

The Top 10 restaurants of 2006

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John Novi, chef and owner of the Depuy Canal House in High Falls, sautés a firey skillet of shallots while preparing a dinner. THR/Tara Engberg

By Bill Guilfoyle

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From January to just last week. From Woodstock to Milford, Pa. (three times, no less!). From cafe to bistro to inn to, well, bistro to inn again. Times Herald-Record dining critic Bill Guilfoyle explored a lot of restaurants in 2006. Here are 10 that scored a four-star overall in The Dish in 2006. Descriptions are from the original reviews.

1 Maggie's in the Alley — 39 Main St., Chester; 469-4595

"The place has great food, reasonable prices and fine service, but is virtually unknown to all but a few lucky locals. One lonely sign points the way, but unless you know where you're going, it's unlikely you'll ever find this tiny treasure." (March 17 review)

2 New World Home Cooking — 1411 Route 212, Saugerties; 246-0900

"First and foremost, it is a true original, difficult to categorize and immensely creative. They serve full-flavored, unique and original food here. The decor is frantic, fun and frenetic. The menu is both a wonder and a puzzle, and the service here, while friendly and laid-back, is among the most expert in the Hudson Valley. Finally, prices are right on the mark." (April 7 review)

3 WaterWheel Cafe — 150 Water St., Milford, Pa.; 570-296-2383

"Milford makes for a great day trip, and the WaterWheel Café makes for a fine dining adventure, as well. The historic buildings are magnificent, their character and appeal priceless. The food here is first-rate; the chef, Susanna Gasiorek, has real talent and discipline. Service is friendly, and prices are very reasonable. The heck with gas prices, this place is worth it." (May 19 review)

4 Depuy Canal House — Route 213, High Falls; 687-7700

"Depuy Canal House was a pioneer in developing Nouvelle American cuisine and continues to deliver innovative cuisine in a gorgeous setting. This restaurant is a classic, a must-try for any fan of fine dining." (June 23 review)

5 Resort — 87 Debruce Road, Livingston Manor; 439-3400

"We take forever to plot out our meal, since there are so many intriguing dishes and so many ways to put a meal together. ... Resort is quite a place. Owned by Sims Foster, a local boy who worked in restaurants in New York City and returned to his roots, it's a true phenomenon for Sullivan County and may well represent the growth and promise of this region." (July 14 review. Resort has since closed its DeBruce Road location; it may be reopening on Main Street in Livingston Manor sometime soon.)

6 Artist's Palate — 307 Main St., Poughkeepsie; 834-8074

"This place is part restaurant, part art museum. Where are you? SoHo? Tribeca? DUMBO in Brooklyn? How about Main Street in downtown Poughkeepsie! ... The space is wonderful, and it's a great addition to the renaissance of downtown Poughkeepsie. ... The owners have a lot to be proud of." (Sept. 8 review)

7 Cliff Park Inn — 155 Cliff Park Road, Milford, Pa.; 570-296-6491

"The food is both creative and smart, and the prices are most reasonable considering the quality of the cuisine. The service team is well-trained and courteous, and the space, especially the view, is wonderful, both peaceful and serene. This is a special little oasis in Milford, about an hour's drive from Newburgh, but it feels worlds away, a retreat in the woods that's worth a drive from almost anywhere." (Oct. 13 review)

8Bywater Bistro — 419 Main St., Rosendale; 658-3210

"This place is fabulous. The creative, contemporary cuisine is perfect for the modern, stylish space. The service here was top-notch, and the prices and menu offer something for every style and taste. Sleepy Rosendale has another winner; we hope it has a long and fruitful life." (Dec. 1 review)

9Backyard Bistro — 1118 Route 17K, Montgomery; 457-9901

"This is a gem of a restaurant, a tiny wonder that feels more like someone's home than a restaurant. The food here is wonderful, service is friendly and informed, prices are more than reasonable, and the room is a cozy refuge from daily life. If you love food, go. This place shouldn't be missed." (Dec. 22 review)

10River Rock Inn — 554 Route 6/209, Milford, Pa.; 570-296-7177

"Except for the large sign by the road, there are few hints that this is a restaurant, or, as it calls itself, 'An American Bistro.' One look at the menu here and you realize that the label is on target. The selections here are a collection of innovative and interesting dishes with numerous global influences and components." (Dec. 29)

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