

FOOD & DRINK – SUMMER SPECIAL

Best Restaurants 2007 Edited by Ivan J. Sheehan Additional research by Jenna Gerling and Ashley Trunko

The Culinary Institute of America's Professional Chef, 8th Edition, the textbook for many soon-to-be elite chefs (and hosts of celebrated at-home cooks), devotes a scant two paragraphs – in an otherwise thorough compendium of gastronomic savvy – to the cuisine of the Midwest. Ask those who live outside our sphere what defines northeast Ohio's cuisine, and answers will include a borderline insulting, if alliterative, response: pierogi, potato, pork and pilsner.

So, what does define our regional cuisine? It is the people, places and things that create it, of course. Northeast Ohio has developed a sense of culinary ethnocentricity led by dedicated proponents of sustainability and the farm-to-table concept. Farmers – including Lee Jones of the Chef's Garden, and Mariann Janosko and Gerald Onken of Lake Erie Creamery – create unique foods that talented chefs, such as Karen Small of the Flying Fig and Matthew Mathlage of Light Bistro, use to bring regional life to dishes; one of the region's culinary heroes, Parker Bosley, helps encourage locals to eat locally, as the man behind the North Union Farmers Market.

Our commitment to local tastes and talent has not escaped the national radar: Red the Steakhouse was name-checked among the country's best steakhouses by Playboy; Food & Wine will feature a tour of Cleveland's culinary scope in an upcoming issue; and author Michael Ruhlman gave the famed Anthony Bourdain a tour of Cleveland's food scene in an episode of No Reservations that will soon air on the Travel Channel. This year's Live Restaurant Poll elicited more than 5,000 responses, and the lion's share of the winners represent local talent (yes, Bob Evans was an Ohioan), suggesting that eating locally is not just an option, it's the best option.

French

1. Chez François, Vermilion
2. The Leopard, Aurora
3. Sans Souci, Cleveland

Sunday Brunch

1. Pier W, Lakewood
2. fire food & drink, Cleveland
3. Mustard Seed Market, multiple locations

Italian Family

1. Carrabba's Italian Grill, multiple locations
2. Mama Santa, Cleveland
3. Luigi's, Akron

Place for Business Lunch (Cleveland)

1. Hyde Park Prime Steakhouse, multiple locations
2. Moxie, Beachwood
3. One Walnut, Cleveland

Italian Upscale

1. Ristorante Giovanni's, Beachwood
2. Battuto, Cleveland
3. 'Stino da Napoli, Rocky River

Place for Business Lunch (Akron)

1. Crave, Akron
2. Ken Stewart's Grille, Akron
3. Diamond Grille, Akron

Latin American or Spanish

1. Mallorca, Cleveland
2. Viva Barcelona, Westlake
3. El Campesino, several locations

Late-Night Dining

1. Luigi's, Akron
2. Nighttown, Cleveland Heights
3. Fahrenheit, Cleveland

Greek

1. Mad Greek, Cleveland Heights
2. Kristofer's, North Olmsted
3. Lolita, Cleveland

Al Fresco Dining

1. Three Birds, Lakewood
2. Gamekeeper's Taverne, Chagrin Falls
3. Ken Stewart's Grille, Akron

Middle Eastern

1. Aladdin's Eatery multiple locations
2. Taza, Woodmere
3. Middle East Restaurant, Cleveland

Chinese

1. Hunan on Coventry, Cleveland Heights
2. Hunan by the Falls, Chagrin Falls
3. Golden Dragon, Akron

Japanese

1. Shuhei, Beachwood
2. Sushi Rock, multiple locations
3. Benihana (Beachwood)/ Sakura (Lakewood) (Tie)

Asian

1. Lemon Grass, Cleveland Heights
2. V-Li's Thai Cuisine, Canal Fulton
3. #1 Pho, Cleveland

Mexican

1. Luchita's Mexican Restaurant, multiple locations
2. Momocho, Cleveland
3. Marcelita's, Hudson

European

1. Balaton, Cleveland
2. Sokolowski's University Inn, Cleveland
3. Frank Sterle's Slovenian Country House, Cleveland

Indian

1. Saffron Patch, Shaker Heights
2. Café Tandoor (multiple locations) /Kashmir Palace (North Olmsted) (Tie)
3. India Garden, Lakewood

South American/Brazilian

1. Brasa Grill Steakhouse, Cleveland
2. Sergio's Saravã, Cleveland
3. Sergio's in University Circle, Cleveland

Coffee (Restaurant)

1. Paws at the Bertram Inn, Aurora
2. Inn on Coventry, Cleveland Heights
3. Café Stratos, North Olmsted

Coffee (House)

1. Starbucks, multiple locations
2. Arabica (multiple locations/ Caribou (multiple locations) (Tie)
3. Phoenix, multiple locations

Pizza

1. Luigi's, Akron
2. Geraci's, University Heights
3. Mama Santa, Cleveland

Hamburger

Cheap Eats

1. Kristofer's, North Olmsted
2. Aladdin's Eatery, multiple locations
3. Yours Truly, multiple locations

Most Romantic

1. Pier W, Lakewood
2. Downtown 140, Hudson
3. Baricelli Inn, Cleveland

Place to Take Kids

1. Chuck E. Cheese's, multiple locations
2. Dave & Buster's, Westlake
3. Winking Lizard, multiple locations

Service

1. Ristorante Giovanni's, Beachwood
2. Morton's, the Steakhouse, Cleveland
3. Michaelangelo's, Cleveland

Ambience

1. Downtown 140, Hudson
2. Pier W, Lakewood
3. Nighttown (Cleveland Heights)/Piatto Novo (Cuyahoga Falls) (Tie)

View

1. Pier W, Lakewood
2. Blake's Seafood Restaurant & Bar, Chagrin Falls
3. Swingos on the Lake, Lakewood

Carryout

1. Hunan on Coventry, Cleveland Heights
2. Joe's Deli, Rocky River
3. Ricky Ly's Thai Classic Gourmet, Beachwood

Catering

1. Sammy's, multiple locations
2. Marigold Catering, Cleveland
3. Executive Caterers at Landerhaven, Mayfield Heights

Deli

1. Corky and Lenny's, Woodmere
2. Max's Deli, Rocky River*
3. Slyman's, Cleveland

Wine List

1. The Leopard, Aurora
2. Downtown 140, Hudson
3. Ristorante Giovanni's (Beachwood)/Swingos on the Lake (Lakewood) (Tie)

Brewpub

1. Great Lakes Brewing Company, Cleveland
2. Rocky River Brewing Company, Rocky River
3. Willoughby Brewing Company, Willoughby

Libations

1. Swensons, multiple locations
2. Yours Truly, multiple locations
3. Moxie, Beachwood

Ribs

1. Damon's Grill, multiple locations
2. Famous Dave's, multiple locations
3. Tony Roma's, multiple locations

Steak

1. Red the Steakhouse, Beachwood
2. Hyde Park Prime Steakhouse, multiple locations
3. Morton's, the Steakhouse, Cleveland

Seafood

1. Blue Point Grille, Cleveland
2. Blake's Seafood Restaurant & Bar, multiple locations
3. Pier W, Lakewood

Sandwich

1. Corky & Lenny's, Woodmere
2. Max's Deli, Rocky River*
3. Slyman's (Cleveland)/Panini's (multiple locations) (Tie)

Dessert

1. Max's Deli, Rocky River*
2. Downtown 140, Hudson
3. Crave, Akron

Appetizer

1. Downtown 140, Hudson
2. Crave, Akron
3. Light Bistro, Cleveland

Sushi

1. Sushi Rock, multiple locations
2. Parallax, Cleveland
3. Pacific East, Cleveland Heights

Breakfast Menu

1. Bob Evans, multiple locations
2. Yours Truly, multiple locations
3. Inn on Coventry, Cleveland Heights

Hotel Dining

1. The Leopard/Bertram Inn, Aurora
2. Muse/Ritz-Carlton, Cleveland
3. Sans Souci/Renaissance, Cleveland

1. Velvet Tango Room, Cleveland
2. Winking Lizard, multiple locations
3. McNulty's Bier Markt, Cleveland

Bar

1. Velvet Tango Room, Cleveland
2. Ken Stewart's Grille (Akron)/Metropolitan Café (Cleveland) (Tie)
3. Sergio's Saravá, Cleveland

Vegetarian/Vegan

1. Tommy's, Cleveland Heights
2. Aladdin's Eatery, multiple locations
3. Mustard Seed Market, multiple locations

Sports Bar

1. Winking Lizard, multiple locations
2. Champs, multiple locations
3. Damon's Grill, multiple locations

New in Northeast Ohio

1. Light Bistro, Cleveland
2. Momocho (Cleveland)/Lola (Cleveland) (Tie)
3. Melt Bar & Grilled, Lakewood

Chef in Northeast Ohio

1. Matthew Mathlage, Light Bistro (Cleveland)/Michael Symon, Lola (Cleveland) (Tie)
2. Shawn Monday, Downtown 140, Hudson
3. Doug Katz, fire food & drink, Cleveland

Restaurant in Cleveland

1. fire food & drink, Cleveland
2. Red the Steakhouse, Beachwood
3. The Flying Fig, Cleveland

Restaurant in Akron

1. Ken Stewart's Grille, Akron
2. Crave, Akron
3. Downtown 140, Hudson

Bartender

1. Tatiana Madden, Velvet Tango Room, Cleveland
2. Thomas Barberic, Light Bistro, Cleveland
3. Stephanie Wallace, Downtown 140, Hudson

* Restaurant has changed locations. New location information was not available at time of publication.

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