

SUMMER IN  
THE CITY

Dining, Drinks, Outdoor  
Concerts, Family  
Festivals, Shopping,  
Fitness, Grilling & More

BASIC ACTS  
OF KINDNESS

New Covenant  
Center—Renewed,  
Expanded and  
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# STAMFORD



**165 CATEGORIES**  
**120,000+ VOTES**  
The people  
have spoken!

HAVING  
TROUBLE  
COMING OUT  
OF YOUR  
SHELL?  
SWING BY  
**SIGN  
OF THE  
WHALE**  
WINNER BEST  
SINGLES SCENE  
(under 35)

JULY/AUGUST 2016 | \$5.95

**PLUS**  
2016-2017  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL  
GUIDE

## VEGETARIAN / HEALTH FOOD

### The Lime Restaurant

Come as you are to this area favorite. The only thing fussy here is attention to well-prepared vegetarian dishes; and the number of options on the menu is anything but limited. Consider the Falafel Pita Sandwich with garden greens, shredded carrots, cucumbers and organic brown rice. It's nothing you couldn't prepare at home, yet, somehow, is just so much more finger-licking good here. Bring your

omnivore friends, because the menu includes quite a few nonvegetarian options like Blackened Chicken and Tuna among the salads, roll-ups, and sandwiches. If you're a first-timer, consider the Soy-Carrot Loaf and salad with tahini dressing.

168 Main Ave., Norwalk, 203-846-9240 | [limerestaurant.com](http://limerestaurant.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G N** Green & Tonic (Cos Cob, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan)  
**S** Tabouli Grill **W** Embody Fitness  
**Gourmet F** Catch a Healthy Habit

## CATERER

### Marcia Selden Catering and Event Planning

Blank slate everything—now add layer by layer, building your perfect party, whether it's a soiree for six or a wedding for 300. This is how the catering and event-planning pros of Marcia Selden do it. Prime, polish, perfect. Marcia works with her daughter Robin and son Jeffrey and a talented team of foodies and party people to make sure that your occasion is outstanding. Every detail

is considered. And we hope you don't mind guests taking social-media-worthy food shots with their iPhones—the gourmet appetizers, entrées and desserts are irresistible to those with a taste and an eye for fine food served with beautiful presentation.

65 Research Dr., Stamford, 203-353-8000 | [marciaselden.com](http://marciaselden.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Watson's Catering **S** Marcia Selden Catering & Event Planning  
**N** Palmer's Catering (Darien)  
**W** AMG Catering & Events (Wilton)



## GLOBAL CUISINE



### LE PENGUIN / GOLD COAST WINNER ON... THE PERFECT MEAL

**Antoine Blech** and **Anshu Vidyarthi**, co-owners of Le Penguin (and sister hot spot Le Fat Poodle), take a holistic approach to the restaurant business. In other words, great food is nothing without a great atmosphere. The secret to their success? "Not only do we care about what our guests are eating, but we care about the experience. A simple, classic hospitality philosophy—food, wine, service, music and ambiance," says Anshu. "It's not just about appeasing hunger. It's about making people dine. It's such a pleasure to watch someone eat dinner rather than demolish it."

# GOLD COAST WINNERS



"For the perfect summer soirée, mix St.-Germain Elderflower Liqueur because it livens up wine, Champagne and seltzers. Château Miraval Côtes de Provence Rosé comes in a gorgeous bottle and pairs perfectly with summer salads and fish," says **Jeffrey Selden**. "I always have olives in my fridge—they keep forever—and handmade crackers. Serve them with cheese and you'll be summer-party ready for any last-minute guests."

**MARCIA SELDEN  
CATERING  
CATERER**



On your first visit try Hiyashi Chuka. **Chef Jeff Taibe** says it has "lots of flavor for cold noodles." Otherwise, try Pork and Garlic: braised belly, shoyu egg, nori, greens and tonkatsu noodles. "The marrow and calcium of the bones breaks down in the eighteen-hour boil-down process." Co-owner Chef Bill Taibe says his "crave-able" pick is Spicy Kai Udon. "It's all the flavors we are trying to accomplish in one bowl. It combines the right amount of brininess, fat and spice. I love it."

**KAWA NI  
Japanese Cuisine**

## AMERICAN

### Little Pub

Little Pub is our voters' choice for an unfussy night out, where everything tastes good and you're surrounded by people who just want to relax and have a good time. Start out with a Little Crock of "The Ships" Seafood Bisque and then let the whole table share an order of little plates, such as Salt and Pepper Calamari, 3 A.M. at the Diner Fries, and Farmers Market Spring Rolls. Getting a feel for the place? It's as refreshing as a genuine smile. With salads, sandwiches, wraps, burgers and, of course, the "Little Pub Favorites," such as Moo Shu Pork Tacos or Lobster Mac and Cheese. All of this comfort food would melt the frosty air of any harried, work-week-ravaged grump. (See also "Pub.")

26 Danbury Rd., Wilton, 203-762-1122 | 59 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, 203-544-9222 | 531 E. Putnam Ave., Greenwich, 203-717-1147 | opening soon, 2133 Black Rock Tpk., Fairfield | [littlepub.com](http://littlepub.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** **W** Little Pub **S** Harlan Social **N** The Restaurant at Rowayton Seafood **F** The Chelsea

## ASIAN FUSION

### Ching's Table

Pan-Asian food, bright and airy, nicely decorated restaurant with influences of traditional Chinese design, and decidedly upscale, reserved and tasteful with wood flooring, columns and archways, and artwork inset into the wall, creating a unique gallery. Enjoy the feel of the place while you await your order. Perhaps you will try the pan-seared sesame tuna or wok-glazed ginger chicken. Its sister restaurants include Hunan Café in Wilton, Sushi 25 in New Canaan and Penang Grill in Greenwich.

64 Main St., New Canaan, 203-972-8550 | [chingstable.com](http://chingstable.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** **S** **W** Tengda Asian Bistro **N** Ching's Table **F** Mecha Noodle Bar

## FRENCH

### Le Penguin

Stop into Le Penquin in Greenwich, and you'll want to be French. The language, the style, the *joie de*

*vivre* and, mostly, the cuisine. Restaurateurs Antoine Blech and Anshu Vidyarthi struck gold with their charming French bistro. These two are serious pros; Blech with Spago, L'Orangerie, Le Bec Fin and Orienta, and Vidyarthi with l'escale, Le Colonial, Brentwood Bar & Grill and The Olive. Together, with their Le Penquin, they have fully developed their own style—and aren't we the lucky ones? Beyond the gorgeous space, with tangerine orange walls and a deep version of Bleu de France on all of the accents, there is the menu. Ooh la la, Carre d'Agneau, Ragout de haricots Provençale, and so many tempting choices. This is a menu filled with dishes that taste perfectly traditional but are presented in an impressively modern way. Brush up on your compliments in French before you go.

61 Lewis St., Greenwich, 203-717-1200 | [lepenquinbistro.com](http://lepenquinbistro.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Le Penquin **S** Chez Vous **N** Roger Sherman Inn **W** Rive Bistro **F** Martel Bistro & Bar

## ITALIAN

### Bar Sugo

Our voters chose Bar Sugo, a hip little restaurant in Norwalk for Best Italian food. With its dramatic red-and-white tiled floor, wood walls and industrial lighting, it has an urban feel we all seem to crave. But it has a sentimental side when it comes to the food, such as Nonna's beef and sausage blend meatballs with currant mostarda, the homemade ricotta, and the handmade gnocchi, cavatelli and buckwheat cavatappi. There's also quite a few next-generation options, such as Octopus with pea purée, pickled red onions, asparagus and chorizo, or perhaps the Burrata Crostino with roasted and pickled green strawberries, fiddleheads and Boston brown bread. And don't worry, there are cannolis; don't mess with cannolis. Consider a fun cocktail—creative menu is unusually cool (Rudolf Von Flugel, Uncle Val's gin, elderflower liquor, cardamom and downeast cider).

102 Wall St., Norwalk, 203-956-7134 | [barsugo.com](http://barsugo.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Polpo **S** Columbus Park Trattoria **N** Cesco's Trattoria (Darien) **W** Tarry Lodge **F** Brick & Wood

## JAPANESE

### Kawa Ni

This Izakaya-inspired restaurant is fun and casual with its communal tables and bar, rows of delightfully kitschy maneki-neko cat figurines and mixed-pattern dishware. You feel like you've traveled abroad and found a second home. Which is remarkable because this place seats only fifty; we think the welcoming feeling has to do with its endless charm, which transports its guests to the exotic pubs of Japan via Spicy rice cakes, Shaved broccoli and miso-goma, Beef miso ramen and so much more. Décor-wise, this place has free license to do anything it wants—it all just seems to work. And the menu, which relies on fresh, local ingredients, is a collection of crowd-pleasers. The dozens of cocktail and sake options alone will make your head swirl with delight. If you're serious about what's on your plate, yet lighthearted about everything else, here's your new home away from home—no plane ticket required.

19 Bridge Sq., Westport, 203-557-8775 | [kawaniwestport.com](http://kawaniwestport.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Abis **S** Kotobuki Japanese Cuisine **N** Matsuri (Darien) **W** Kawa Ni **F** Fin Japanese Restaurant

## SUSHI

### Fin Japanese Restaurant

Some like to say we all scream for ice cream, but there's a large and vocal crowd to rally another refrain: "Sushi, sashimi!" It's a tribal call for the beautiful and delicious cuisine at Fin Japanese Restaurant, which has downtown locations in quaint Fairfield and hip Stamford. Drop in for a quick and healthy lunch (try a box special with salad, miso soup, rice, California roll, spring roll and either beef teriyaki or chicken katsu) or bring a school of friends for the Tatami Room, which seats up to fifteen. And no reason to scream, there's plenty of fresh, yummy sushi to go around.

219 Main St., Stamford, 203-359-6688 | 1253 Post Rd., Fairfield, 203-255-6788 | [fin-sushi.com](http://fin-sushi.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Asiana Café **S** Kotobuki Japanese Cuisine **N** Matsuri (Darien) **W** Matsu Sushi **F** Fin

in 1979 with the belief that natural products make a big difference in helping our furry companions live happy, healthy lives. If you have any questions, don't hold back. You'll find people love to talk about their pets here, and you'll get suggestions, tips and advice for happy, healthy pets. (See also "Pet Clothing.")

606 Post Rd. E., Westport,  
203-222-7173 | [earthanimal.com](http://earthanimal.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** **N** Pet Pantry Warehouse  
**S** Choice Pet Supply **W** Earth Animal **F** Petco

#### PET CLOTHING

### Earth Animal

Now that you have all of the food, brushes, toys and treats, enjoy looking for adorable pet clothing. Go beyond dog harnesses, right into jackets for rainy or chilly weather. (See also "Pet Supplies.")

606 Post Rd. E., Westport,  
203-222-7173 | [earthanimal.com](http://earthanimal.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Pet Pantry Warehouse **S** **F** Choice Pet Supply **N** Pawprint Market (Darien) **W** Earth Animal

#### DOG GROOMER/PET SPA

### Bandilane Canine Center

This dog training center relies on the positive reinforcement method of teaching our best friends about their best manners. It also offers grooming and doggie day care. The dogs can be cared for, 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and romp around on a padded floor in a large room and outside in a fenced-in area—and small dogs get their own space.

80 Largo Dr., Stamford,  
203-975-8151 | [bandilane.com](http://bandilane.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Groomer Has It **S** Bandilane Canine Center **N** Paws & Reflec (Darien) **W** Canine Creations by Carmella **F** Greenfield Hill Dog Groomer

#### VETERINARIAN

### The Veterinary Cancer Center

The Veterinary Cancer Center, a state-of-the-art facility and the largest stand-alone veterinary comparative oncology center in the country, is veterinarian-owned

and -operated. When you are most worried about your beloved pet, know that you have access to wonderful, compassionate, advanced care. The team here will work with your regular vet, too, to provide comprehensive care when it is especially important.

129 Glover Ave., Norwalk,  
203-838-6626 | [vcchope.com](http://vcchope.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Greenwich Animal Hospital **S** Cornell University Veterinary Specialists **N** VCA Darien Animal Hospital **W** South Wilton Veterinary Group **F** Southport Veterinary Center

#### LOCAL HOTEL

### Delamar Greenwich Harbor

Enjoy the luxe life at Delamar at Greenwich Harbor. Your room will come with a private balcony, overlooking the beautiful harbor and just steps from Greenwich Avenue (shopping and dining heaven). You'll be able to relax in a nicely decorated room with flat-screen television and Bulgari bath products. Savor a meal at l'escale at the hotel or have a massage or facial at the Spa at

Delamar, too, because the good life doesn't stop at just good enough—it's all about excellence.

500 Steamboat Rd., Greenwich, 203-661-9800 | [delamargreenwich.com](http://delamargreenwich.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Delamar Greenwich Harbor **S** Hotel Zero Degrees **N** Roger Sherman Inn **W** The Westport Inn **F** Delamar Southport

#### AUTO REPAIR SHOP

### Pray Body Shop

You know what we've noticed about driving in Fairfield County? Tailgaters, bad parking jobs, potholes. If circumstances lead you to need a repair, drive your bruised up beauty to Pray Body Shop for the needed TLC. Here, your car gets the royal treatment, with technicians who aim to provide the gold standard in bodywork, straightening, safety checks and flawless paint.

336 Elm St., Stamford, 203-359-3025 | [praybodysshop.com](http://praybodysshop.com)

#### TOWN WINNERS

**G** Zelenz Brothers **S** Pray Body Shop **N** C & H Automotive & Towing **W** Christie's Service Station **F** Fairfield Collision Center

## BEST FOR LAST WINNERS WITH THE MOST VOTES



#### GOLD

### Marcia Selden Catering

Who wants perfection? These caterers, apparently. They have a big appetite for striving to be the best, and their clients helped them get the most votes in this year's reader poll. If anyone can win tastefully, it's Marcia Selden Catering, right? **S**



#### SILVER

### Underground Fitness

Not surprisingly, a gym played for the big win. Underground Fitness certainly has a competitive category, but they not only won that a category—Best Gym of the Gold Coast—they also came in second for most overall votes. **S**



#### BRONZE

### Silvermine Arts Center

Was Silvermine Arts Center creative about getting out the vote for Best Of or does it simply have lots of loyal fans? They ranked third for the most votes. Perhaps one of their artists should create a bronze medal to commemorate the achievement. **N**

# Winning Tastemaker

Robin Selden, on what makes her smile, and why she loves going to work every day



Last spring, we heard that Stamford's own **ROBIN SELDEN**, managing partner and executive chef at **MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENT PLANNING** (MSC), was given Chef of the Year honors during the annual Catered Arts Through Innovated Excellence (CATIE) Awards. We hear these are considered the Oscars of the catering industry. So when you factor in that MSC was recently inducted into the Connecticut Restaurant Association's Hall of Fame, and opened a venue space in Manhattan called Above Twelve, we are reminded what a culinary gem we have in our midst. So we reached out to find out how Selden does it.

**What are your culinary principles?**

Let the food speak for itself. I strive to create fresh, clean and beautifully presented food.

**How do you help clients select a menu?**

We take the time to get to know our clients and customize menus based on what they like. We call this Concierge Catering.

**What is the most heart-warming moment you've witnessed at an event?**

Every wedding we do melts my heart, particularly the father-daughter dances as I'm a daddy's girl at heart.

**My go-to websites are...**

I'm an instant gratification girl so I love—don't laugh—Amazon, since I can order anything I need and have it the next day.



**What's the most over-the-top request you've received?**

Jeffrey (Selden, my brother, MSC managing partner and in-house wedding expert) and I flew on our client's private jet to their home in Miami to do a twelve-course chef's tasting for six guests, complete with white truffles and specialty caviar that was flown in for them. It was so over the top!

**What are you binge-watching on TV now?**

It's a toss-up between *Billions* and *Shameless*!



**What is your most prized gadget or kitchen tool?**

I'm obsessed with my new set of Shun knives!

**I can't do my job without...**

our amazing team!

**What are the hottest ingredients right now?**

Move over sushi and ceviche. We are doing a lot of poke now. I will be teaching a class on it at the Art of Catering Food Conference in Washington, D.C. in August.

**My idea of a perfect summer soiree is...**

a party on the beach with lots of candles, locally sourced fish, tons of chilled salads, ice cold Rosé and indulgent desserts.

**If you could host a dinner and invite anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?**

Julia Child

**What would you serve?** Her signature *boeuf bourguignon*, and hope it was as good as hers

**When I'm not working you'll find me....**

hanging with my kids.

**My career highlight so far has to be...**

when I was named the President of the International Caterers Association and awarded their Chef of the Year. It blew my mind!

**What is your favorite emoji?**

A kiss. Mom and I always wear red lipstick and the red lips are somewhat of an icon for us.



**What is the biggest disaster your team has averted?**

At a VIP wedding about five years ago, a celebrity designer set up the cake table; the cake was huge. Just as the cake-cutting was over, our manager went to roll the table to the side, and it collapsed. The cake flew into her arms, but somehow only one side of it was damaged. We were able to cut enough cake out of the other side to serve to all of the guest. Phew!

**Right now I'm reading...**

*Del Posto Cookbook*; I just got back from Italy and I am still dreaming of the Tuscan meals we had.