com



Outdoor dining at The Valley Rock Inn in Sloatsburg

For that vacation feeling

Valley Rock Inn in Sloatsburg, surrounded by acres of protected parkland in Harriman State Park, oozes mountain charm and sophistication along with an ever-changing menu filled with farm fresh ingredients. Outdoor dining is available at the resort's Cantina and Summer Lounge on Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday for brunch, by reservation only. Guests

staying at the property also have private tables in the Rose Garden, or can eat by the pool or in their guest houses if requested in advance. Valley Rock also offers long, spread out tables in the Shade Garden for private events.

Go: 27 Mill St., Sloatsburg, 845-618-9123, valleyrockinn.com

For its expanded offerings

DPNB Pasta & Provisions in Nyack has always had a "not pasta" section but during the pandemic the food options have been expanded to allow for an array of choices for take-out (no indoor seating at the moment). Faves include Prosciutto and Plums, the Porchetta sandwich (slow roasted pork seasoned with fennel pollen, arugula, pickled onion and broccoli rabe pesto on Sullivan St. Bakery stirato) and the "Sicilipino" ice cream sandwich (Amarena cherry gelato on pandesal, a Filipino roll).

Go: 21 N. Broadway, Nyack,
845-353-2167, dpnbpastashop.com



The porchetta sandwich at DPNB Pasta in Nyack is made with slow roasted pork seasoned with fennel pollen, arugula, pickled onion, and broccoli rabe pesto.
Submitted



Danny DeMartino, the owner of Mountain House Pizza gives thumbs up at the newly built takeout window to accommodate customers during the coronavirus quarantine in Sparkill April 8, 2020. *Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News*

For the drive-thru

Danny DeMartino, owner of The Mountain House in Sparkill, saw the demand early for the best way to serve diners during the coronavirus. In April, he built a drive-thru window with a little umbrella for some tiki flair. Now the place, known for its thin-crust pizza, also has a newly built "pizza patio" outdoor area.

Go: 333 Route 340, Sparkill, 845-359-9191, mountainhousepizza.com



Outdoor tents at Station Kitchen in Congers. *Submitted*

For the tents

Hats off to restaurants with outdoor tents so that there's covered protection in extremely warm weather or rain. Among those we love: Norcina in New City, Sangria's and Station Kitchen and Bar in Congers, and Bailey's in Blauvelt.

For opening during the pandemic

Little Vietnam, which had been in Spring Valley since 1997, opened July 1 in the old Upper Nyack Grill space at 327 N. Highland Ave. Also new: Roost which moved to a larger location in Sparkill and Mimi's Plate in Tappan which expanded into the space next door and now offers indoor and outdoor seating along with an updated menu.

Jeanne Muchnick covers food and dining. [Click here](#) for her most recent articles and follow her latest dining adventures on Instagram @lohud_food. Check out lohud's latest subscription offers [here](#).