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Issue 11 Spring 2012

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BRADLEY O'BRYAN HAWKS (SUSHI); DOMINIC PERRI (KOMBUCHA)

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Back from a visit to Nepal, our writer satisfies his craving for Nepali *thali*, the beloved daily meal consisting of curried meats, stewed vegetables and spicy pickles. **Written by Greg Herbowy**
Photographed by Michael Berman

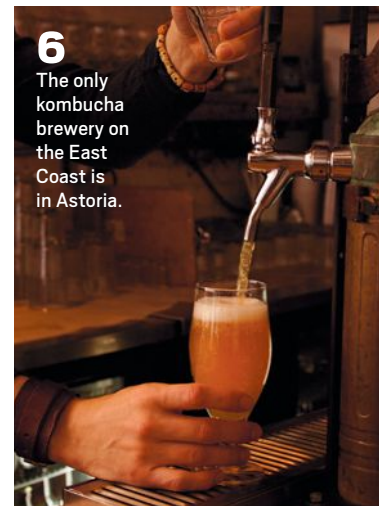
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Letter from the Editor

EVERY YEAR, the publishers of Edible Communities gather for our annual meeting. There are more than 70 of us now, I think. We *Edibles* exist to celebrate the people who transform the places we live into strong communities, bound together by a mutual love of eating, drinking and, above all else, making merry. Just before the meeting, I have the pleasure of determining the winners of our Local Heroes awards. Our Local Heroes are nominated and voted on exclusively by you, our readers; you may remember voting a few months ago. Winners of the Local Heroes awards receive national recognition at the Edible Communities publishers meeting, a gilded certificate and, of course, the gratitude and admiration of everyone in Queens who appreciates local, seasonal food and drink. Join with me in congratulating your 2012 *Edible Queens* Local Heroes:

Farm: Brooklyn Grange Farm, 37-18 Northern Blvd., Long Island City, 718-404-2023, brooklyngrangefarm.com

Restaurant: Quaint, 46-10 Skillman Ave., Sunnyside, 917-779-9220, quaintnyc.com

Food Artisan: Malu Homemade Ice Cream, Chocolate & Confections, 12-09 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, 718-729-6258, amomandpopshop.com

Nonprofit Organization: Western Queens Compost Initiative, 3-17 26th Ave., Astoria, facebook.com/wqnscompost

Market: Thyme Natural Market & Café, 81-22 Lefferts Blvd., Kew Gardens, 718-847-0535, thymenaturalmarket.com

Those aren't the only *Edible Queens* winners this season. Astoria resident Christian Molina, a mixologist at Rouge Tomate restaurant in Manhattan, won the Queens portion of the fourth annual St-Germain Can-Can Cocktail Classic with his refreshing and spicy Finca cocktail. You'll find his winning recipe on page 31. In fact, why not shake up a glass now—and toast the fine food and beverage artisans profiled in this issue? Cheers!

Tastefully yours,

Write to me at leah@ediblequeens.com!



edible
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WRITTEN BY
Buzz Poole

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
Michael Berman



Artopolis' *halloumi* pita rises to the occasion.

The Big Cheese

ASTORIA—Tucked into the back corner of an Astoria shopping center, Artopolis is no secret, but its *halloumi* pita may as well be. Hidden among the Greek bakery's trays and baskets of cookies and the refrigerated cases of cakes and pastries, the savory delicacy is one you won't find anywhere else in the city.

The domed loaves, which are displayed next to the more common breads and stuffed phyllo treats, command attention. If you aren't lucky enough to arrive after a batch

has just come out of the oven, ask for it to be heated up. Rip off a hunk and the aroma of fresh cilantro rises on the steam, fusing with the sweetness of cooked onions. Plentiful cubes of slightly salty, semi-firm halloumi, a traditional Cypriot cheese made from a mixture of goat and sheep milk, add decadence to the light, chewy bread, making it all but a meal.

Regina Katopodis, one of Artopolis' co-owners, credits the halloumi pita to her friend Costas

Zorbas, who co-owns Zorbas, one of Cyprus' largest bakeries. When Zorbas was in town a few years ago, Katopodis asked him for some recipes so that she could better cater to Astoria's large Cypriot community. He "rolled up his sleeves, said, 'Give me an apron,' and got lost in the kitchen," she recalls. The result of Zorbas' tinkering, which most notably departs from tradition by substituting cilantro for mint, is an ode to Cyprus that is very much rooted in Astoria. 🍷

WHERE
TO GO

Artopolis
Agora Plaza
23-18 31st St.
Astoria
718-728-8484
artopolis.net

notable edibles

WRITTEN BY
Alia Akkam
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
Dominic Perri

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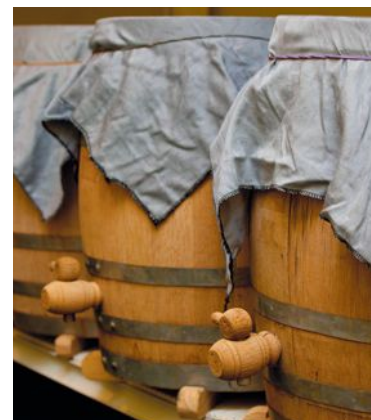
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Beyond Kombucha's *mava roka kombucha* ale; founder Spiro Theofilatos tends to his brew; tea ferments in 40-gallon vessels.

Strange Brew

ASTORIA—New Age harp wouldn't seem to be the most likely soundtrack for a brewery, but then a *kombucha* brewery in Astoria is itself pretty unlikely. Or at least it was until last December, when Beyond Kombucha became the first federal- and state-licensed kombucha brewery on the East Coast—and Queens' first brewery first since Prohibition.

Its founder, Spiro Theofilatos, insists that the musical stylings of Andreas Vollenweider are the perfect accompaniment to the slow fermentation of 40-gallon vessels of tea into kombucha. "It helps the process," he says.

In 2005, Theofilatos, who was then employed by Tri-State Biodies-

el, got his first taste of a second career when he tried kombucha during a trip to Oregon. "I loved that it felt like a healthy beer I could drink in the middle of the afternoon," he recalls. "And instead of getting drunk, I got a lift from it."

Five years later, Theofilatos launched Beyond Kombucha in his native Astoria with two partners who have since left the company. At the time, grocery stores were yanking kombucha from shelves because it contained trace amounts of alcohol, but this did not deter Theofilatos.

In December 2011, Beyond Kombucha officially became a brewery. Now, a roster of flavors such as

hibiscus, ginger and nutty Hojicha can be found in local establishments like Mundo and Vitality & Health Natural Market. Thanks to a recent distribution deal with Union Beer, the brewery hopes to be producing 1,000 cases weekly by summertime; the brews should be in more stores by early April.

Mava Roka, the brand's first high-alcohol release, is a crisp kombucha ale that debuted this winter at The Queens Kickshaw. Its delicate layers of vanilla, rooibos and maple are whetting palates for the next seasonal concoction, Love Potion #10, a kombucha mead brewed with the Brazilian aphrodisiac bark extract *catuaba*. We'll be sipping it on tap at Café Bar all spring until the arrival of Beyond Kombucha's *yerba mate* ale lets us know it's summer. ☺

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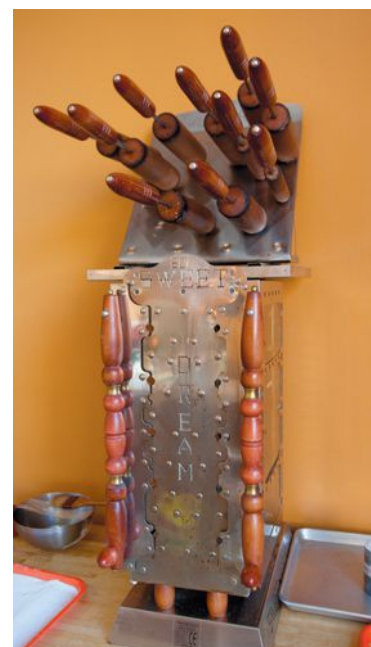
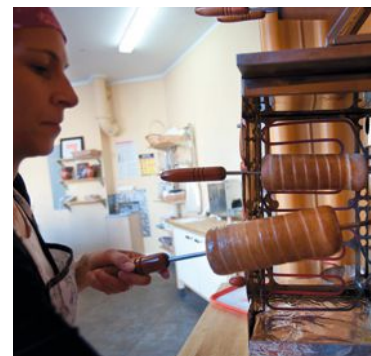
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notable edibles

WRITTEN BY
Nathalie Alonso

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
Michael Berman



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A trio of tempting chimney cakes; Kozma at work in her kitchen; tools of the trade.

Chimney Sweet



WHERE TO GO

Chimney Cake NYC
10-50 Jackson Ave.
Long Island City
718-786-1818
chimneycakenyc.com

LONG ISLAND CITY—On the ground floor of a Jackson Avenue condominium complex in Long Island City, a centuries-old Hungarian-Transylvanian wedding treat has become a Queens novelty. It's here that Anna Kozma (pictured, at right) makes *kurtoskalac*, a yeast-based pastry produced by wrapping a strip of dough around a wooden pin and baking it over a fire. The result is a hollow, spiral cylinder that gives Kozma's bakery, Chimney Cake NYC, its name.

"It's not too sweet; it's not greasy," says Kozma, who takes pains to distinguish her pastry from the doughnut, which she considers the chimney cake's commonplace cousin.

Before baking the cakes in a custom rotisserie-style oven from Hungary, Kozma, a native of Transylvania who has lived in Queens since 2002, rolls the dough in corn oil and sugar for a sweet, caramelized crust. Optional toppings, such as coconut or walnuts, can be added once the pastry is finished baking but still hot.

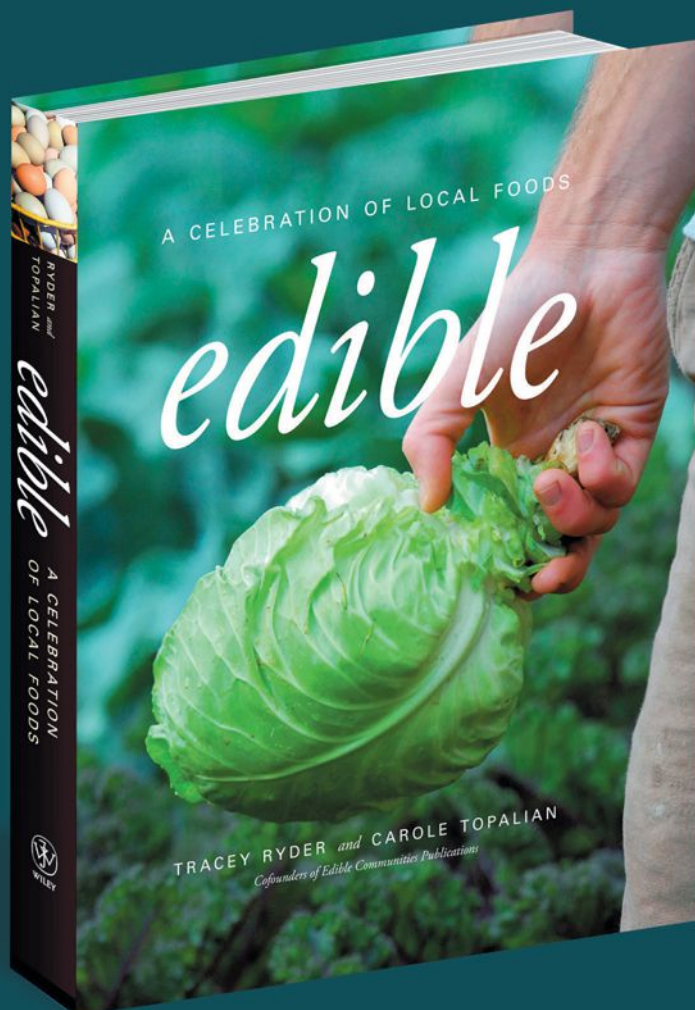
The recipe that inspired Kozma to open her shop last September is an heirloom; she belongs to a lineage of women she lauds as "great bakers," among them her great-great-grandmother, who was alive when Kozma was a young girl. "When you grow up in a village, you grow up

with this tradition, to make everything at home," says Kozma.

According to Kozma, in Transylvania, the region in central Romania where chimney cakes originated, it is a centuries-old custom of Hungarian wedding-goers to arrive with the pastry, which is then served with homemade brandy.

Offering chimney cakes in Queens has reinforced what Kozma sees as her specialty's universal appeal: "It's a very traditional pastry for us, a unique pastry, but it's not so ethnic like something like stuffed cabbage, which some people like and others can't stand," she says. "That's what I enjoy very much." 🍷

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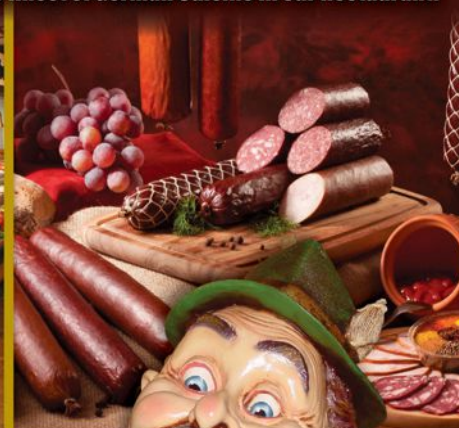
—From the Foreword by MICHAEL ABLEMAN, farmer, photographer and author of *Fields of Plenty*

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Chef Ian Kapitan's menu is a carnivore's playground, with pork, beef and all kinds of fowl making appearances.

HOG WILD

*Long Island City's Alobar
is a mecca of swine dining*



WRITTEN BY REBECCA FLINT MARX • PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANIEL KRIEGER





1. Alobar sources its pigs from a trio of family farms in Sussex County, New Jersey. It took three men to hoist the 225-pound pig onto the table, which is set up in Alobar's back patio area. Once the pig is positioned correctly, Kapitan and his sous-chef can break it down in about 10 to 15 minutes.



2. Before he starts butchering the pig, Kapitan inspects it for any debris and uses a blowtorch to singe off its remaining hairs. He also takes a tea towel and wipes down the cavity to soak up any remaining blood. The pig's tear ducts, as well as glands that can breed bacteria, have also been removed.



3. Using a hacksaw, Kapitan then cuts off the hog's head. "There's a bunch of different ways you can approach this area," he explains. "It kind of depends on where you want to take it." In this case, Kapitan made his cut behind the pig's jowls so they could be saved for *guanciale*.



Ian Kapitan is a man who knows his way around a pig carcass. Since opening Alobar last November with Jeff Blath, the chef has made the restaurant—and Long Island City—synonymous with the kind of snout-to-tail consumption that's typically associated with Brooklyn's more rarefied climes.

Kapitan's pâtés, terrines, headcheese, *guanciale* and brown-sugar-glazed pig tails have earned Alobar such a devoted neighborhood following that Kapitan is now going through an entire Berkshire hog on an almost weekly basis.

"People come in and say, 'I hear you got a new pig,'" Kapitan says. "And all of a sudden we've gone through 60 or 70 portions."

Like everything else served at Alobar, the pigs are of local provenance. They come from a trio of family farms in Sussex County, New Jersey, where they're pasture- and woodland-raised. Before being dispatched to a nearby abattoir, the pigs spend their lives foraging for nuts and acorns, a diet that yields meat with a darker color and richer flavor.

"I like knowing where the animals are coming

from, what they've been eating," Kapitan says. "It gives me a connection to why I'm cooking for people in the first place. It's not about taking a rib-eye out of a bag that's been Cryovaced."

Before coming to Alobar, Kapitan ran the White Horse Tavern in Jersey City. He had his earliest encounters with livestock anatomy as a teenager growing up in Kitchener-Waterloo, an area outside of Toronto. Kapitan worked in a family friend's butcher stall at a local farmers' market and helped out on a poultry farm, killing chickens. He got his start in the kitchen as a dishwasher at a café, and later moved to Toronto, where he worked with the chefs Susur Lee and Massimo Capra. He also played in a band, which led him to New York. Following stints with David Bouley and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, he ended up in Jersey City.



WHERE TO GO

Alobar
46-42 Vernon Blvd.
Long Island City
718-752-6000
alobarnyc.com



4. Kapitan made this cut between the third and fourth ribs. To the left of his cut is the pig's foreshoulder, which is also called the picnic. Kapitan removed the trotters from the foreshoulder and later braised the legs for a terrine. The shoulders were brined and roasted. "With this pig," Kapitan says, "we got so much demand that we couldn't cure anything except for the guanciale. It lasted a little over a week."

5. Kapitan goes inside the cavity to remove the pork tenders, which he describes as "very, very tender mini pork tenderloins." He removes the kidneys and the caul fat, which can be used to wrap vegetables or terrines. The pork tenders were put into a terrine, and the kidneys turned into pâté.

6. Kapitan saws down the spine, splitting the carcass in half. This allows him to remove the tenderloins, and the pork belly from the spare ribs. The ribs were later sold as bar snacks, and the bellies braised and served as entrées. Bones were used to make stock.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Alobar's charcuterie plate, with pork terrine, sweet norcino salami, Virginia prosciutto and various accoutrements; the front bar area has a few tables overlooking Vernon Boulevard; the wild mushroom toast is layered with local smoked ricotta, roasted garlic and pickled onions, then topped with fried duck eggs.

"I was looking to make a change," he says of his move to Alobar. "The stuff I was doing at White Horse was higher volume. I wanted to get back to my roots, to take techniques from the fine-dining world and bring them to a neighborhood place where I could change the menu, bring in whole animals and have fun."

The beauty of working with pigs, Kapitan says, is in their versatility. What he does with them changes from week to week, depending on the restaurant's needs and customers' desires. The head might become *porchetta di testa*, a process that involves removing the meat from the bones, marinating it for 14 hours, and then braising it. Trimmings might get turned into headcheese seasoned with candied pistachios, dried cranberries, port wine and brandy. Kidneys might be transformed into a red

wine rosemary mousse. Ham hocks are often braised, and jowl meat dried and cured into guanciale. Regardless of what Kapitan makes, he leaves nothing behind—even the bones get turned into stock.

"You discover something new every time," he says of his work. "Like, what do you want to do with this seasoning this time, how do you want to cure this. We can almost do whatever we want, and that's really fun."

He's not alone in his enthusiasm: Customers have started to request butchering classes. "We're playing it by ear right now," Kapitan says. "If demand grows, we might do it every time we get a pig." In the meantime, the steps noted at the top of these pages will give you an idea of what goes into breaking down a whole hog, from beginning to delectable end. 🍷

Kappa maki (Japanese cucumber wrapped in shiso leaves), stacked with sabagari maki (mackerel with shaved ginger)





raw | AT ASTORIA'S LINN RESTAURANT, KUROSAWA MEETS KYOTO

WRITTEN AND
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
BRADLEY
O'BRYAN HAWKS

talent



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Chef Tanaka Shigenori preparing monkfish liver; corks from sake bottles serve as chopstick rests; panko-crusted fried oyster roll, with asparagus, tobiko and spicy mayonnaise.



Loaded with sweet shrimp, jumbo shumai are served three to an order for just \$5.



Kappa and sabagari maki with the Linn Special Roll.

Although Flushing is renowned as the city's epicenter of Asian cuisine, Astoria is its unlikely paradise of Japanese cooking. With 20 Nipponese restaurants to its name, the neighborhood harbors more Japanese menus than Bayside, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Long Island City, Sunnyside and Woodside combined. Admittedly, many of these restaurants fall under the fusion umbrella, sneaking elements of Japanese, Thai and Chinese into their ultimately Westernized dishes. But thanks to Tanaka Shigenori's Linn, Astoria can boast at least one Japanese restaurant whose cuisine is rooted in centuries-old techniques, prepared by one of the most experienced chefs in the city.

With its spare white walls and austere glass facade, the entrance to Linn—whose name loosely translates to cool and quiet—more resembles an art gallery than the entrance to a restaurant. Beyond the partition that conceals the dining room from passersby on Broadway, the gallery conceit continues, with works from local artists displayed across charcoal-colored walls dotted with the nail holes of exhibits past. Old black-and-white Kurosawa films are projected onto the wall during dinner service, all the better to highlight the artistry of Shigenori's cooking.

The chef's taste in sushi reflects his taste in design. "My favorite [sushi roll] is probably the cucumber," Shigenori says, laughing. "It is simple, but delicious." On most catered sushi party platters, the *kappa maki* is a bit of a snore, and more often than not the last to be snatched up.

At Linn, however, the roll's quartered spears of Japanese cucumber are tightly wrapped in *shiso* (Japanese basil) leaves before being rolled into the rice and *nori*. The pleasant tingle of the herb is unexpected, giving the roll an entirely new identity.

With his predilection towards well-worn blue jeans and faded T-shirts, Shigenori initially appears to be more inclined to laid-back California whims than tradition. But the free-spirited façade belies an impressive curriculum vitae built upon stints in some of New York's most hallowed kitchens.

The 47-year-old chef began cooking three decades ago when, at the age of 17, he went to work in Kyoto's Shimogamo Saryo, a restaurant that dates back to 794 A.D. and remains one of the city's most esteemed establishments. After immigrating to New York City in 1987, Shigenori immediately began work as a sushi chef at the downtown location of Ise, the first in series of jobs that would later include Masa, Sushi Yasuda, Jewel Bako and Riingo at the Alex Hotel. Although the latter, which was then under the helm of Chef Marcus Samuelsson, was known for the retro-fusion approach Shigenori notably does not bring to his own work, it was from Samuelsson that Shigenori says he "learned the most about presentation and making the plate beautiful."

At his own restaurant, which opened in May 2008, those lessons can be seen in one of Linn's most popular dishes, the Linn Special Roll. Jeweled with a checkered pattern of tiny translucent beads of red and green flying-



Koori tofu: Sweet tofu suspended in Japanese gelatin, served with a black sugar syrup

fish roe, it's packed with fresh yellowtail, jalapeño pepper and crunchy tempura flakes, a combination whose flavors are as complex as they are innovative.

The roll is typical of Linn's menu, which reads as an homage to some of the chef's favorite dishes over the years with a particular emphasis on straightforward cuisine in the Kyoto and Osaka tradition. The clientele is comprised almost entirely of adventurous locals who thrill to popular small plates like Japanese black pork belly simmered in a soy-ginger-sake broth, or the broiled yellowtail cheek served with *ponzu*. "My [regular patrons] will try almost anything at least once," says Shigenori, admitting it gives him a great freedom in the kitchen.

Elements of French technique shine occasionally throughout the menu. To prepare his monkfish liver, for example, Shigenori simply removes the skin, lightly salts the fresh liver, wraps it in foil, and steams it for 30 minutes. The result is a velvety foie gras-like *torchon* that is then garnished with dried seaweed. Such minimal tinkering can also be appreciated in the fresh tofu that is prepared tableside in a clay pot, served with ginger, scallions and a miniature pitcher of soy-mirin sauce.

Likewise, Shigenori uses a light but inspired hand with *gyoza*, traditional Japanese pork dumplings. Here, they become *hane-tsuki gyoza*, or *gyoza* with "wings." They're steamed and then lightly fried, but just before they're removed from the heat, a thin layer of flour is sprinkled into the pan, sealing the pastry pockets into a crispy wing of paper-thin golden crust. The result is like

tiny paper doll pot stickers that must be carefully punched out, leaving behind a flaky crepe to dip in the accompanying soy-vinegar-red-chili sauce.

It's in Shinegori's desserts that his training at Shimogamo Saryo is most apparent: Both the recipes for his *shira tama* and *koori* tofu are at least 200 years old. The former—plump little dumplings made with rice flour and white wine—are served with sugary gelatin cubes and fresh berries. Topped with vanilla bean ice cream and sweet red bean paste, their subtle flavors and textures are a welcome departure from the usual *mochi* or fried ice cream (though the latter is executed at Linn to delicious effect). *Koori* ("ice") tofu, meanwhile, comprises sweetened cubes of tofu that have been suspended in Japanese gelatin. A pitcher of blackened sugar syrup is drizzled alongside strawberries and blueberries, adding a depth of sweet smokiness to the cool tofu, almost like a creamy Asian *semifreddo*.

Many of Linn's unique treasures and hidden luxuries are not often found at even some of the city's most renowned Japanese restaurants. So why did the talented chef choose Astoria to showcase his passions? For one, it's his home: After he first came to New York, he settled just off the Ditmars Blvd. subway stop, where he instantly felt "safe, secure and a little more relaxed than in Manhattan." For another, there's his other great passion. "I have a collection of three cars and 10 vintage Japanese motorcycles," says Shigenori, whose pride and joy is a 1972 Kawasaki H2 750. "The garage space is much more affordable here." 🍷

WHERE TO GO

Linn Restaurant
29-13 Broadway
Astoria
718-204-0060
linnrestaurant.com



TASTE o.

A group of Nepali friends dig in at Lali Guras restaurant.



Sundays at Adhikaar, a Woodside-based nonprofit supporting Nepali immigrants, are open hours. In addition to the regular English language and worker's rights classes, there are employees and volunteers on hand to discuss whatever concerns a member of this growing New York City community—about 6,000, according to the 2010 census; about 30,000, according to Adhikaar—may have. There are computers, for applying to jobs or keeping in touch with family. There is tea. And, in a conference room in the back, free to all comers, there are paper plates, plastic forks and large containers filled with rice, vegetable curry, wilted greens and a thick slurry of lentil soup.

Taken together, this meal is called *dal bhat*, or *dal bhat tarkari*, or—as the half-dozen Nepali eateries scattered through Jackson Heights, Woodside and Sunnyside refer to it—*thali*, a term cribbed from a similar Indian dish. Whatever its name, for many Nepalis, this is less a food than *the* food, eaten twice daily, midmorning and night. Visitors to the country tend to treat it as such, too. During a month there last spring, I subsisted almost entirely on the stuff: Mountains, hills or lowlands, it was everywhere. “I think if you asked Nepalis which of their foods they would miss the most, they would say dal bhat,” says Luna Ranjit, Adhikaar’s cofounder and a Kathmandu native. “It reminds them of home.”

“If I don’t eat dal bhat, I feel like I haven’t eaten,” says Jangyang Gurung, the manager of Himalayan Yak, on Roosevelt

it lacks in excitement, it makes up for in sturdiness. For one, dal bhat is nutritionally balanced. The *bhat* (rice) and *tarkari* (vegetable curry), usually anchored with potatoes, provide carbohydrates; the *dal*—lentils or some other chipped up legume—protein; and the *saag* (leafy greens, usually mustard) antioxidants, calcium and other nutrients. For another, it is incredibly filling. Tradition dictates free and heavy-handed refills of all but the meal’s fringe elements—such as the *papad* crackers, *cruautés* and *aachar* (pickles) that often garnish the plate.

As with all other Nepali restaurants in Queens, Himalayan Yak’s dal bhat thali can be augmented with a meat or fish curry for a dollar or two more, and arrives at the table on a large metal tray, each component in its own metal bowl. Here,



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Thali* at Lali Guras with goat curry, potato with green peas and eggplant, *dal*, pickles and, in the center, *dhedo*; Sharmila Sherchan, co-owner of Mustang Thakali Kitchen; Adhikaar member Bindu Malla enjoys a plate of vegetarian *thali* at Adhikaar, a Woodside-based nonprofit.

Avenue. A handsomely furnished, two-story restaurant, it’s the grandfather of Queens’ Nepali dining scene, and has been featured everywhere from *The New York Times* to an episode of *Ugly Betty*. It was established in 2005, when Gurung’s uncle bought the place from its previous, Tibetan owners.

The menu takes a trans-Himalayan approach, with Indian, Tibetan and Bhutanese options, but its focus is Nepali, a cuisine that incorporates Central, East and South Asian flavors and textures, griddled flatbreads and ghee-lacquered curries coexisting with hand-pulled noodles, dumplings and air-dried meats.

Gurung’s sentiment, echoed by many Nepalis I spoke with, gets at a core truth of dal bhat’s appeal: Whatever

the usual *saag*, though bright and pleasantly bitter, can (and should) be swapped out for the stewed *gundruk*, a fermented green with a sorrel-like sourness. The *tarkari*, generally the greatest point of variation between chefs’ dal bhats, is laden with bamboo shoots and black-eyed peas, an interesting change from the usual cabbage, cauliflower or string beans. The radish *aachar* is coated in a sesame and chili paste. Nepali pickles, as addictive as any other, come in a spectrum of flavors, from salsa-like roasted tomato purées to oleaginous, redolently spiced cucumber and radish combos. The Yak’s pickles have a thin, funky astringency, not unlike kimchee.

The dal, like the others in Queens, is black in bean and muddy in broth, earthy in taste and very tender. The secret,



TOP: Thali at Mustang Thakali Kitchen: mustard greens, cauliflower with peas and potato, dal, goat curry and pickles; BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: Lali Guras owner Rajendra Gurung; *mise en place* in the kitchen at Himalayan Yak Restaurant.

according to Gurung, has less to do with any external seasonings than it does with cooking it “for a really, really long time.”

In Nepal’s higher altitudes, where rice can’t be cultivated, and among families for whom the grain is too costly, dal bhat’s bhat is often replaced with something called *dhedo*, a soft, weighty hunk of hot dough made by stirring flour, usually buckwheat, into boiling water. Himalayan Yak offers *dhedo*, as does the 3-year-old Mustang Thakali Kitchen, just a few blocks away, on 37th Avenue.

Like Gurung and his uncle, the couple running Mustang Thakali is from the northwesterly, wind-whipped region of Nepal that gave their restaurant the first part of its name. Thakalis, a people from Mustang, are renowned among their countrymen for “the most delicious food,” says the restaurant’s co-owner, Nabin Sherchan. He worked for several years behind a Subway sandwich shop counter to raise funds for the business, while his wife, Sharmila, Mustang Thakali’s chef, worked in the kitchen at Le Train Bleu in the Upper East Side Bloomingdale’s.

Growing up, Sherchan ate *dhedo* more often than rice. Sometimes a meal would be “just pickles and *dhedo*,” he says. Having tried the starch once in Bandipur, a picturesque hill town in central Nepal, I tried it again here at a lunch with Sworupa Khadka, a childhood friend of Luna Ranjit, and Khadka’s mother, Shanta. As with my first experience, the *dhedo* was an austere, eating experience on its own, nearly void of flavor. But with the added flavor of a swab of dal or the restaurant’s sweet *farsee* (pumpkin) goat curry, it became easier to focus on the texture of the dough, which you are encouraged to eat with your hands. It feels, in both the fingers and the mouth, like quick-hardening paste.

Once our plates were cleared away, I asked the elder Khadka, the cook in the family, for her dal bhat recipes. She went into great detail, explaining the tempering process (cooking spices in a bit of oil, then adding that oil to precooked food), offering variations (yellow dal in summer, black dal in winter) and suggesting garnishes (diced onion, coriander leaves, green chilies). About three recipes in, I noticed that each of her preparations called for crushed ginger. “See, like the Italians,” Sworupa said, smiling. “But instead of garlic, we’re always using ginger.”

Of course, any dal bhat recipes are bound to be more regional or personal than prescriptive. Even then, regional or personal preferences and imperatives change. The few immutable constants of dal bhat—legumes, grains, hardy vegetables—are inexpensive and both travel and store well, important factors for citizens of one of the world’s poorest countries, many of whom live in remote villages accessible only on foot.

“Dal bhat is a template,” says Naomi Duguid, a renowned traveler, photographer and food writer, whose 2005 book with Jeffrey Alford, *Mangoes and Curry Leaves*, compares Nepali dal to bread, less a high culinary tradition than an “always available” and comforting “friend.” “It’s a real taste of home,” Duguid adds, “a basic, frugal, flexible thing that comes from people who live really close to the land. The whole point of it is reliable calories.”

This workmanlike nature of the meal is best seen at Lali Guras, named for Nepal’s national flower and run by another, more recently arrived Gurung family. Located at the corner of 35th Road and 76th Street, its décor is a bit misleading. A standard-issue Chinese takeout menu hangs over the counter, the photos for spare ribs and fried chicken scribbled out with black marker, and Bhutanese items are prominently advertised on the awning though none, in reality, are offered.

Still, of all of Queens’ Nepali restaurants—with the possible exception of Namaste, a crowded dumpling shop burrowed deep within the chaotic Merit Kabab & Dumpling Palace on nearby 74th Street—Lali Guras reminded me most of the businesslike eateries of Nepal’s villages and towns, bustling with people who stop in with a friend, work through a thali with brisk efficiency, then motion for more rice. Though the dal bhat here is equal in deliciousness to any other restaurant’s—and the homemade hot sauces in the snub-nosed condiment bottles are not to be missed—the food here is eaten and delivered with a purpose and intent that renders all else, whether it be a comfortable chair or a beer and wine menu, superfluous.

“So often, in places like Toronto and New York,” Duguid says, “it’s about ‘what do you want to eat tonight? Do you want Mexican, do you want Italian?’ We’re really only eating with our heads—our heads and maybe a little bit with our mouths. But when you eat with your heart and your stomach, when you’re eating food made by and for people who understand hunger and necessity, it’s a whole different thing.”

WHERE TO GO

Adhikaar
71-07 Woodside Ave.
Woodside
718-937-1117
adhikaar.org

Himalayan Yak Restaurant
72-20 Roosevelt Ave.
Jackson Heights
718-779-1119
himalayanyakrestaurant.com

Lali Guras
37-63 76th St.
Jackson Heights
718-424-0017

Merit Kabab & Dumpling Palace/ Namaste
37-67 74th St.
Jackson Heights
718-396-5827

Mustang Thakali Kitchen
74-14 37th Ave.
Jackson Heights
718-898-5088

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the guide

An exclusive listing of local businesses that share the mission of *Edible Queens*.

BAKERIES

Artopolis

Since 2003, this authentic Greek pastry shop has been an impromptu gathering place for the Greek community. Flaky baklava, Cretan *diples* and other sweets tempt the taste buds while owner Regina Katopodis' smile warms the heart. Agora Plaza 23-18 31st St., Astoria, 718-728-8484, artopolis.net

2010 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Cannelle Patisserie

Fronted by partners Jean-Claude Perennou and Gnanasampanthan Sabaratnam, who worked together in the pastry kitchen of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Cannelle is a true borough find, tucked into an otherwise nondescript strip mall. Their motto is "consistent, affordable and exquisite," and they mean every word of it. Perennou was voted a 2010 Local Hero by *Edible Queens* readers. 75-59 31st Ave., East Elmhurst, 718-565-6200, cannellepatisserie.com

BREWERIES & WINERIES

Bouké

Crafted by world-renowned winemaker Gilles Martin, Bouké wines—and their counterpart dessert wines, marketed under the name Bouquet—are incredibly approachable but sophisticated blends. Martin expertly combines finished wines to create consistent flavors with each batch. Owner Lisa Donneson, a former musician, offers musical interludes to enjoy with each bottle on the website. 877-877-0527, boukewines.com

Brooklyn Brewery

Since 1988, Brooklyn Brewery has established itself as New York's pioneering craft brewery. Today, Brooklyn Lager is the number three draft beer in the city and the brewery is among the top 30 breweries in the nation. Stop by the festive Williamsburg brewery, open on Fridays 6-11 pm for happy hour, and on Saturdays and Sundays noon-6 pm for tours. 79 N. 11th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn, BrooklynBrewery.com

Macari Vineyards

Located on the idyllic North Fork of Long Island, Macari Vineyards crafts wine on farmland that has been cared for by the Macari family since 1955. Joseph Macari Jr. has been a pioneer in sustainable farming practices on Long Island and it's paid off. Macari wines have won many accolades including a silver medal at the International Wine & Spirit Commission for their 2008 Cabernet Franc. 150 Bergen Ave., Mattituck, 631-298-0100, macariwines.com

COFFEE & TEA SHOPS

2010 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Espresso 77

Relax with a cup of coffee roasted in Ithaca, a scoop of ice cream churned in Astoria and a pastry baked in Jackson Heights. Drinking coffee never felt so local. Say hello to owner Afzal Hossain, who was voted a 2010 Local Hero by *Edible Queens* readers. 35-57 77th St., Jackson Heights, 718-424-1077, espresso77.com

Sweetleaf

Savor the delicious art of coffee at this recently expanded hip-yet-cozy neighborhood café. These proud brewers of direct-trade Stumptown coffee finish every latte with a delicate leaf design in the foam. 10-93 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, 917-832-6726, sweetleaflic.com

EDUCATION

The New School for General Studies

The Food Studies program at The New School for General Studies offers a unique opportunity to explore multiple aspects of the food industry, including business, society, history and writing. 66 W. 12th St., Manhattan, 212-229-5615, newschool.edu/generalstudies

The Waldorf School of Garden City

Founded in 1947, this Nassau County school aims to give children in grades 3 through 12 the most well-rounded education possible. With a teaching philosophy founded on values of integrity, social responsibility and imagination, teachers at The Waldorf School help students learn varied disciplines in programs for music and visual arts, athletics, social sciences and liberal arts. 225 Cambridge Ave., Garden City, 516-742-3434, waldorfgarden.org

EVENT SPACES

The Foundry

One of the most popular event spaces in Long Island City, The Foundry is an architectural reminder of the neighborhood's industrial past, but with a chic, modern edge. With fully equipped kitchens and multiple rental spaces, not to mention roof gardens with the Ed Koch Queensborough Bridge as a dramatic backdrop. 42-38 Ninth St., Long Island City, 718-786-7776, thefoundrylic.com

MARKETS

2011 AND 2012 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Brooklyn Grange Farm

New York City's largest rooftop farm blankets the top of the Standard Motor Products building on Northern Boulevard, greening our skies and producing heirloom vegetables for local restaurants, food makers and residents. Both the farm and founder Ben Flanner were voted 2011 and 2012 Local Heroes by *Edible Queens* readers. The market is open Wednesday 1-6 pm. 37-18 Northern Blvd., Long Island City, 718-404-2023, brooklyngrangefarm.com

Despaña Brand Foods

Called "an excellent place to eat and shop" by Martha Stewart, this local importer features the best foods that Spain has to offer. Find *horchata*, Iberico ham, *bacalao*, *boquerones* and more at the wholesale/retail space in Jackson Heights, which was originally founded as a chorizo factory. 86-17 Northern Blvd., Jackson Heights, 718-779-4971

Food Cellar & Co.

With a wide selection of specialty, locally made and organic foods, Food Cellar & Co. is a must-shop for discerning foodies in LIC. Visit the website for online ordering. 4-85 47th Rd., Long Island City, 718-606-9786, foodcellarandco.com

Fresh Start Market

Owner Ellie Zoumberakis personally inspects the ingredients label of every product in this well-stocked organic market to ensure exceptional quality. The all-organic juice bar and deli offers tasty vegan baked goods and prepared dishes. The back garden often serves as a gathering place for local community groups. 29-13 23rd Ave., Astoria, 718-204-7868

Muncan Food Corp.

No less than 15 varieties of bacon can be purchased from this borough institution, not to mention a mind-boggling array of salami, house-smoked sausages and sandwich meats. 43-09 Broadway, Astoria; 60-86 Myrtle Ave., Ridgewood, 718-278-8847



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Queens Natural Meats

Located down the street from the health food mecca Queens Health Emporium, this newcomer features artisanal and specialty food products, a well-curated cheese selection, prepared foods and, you guessed it, a wide selection of natural and organic meats. 159-15 Horace Harding Expressway, Fresh Meadows, 718-358-1800, queensnaturalmeats.com

2012 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Thyme Natural Market & Café

Not your average neighborhood health-food shop, Thyme Natural Market offers eye-opening juice concoctions, inspired prepared foods and healthful specialties. (The chef is a graduate of the Natural Gourmet Institute.) Nathalie Reid took over the spot last year and has turned it into a neighborhood gathering spot for health-minded foodies. The Café was voted a 2012 Local Hero by *Edible Queens* readers. 81-22 Lefferts Blvd., Kew Gardens, 718-847-0535, thymenaturalmarket.com

Whole Foods Market

Only the highest quality, most natural foods can be found on the shelves of Whole Foods Market, the organic shopper's haven for delicious, fresh products. Locations in Manhattan and Manhasset, wholefoods.com

MUSEUMS & OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Queens Botanical Garden

While the Queens Botanical Garden is lovely in full bloom, it's more than just a pretty face. In addition to the gardens and horticultural exhibits, this unique organization also offers an array of community programs including *tai chi* classes, sustainability education, senior gardening and compost workshops and concerts. The Garden is open to visitors year-round. 43-50 Main St., Flushing, 718-886-3800, queensbotanical.org

2010 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Queens County Farm Museum

Open since 1697, this working farm has been in operation longer than any other farm in New York State. It's a true monument to Queens' long history as the one-time breadbasket of New York City. Both the farm and Agricultural Director Kennon Kay were voted 2010 Local Heroes by *Edible Queens* readers. 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy., Floral Park, 718-347-3276, queensfarm.org

Queens Museum of Art

Called "New York's essential museum" by *Time Out New York*, this world-class institution houses extensive exhibitions plus a full lineup of fun events and community programs. Check out the legendary New York panorama and try to spot your fave Queens eateries. NYC Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Flushing, 718-592-9700, queensmuseum.org

Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden

Occupying the home of German immigrant Conrad Voelker, who emigrated in 1881, this house has changed little since then. Its garden, containing plants that were favorites in the Victorian era, is maintained using 18th-century propagation methods and gardening techniques. A thriving colony of honeybees produces honey for purchase. Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 1-4 pm. 149-19 38th Ave., Flushing, 718-359-6227, vomuseum.org

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

IOBY

IOBY stands for "In Our Back Yard." Similar to the independent fundraising website kickstarter.com, IOBY helps eco-minded individuals and organizations fulfill their funding needs. In Queens, completed projects include school gardens from Astoria to Jamaica and a borough-based sustainability fair. 41 E. 11th St., 3rd Floor, 917-464-4515, ioby.org

PET SERVICES

City Vet

LIC resident Dr. Jules Adams received her DVM from the University of Missouri in Columbia and has nine years of experience in internal medicine and surgery. Her office offers a full lineup of annual checkups, vaccinations, treatment of injuries and diagnostic blood workups, plus a complete pet pharmacy and full range of prescription diets on-site. 45-44 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, 718-433-1334, cityvetnyc.com

Dog Island City

This full-service daycare facility, steps from the #7 train and open six days a week, features personal attention for your dog and offers grooming and training services by appointment, as well as daily walks and meal time. Owner Lidia Lozovsky and her team have a simple goal: Keep the tails up! Closed Sundays. 5-29 50th Ave., Long Island City, 718-433-4545, dogislandcity.com

LIC Doghouse

Owner Ronny Beyer has earned a reputation as one of the best dog walkers in Long Island City. His full-service facility, conveniently located next door to the neighborhood vet, offers daycare, walking and boarding. Open 7:30 am-8 pm Monday-Friday, 8 am-6 pm on the weekends. 45-44 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, 718-389- DOGS (3647), licdoghouse.com

RENTAL AND COMMUNITY KITCHENS

The Entrepreneur Space

Trying to launch or expand your food business? The rental kitchens at this LIC incubator may be just what you need. Book by the shift—day, night or overnight—and cook up your new venture. Workshops in finance, marketing and human resources ensure you don't lose your way on the path to success. 36-46 37th St., Long Island City, 718-392-0025

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Alobar

Featuring an extensive beer list and a focus on house-made charcuterie, this Vernon Boulevard newcomer is a welcome addition. Read more on pages 12-15. 46-42 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, 718-752-6000

Astor Bake Shop

A veteran of Tribeca Grill, Nobu and Café Boulud, chef George McKirdy brings his haute touch to down-home comfort foods like banana pancakes, rustic apple pie and French onion soup. Also mouthwatering: the tuna salad on croissant and slow-roasted chicken sandwich. The must-try coffee is a custom blend from Brooklyn-based micro-roaster Stone Street Coffee. 12-23 Astoria Blvd., Astoria, 718-606-8439, astor-bakeshop.com

BareBurger

Organic and *well-sourced* are the words of the day at this burger spot. Choices range from beef or veggie to the less familiar elk and ostrich. Breakfast is also available on the weekends. 33-21 31st Ave., Astoria, 718-777-7011, bareburger.com (For additional locations, see the ad on page 7.)

The Burger Garage

The owners of this diner-ish spot near Court House Square, brothers Jim and Adam Pileski, know good beef: Their family runs the legendary Palm Restaurant steakhouse in Manhattan. 25-36 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, 718-392-0424, burgergarage.com

Café Bar

This beloved neighborhood joint boasts an eclectic menu. Try the Cypriot Breakfast (available all day), a mountainous Mediterranean meal complete with Greek sausage marinated overnight in red wine, grilled *halloumi* cheese, organic eggs and tomatoes. 32-90 36th St., Astoria, 718-204-5273, monikascafebar.com

Claret Wine Bar

Come for the ample wine and craft beer selection, stay for the delicious small plates and brick-oven pizza. Owner Niall Costello makes frequent tasting excursions to Long Island wineries. 46-02 Skillman Ave., Sunnyside, 718-937-7411, www.claretwinebar.com



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2011 LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER

Danny Brown Wine Bar Kitchen

This modern take on the French wine bar or Spanish tapas bar has been a Forest Hills favorite since it opened in 2006. The market-driven menu features local duck, house-made charcuterie and hand-rolled pasta, plus artisanal cheeses and steak from Creekstone; also try more than 80 wines by the bottle and 20 by the glass. With a \$28 prix fixe on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Chef Danny Brown was voted a 2011 Local Hero by *Edible Queens* readers. 104-02 Metropolitan Ave., Forest Hills, 718-261-2144, dannybrownwinekitchen.com

Domaine Bar a Vins

This welcoming wine bar is conveniently located directly above the #7 Vernon-Jackson subway stop. With a well-curated selection of more than 40 different reds, whites and rosés, plus a pleasing lineup of charcuterie, cheeses from Artisanal and local oysters, Domaine is an after-work must. Live jazz at 9 pm. 50-04 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, 718-784-2350, domainewinebar.com

Fino Wine & Tapas

This Bayside lounge and restaurant offers more than 150 wines to choose from, plus a tapas menu featuring fresh seafood and vegetables, charcuterie and cheese. Entrees include macaroni & cheese with four cheeses, grilled prawns with fregola and a paella for two. We hear the chocolate crème brûlée's to die for. 39-13 Bell Blvd., Bayside, 718-229-1330, finowinetapas.com

The Original 1880 Gianni Pizza & Restaurant

Founded in the 1980s by an Italian immigrant named Giovanni, Gianni's knows pizza. A favorite in Jackson Heights for decades, they also offer a full menu of Italian-American specialties. Ask them to cater your next party or stop in for a slice in their sunny garden. 81-13 Northern Blvd., Jackson Heights, 718-424-9202, giannipizzajh.com

LIC Market

Chef Alex Schindler serves up inspired American fare at this restaurant, wine bar and local market. Everything's in season and locally sourced, including the decor. 21-52 44th Dr., Long Island City, 718-361-0013, licmarket.com

London Lennie's

A Rego Park mainstay for more than half a century, London Lennie's has long been recognized as the borough's premier seafood restaurant. But you may not know that they also have a stellar wine list, which earned the 2008 and 2009 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. 63-88 Woodhaven Blvd., Rego Park, 718-894-8084, londonlennies.com

MexiQ Kitchen & Draught

Featuring barbecue with a Mexican accent and more than 48 artisanal beers (sold by the glass or by the growler), MexiQ has been a neighborhood favorite since its opening last year. On the menu: house-smoked carnitas, brisket and adobo chicken, ceviche flights and more. New to craft brews? The menu offers beer-pairing advice. 37-11 30th Ave., Astoria, 718-626-0333, mexiqny.com

Ovelia

A contestant on the Food Network's "Chopped," Chef Peter Giannakis and his brother, Chris, who manages the place, are local boys who abandoned careers in chemistry and law to create this modern Greek restaurant. Lucky for us. Check out their Rockin' Ribs menu on Wednesday nights, featuring Greek-style pulled pork, kafteri pepper poppers and more. 34-01 30th Ave., Astoria, 718-721-7217, ovelia-ny.com

Quaint

Voted *Time Out New York's* 2007 "Best New Restaurant in Queens," this New American bistro highlights a seasonal menu with local ingredients. 46-10 Skillman Ave., Sunnyside, 917-779-9220, quaintnyc.com

Rèst-àù-Ránt

Insiders refer to this beer, wine and cheese bar as the "RAR-bar." The menu offers specialty tapas, such as mini lobster rolls and papaline (tiny fried fish with horseradish dip, sometimes referred to as *cento in bocca* or "hundred in mouth"); fondue; salads; panini and more. Most dishes are made with local, organic and artisanal ingredients. 30-01 35th Ave., Astoria, 718-729-9009, rarbarlic.com

Lucy's Edibles



LAST FEBRUARY, the makers of Evermore pet food, Brooklynites Hanna Mandelbaum and Alison Weiner, made a commitment to eat nothing but their own dog food for a month, an endeavor they chronicled day by day on UStream (you can watch on their website, evermorepetfood.com). In the first clip, they can be seen adding salt and pepper and contemplating the virtues of their endeavor. "Just think of how much money we'll save," says Mandelbaum, who is wearing a wolf hat. By day 27, they are setting the table with roses and pairing their pet food with wine.

The message behind the stunt was clear: If Evermore is good enough for humans, then it's good enough for dogs. Nutritionally, this doesn't make a lot of sense, but it sounds good. Humans, for example, should eat more plant foods than animal protein, while canines need more animal protein and fewer plants. In fact, Evermore—which comes in two flavors, Beef and Chicken—offers a pretty good balance for dogs, specifically 55% animal protein, 36% fruits and vegetables and 4% oats and barley. The remaining 5% consists of herbs, oils and enough added vitamins and minerals to meet the recommendations of the Association of American Animal Feed Control Officials, a non-regulatory industry group that sets nutritional standards for pet foods. Ingredients are often organic and always free of hormones and antibiotics; meats are sourced from humanely raised animals. (The beef hails from Niman Ranch.) One container of Evermore food, according to the website, equals the nutritional value of 10 cans of some premium dog foods. Shocking, really.

According to the feeding calculator on Evermore's website, Lucy needs about 19 ounces a day—or nearly an entire 24-ounce container. (Knowing her, the whole container would work just fine.) That's about \$12 per day—quite an investment, for sure. But worth it, maybe, if only for an occasional treat? I gave it to Lucy last week and in less time than it took me to wipe down the kitchen counter, her bowl was licked clean. No salt and pepper necessary.

—Written by Leah McLaughlin



WHERE TO BUY

evermorepetfood.com

Kitty and Dog Lounge

48-18 Vernon Blvd.
Long Island City
347-642-4022

Whiskers

19-25 Ditmars Blvd.
Astoria
718-626-8590

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(Oh, My Fish is Good!)



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63-88 WOODHAVEN BLVD. REGO PARK, N.Y. 718.894.8084
WWW.LONDONLENNIES.COM



Sage General Store

This old-fashioned general store and caterer serves up classic American comfort food. Chef-owner Leslie Nilsson sources most ingredients locally and has a deep love for bacon. Choose eat-in, takeout or delivery. 24-20 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, 718-361-0707, sagegeneralstore.com

Shi

One of the chicest spots in Long Island City, Shi features an Asian fusion menu in a sleek dining room set high above Gantry Plaza State Park, overlooking the waterfront. 47-20 Center Blvd., Long Island City, 718-806-1068, eatdrinkshi.com

Skinny's Cantina

From the owners of Long Island City's Shi restaurant comes this fanciful Mexican taqueria. Walk inside and you're transported to an actual cantina. A full menu of tacos, burritos and other favorites, not to mention margaritas galore, are sure to please. 47-05 Center Blvd., Long Island City, 347-242-2450

Sweet Afton Bar

This sister restaurant to Wilfie & Nell in Manhattan serves high-quality cocktails and a solid beer list to wash down locally sourced comfort foods. Sweet Afton boasts one of the best burgers in the borough. Try the fried pickles; they're delicious. 30-09 34th St., Astoria, 718-777-2570, sweetaftonbar.com

Tournesol

Run by French expat Pascal Escriout (who also co-owns Domaine Bar a Vins three doors down), this inviting French bistro offers solid preparations of such favorites as escargots, steak frites and cassoulet. 50-12 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, 718-472-4355, tournesolnyc.com

Uncle Peter's

A "Critic's Pick" from *New York* magazine, this Jackson Heights Italian (by way of Argentina) wows with house-made pasta, superfresh seafood and tender steaks (not to mention a killer wine list). 83-15 Northern Blvd., Jackson Heights, 718-651-8600

Zum Stammtisch

In German, the word *stammtisch* literally translates to "regulars' table" but more loosely, it refers to any gathering of friends accompanied by food, drink and good cheer. Growing up among the rich beer-hall traditions of Bavaria, founder John Lehner opened this Glendale institution in 1972; it's now enjoying its 40th anniversary and is run by his two sons, Hans and Werner. Traditional Bavarian fare such as sausage and cabbage are served with frothy German beers on tap. 69-46 Myrtle Ave., Glendale, 718-386-3014, zumstammtisch.com

OTHER SHOPS

Stray Vintage & More

This tiny 350-square-foot consignment is a great place to explore. Owner Dan Glasser consistently stocks local artists' works, not to mention well-curated vintage furniture, vinyl records and assorted knickknacks. 48-09 Skillman Ave., Sunnyside, 718-779-7795, strayvintage.blogspot.com

SPECIALTY FOODS

Bao Fresh Kombucha

This fermented tea drink, with recipe origins in Manchuria 2,300 years ago, is made locally in Long Island City. Packed with vitamins and digestion-aiding probiotic bacteria, this nutritious beverage is quite refreshing and, some say, addictive. Learn more at drinkbao.com or follow them at twitter.com/drinkbao.

Chambre de Sucre

These gourmet decorative sugars are handmade by Japanese artisans who still use traditional methods. They are perfect for weddings, bridal showers, baby showers or gifts for those you love. chambredesucre.com.

Elmhurst Dairy

Since 1919, New York City's only dairy uses only local New York State milk. Elmhurst Dairy is the sole supplier of milk to more than 8,300 independent grocers and 1,400 schools throughout the city, and employs more than 250 people in Jamaica, Queens. Visit elmhurstdairy.com to learn more.

Lazar's Chocolate

This family-owned chocolate shop is a definite Queens favorite. With two locations in Great Neck and Greenvale, Lazar's makes deciding where to get your favorite sweets easy. Wheatley Plaza, Greenvale, 516-829-5785, lazarschocolate.com

Sweet Silk

Owner Shefalee Patel created this line of hand-crafted confections using fine, exotic ingredients from all over the world. The lovingly decorated sweets are reminiscent of Indian burfis, but with decidedly nontraditional flavor combinations. 973-930-3939, savorsweetsilk.com

WINE SHOPS

Off the Vine

Owners J. P. and Angela Bucich provide Astoria with a friendly, intimate place to buy and discuss wines. Check out their tastings; the Buciches often serve up home-cooked fare with their picks. 44-21 30th Ave., Astoria, 718-728-4142, offthevinyenc.org

Table Wine

This cozy newcomer sources small-production wines and spirits with an emphasis on value. The staff is happy to help pair a wine for your evening meal or assemble a case for your next party. 79-14 37th Ave., Jackson Heights, 718-478-9463, twitter.com/tablewiny

Yes, We Can-Can!

LAST SUMMER, Edible Communities partnered with St-Germain, the makers of the elderflower liqueur, to promote their fourth annual Can-Can Cocktail Classic competition. St-Germain asked our readers (more than 15 million nationwide!) to submit cocktail recipes using their liqueur and any seasonal, local ingredients. The recipes were judged by the folks at St-Germain, who chose a winner in each locality. Local winners received a Yarai (Japanese) cocktail mixing glass and the chance to win the national competition, whose prize was \$10,000! Astorian Christian Molina, a bartender at Manhattan's Rouge Tomato restaurant, won in Queens with this delicious recipe:



FINCA

- 2 slices lime
- 1 slice jalapeño pepper
- 1½ ounces apple vodka (such as Tuthilltown)
- 1 ounce St-Germain elderflower liqueur
- Ice
- Dry sparkling wine
- Long Island white grape juice

IN A MIXING GLASS, muddle the lime and jalapeño. Add the vodka, St-Germain and ice. Shake well. Strain over fresh ice into a rocks glass. Top off with a splash of both sparkling wine and grape juice. Alternatively, make a foam with the grape juice and sparkling wine by combining in a foam whipper.

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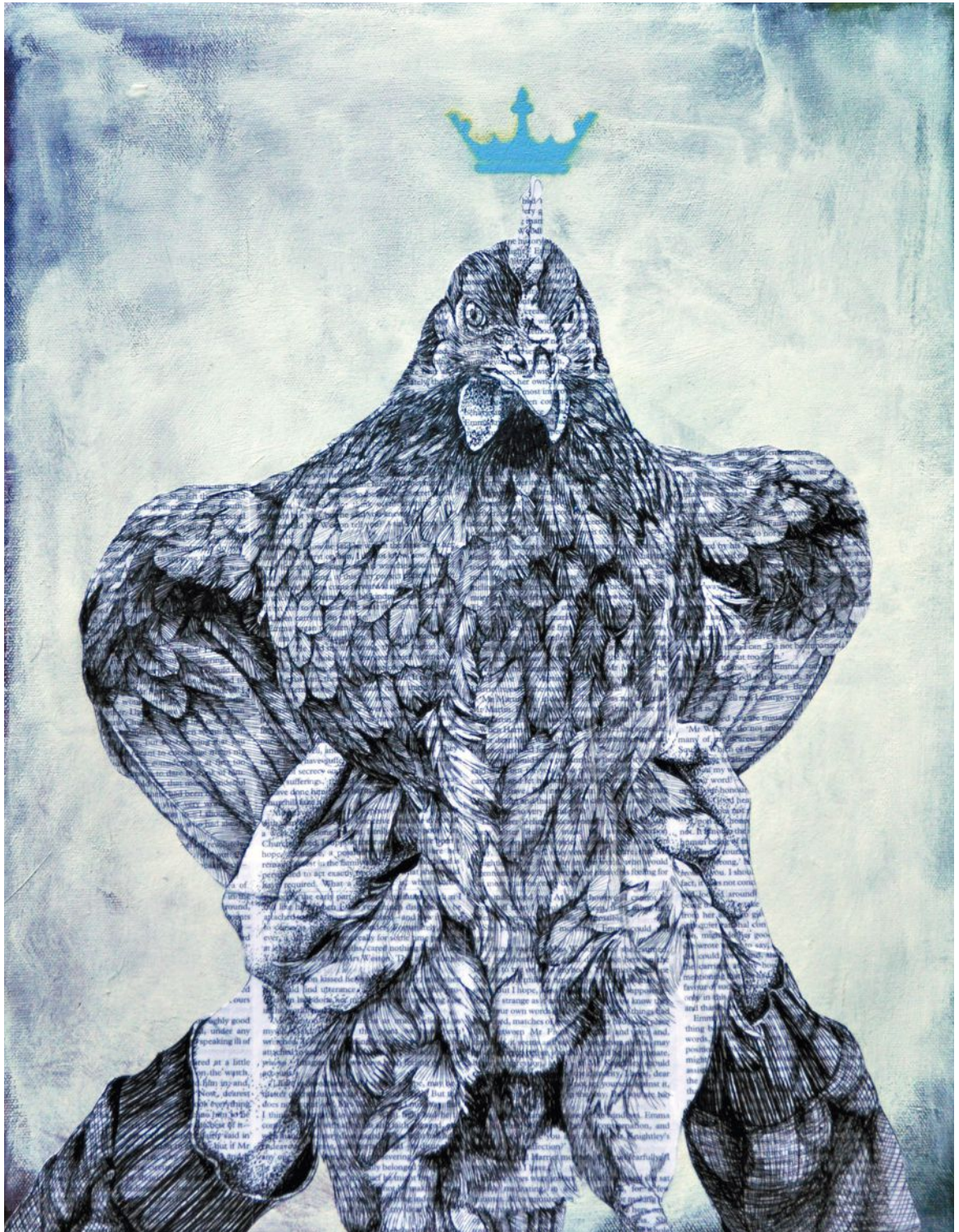
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CREATED BY
Emilia Andrzejewska

Fowl Play

A Sunnyside artist finds inspiration in her neighbor's chicken coop.



The Blue Crown

14" x 18"

Paper, ink, paint,
spray paint on canvas

Andrzejewska superimposes torn magazine articles over her line drawings, signifying the intersection between the wild animal and urban human kingdoms.

LEARN MORE AT eamandrzejewska.com, and read about the local birds at sunnysidechicks.wordpress.com.

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