

ARTISANAL

*Fresh, housemade food is prepared
traditional methods to create*



*by inspired chefs who rely on
flavorful, memorable dishes.*

FARMER'S TABLE

12 Forest Street,
New Canaan

It's not unusual to see Chef Robert Ubaldo unloading the day's produce—bags and bags of fresh greens, odd squashes, Chinese long beans and heirloom tomatoes. These organic vegetables don't travel far; he picks them early in the morning in the raised bed garden at his mother's house in Pound Ridge. Later, they get paired with the poultry, pork and beef that his brother raises at John Boy's Farm in Cambridge, New York. All of it enhances the food his restaurant is known for: good, clean and healthy. Specials change each day

depending on what was just picked or foraged. Ubaldo had a long history in the restaurant business when he found himself between jobs and baking homemade bread to sell at farmers' markets. "We were standing there freezing one day in November and I said, 'You know it's possible to do this with a roof over our heads.'" He moved to a little spot on Forest Street where they sold the family produce with his bread. When customers bought produce, Ubaldo offered to cook it for them in his store. Pretty soon, he outgrew the tiny storefront and moved across the street. He took with him the sourdough starter to keep making that homemade bread.

UNCORKED

15 Elm Street,
New Canaan

The Hamptons vibe at Uncorked might not be serious, but the food is. Nick Martschenko, the Gramercy Tavern-trained chef/owner, turns out small plates with ingredients



Nick Martschenko

that are locally sourced and organic. The 40-seat gastropub is often hopping, and the tiny open kitchen is a model of efficiency, the chefs pulling from a stack of matchstick-thin radishes, plating with tweezers. "We can make things better than we can buy them," Martschenko says. They make their own bread, sausage, fries, vinaigrettes and sauces. The simple fare belies the steps involved. Take those carnitas, for example. The pig arrives on Thursdays around the corner at sister restaurant South End, and there they break it down. Martschenko brings the shoulder over to Uncorked, where he cures it in the basement with his own blend of kosher salt, herbs and spices. Then he slow-cooks the pork in duck fat for four hours before searing it on the grill.

MEATBALL & CO.

20 Center Street,
Darien

The bread dough is on its third rise at Meatball & Co., the unassuming eatery over by the train station. Fresh herbs spill over their pots on the patio. In the open kitchen, they're chopping carrots for the bolognese sauce and rolling balls of house-ground and spiced chicken thighs for the buffalo chicken meatballs. A couple of customers dig in to their lunch. She's having a risotto chock-full of mushrooms. He's having fresh linguini with clams. What, no meatballs? Chef and owner Joe Criscuolo chuckles over that. Each day he ponders the merits of his restaurant's name, for the common meatball may not adequately convey what he and his wife, Caty,

are serving: homemade straciatella soup with spinach and eggs and slow-cooked "Sunday Sauce" with short ribs and homemade sausage. Criscuolo has worked for some of the best chefs in New York, but he credits artisans closer to home for inspiration. "I grew up watching my mother and grandmother making meatballs," he says.

BAR SUGO

102 Wall Street,
Norwalk

Many chefs stake a farm-to-table claim, but when pressed can't explain what that really entails. Not so Executive Chef Pat Siciliano. When asked what, exactly, he means by "farm-fresh eggs" in his homemade pasta, he says, "We get the eggs every day from my aunt and uncle's

house in Stamford." That would be Aunt Gina and Uncle Antimo Pascarella, Italian immigrants whose chickens, ducks and produce often end up on the menu at Bar Sugo in one form or other. Their son, Pasquale, started Bar Sugo but sold it recently to relocate to Atlanta, Georgia. His cousin Pat stuck around and kept cooking. Siciliano could roll a buccatino by the time he was 15, and he's still making fresh pasta at the restaurant each day. He makes Bar Sugo's ricotta, mozzarella, sausage, meatballs and more from scratch. When new owner Adam Roytman added a burger to the menu he wanted to honor that from-scratch practice, so Siciliano grinds the meat—brisket, short rib and chuck—for the patty and makes his own pickles.

LISA WILTSE



At Farmer's Table, the menu includes grilled lamb chops, housemade bread and produce picked from the chef's garden.

