

October 30, 2008

Restaurants of the Year 2008 *—The intown westchester editorial staff*

What are the elements of a great restaurant? It's a question we debate a lot—especially when we're what restaurants to include in our annual food issue. Is it ambiance? Value? Farm-fresh fare? Incredible offerings? For many of us—some who eat out at least four times a week, others who love cooking—a combination of all these elements and several more, namely service, décor, food, and, yes, a certain charm. Our choices are as varied as Westchester: Some serve gorgeous seafood, others Thai, and even casual sophisticated comfort-food. After exhaustive research (and a few pounds gained), we then compile and give you this: our 2008 dossier—the very best of the best, for your eyes only.

MIMA Irvington

WHY WE LOVE IT Even though we review dozens of restaurants every year, there's a select few that we return to again and again. Mima doesn't just fall into that group, it also qualifies for the much smaller list—as in, the kind of special place we want to blow out our candles. Mind you, we're not talking about a party spot with \$40 entrées and chichi décor; the Irvington gem instead favors entrées in the \$15-\$25 range and the vibe is decidedly rustic, with exposed brick, pressed-tin ceilings, and mopina napkins.

WHAT TO ORDER Start with the arugula salad, which comes filled with fried artichokes, shaved parmesan, and cherry tomatoes. Then move on to the braised short ribs with sides of baby carrots, pearl onion, and chestnut-ricotta gnocchi, or the corkscrew-shaped treccie pasta, with a farm-fresh egg you mix in.

INSIDER TIP Instead of ordering a bottle of wine, or even a couple glasses, try getting several flights (three ounces each). It's one of the best ways to sample Mima's extensive, outstanding wine list. **FOR TWO \$80**

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE 63 Main St.; Irvington; 591-1300; mimarestaurant.com