

Best Places to Live

FOR SINGLES, FAMILIES, EMPTY-NESTERS, AND MORE

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P. 98

WASHINGTONIAN

MAY 2012

50 MOST EXPENSIVE HOMES

(And Who Lives in Them)

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FIRST LOOK

Simply dressed pizzas
served on metal trays
are crowd pleasers
at Bethesda's Haven
Pizzeria Napoletana.

TASTE OF NEW HAVEN

A Connecticut native fires up his coal ovens and brings crisp-crust pizzas—plus a standout white-clam pie—to Bethesda **BY JESSICA VOELKER**

O rder a white-clampie in New Haven and you'll typically wind up with a thin-crust pizza topped with salty Pecorino Romano cheese, olive oil, garlic, oregano, and fresh clams. And that's exactly what you get when you order one at Haven, a new pizzeria from accountant turned restaurateur Tiger Mullen and his pie-making partner, New Haven native Mark Bergami.

Studded with fresh-shucked topnecks and doused with enough oil to leave a sheen on your lips, the clam pie is gooey in the middle but has a crisp, skinny crust that the coal-burning oven marks with a thin line of black char.

Well-conceived, simple salads include the Romano—featuring romaine lettuce, a tart lemon vinaigrette, olives, aged pecorino, and salami—and the excellent Arance, in which juicy orange slices mingle with walnuts, Parmesan, olives, and balsamic dressing.

The clam pizza is the best thing on the menu, but the tomato pie (with or with-

out mozzarella) and white Pie Bianco are straightforward and tasty. More complicated options are less rewarding: Bitter spinach beats out competing flavors on a white pizza with mushrooms. The Haven Fresh

—a tomato pie with mozzarella, grated cheese, sliced tomatoes, olive oil, and basil—adds up to less than the sum of its parts.

Parents will feel at home at Haven on

weekends, when it's not unusual to see (and hear) gelato-fueled kids charging down the aisles. The frozen dessert—available in chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla—is made in-house. Like the best pizzas here, it's fresh and uncomplicated.

Haven Pizzeria Napoletana

7137 Wisconsin Ave.,
Bethesda; 301-664-
9412. Open daily for
lunch and dinner.
Starters \$5 to \$7.50,
entrées \$7 to \$28.

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At Jack Rose Dining Saloon, Alex Strange whips up a Powerglove, with aquavit and egg whites.

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JOHN WALL
Will the star's return
lift the Wizards?

BEST OF BETHESDA
Shopping, fun outings,
dining, and more



A sampling
of excellent
vegetarian fare
at *Passage
to India*.

WHERE SHOULD WE EAT?

Bethesda has so many restaurants—here are our favorites **BY ANN LIMPET**

HAPPY HOUR: Drink and snack deals aren't just for office refugees at **Food Wine & Co.** (7272 Wisconsin Ave.; 301-652-8008), which in addition to its regular happy hour (4 to 6 daily) serves the same specials all day Tuesday and Thursday and from 9 to 11:30 Friday and Saturday. Draft beers are \$4, cocktails are \$6 to \$7, and some of the menu's best shares—Gruyère tater tots, fried calamari with pickled peppers—are discounted, too.

PLACE TO DOWN A DOZEN OYSTERS: Jeff and Barbara Black, the restaurateurs behind the sleek, warmly lit **Black's Bar & Kitchen** (7750 Woodmont Ave.; 301-652-5525), are passionate about their

oysters—so much so that they teamed up with Virginia's Rappahannock Oyster Co. to create their own varieties: Black Pearls and our favorite, the briny, mineraly Old Black Salts. Round those out with a selection from a rotating roster of carefully shucked Chesapeake Bay and Pacific Northwest bivalves.

BARBECUE FIX: Okay, it might be the *only* place in Bethesda for a barbecue fix. Still, the tiny new **Smoke BBQ** (4858 Cordell Ave.; 301-656-2011) is a good spot for thick-cut baby back ribs (get them slathered in the tomatoey "regular" barbecue sauce) or North Carolina-style pulled-pork sandwiches, which are best doused

in vinegar. Both are better bets than the smoked-brisket sandwich, which was dry when we tried it.

BAR FOR WINE-SIPPING: More than 80 reds, whites, sparklers, and rosés are available by the glass or 2½-ounce taste at the eclectic bistro **Grapeseed** (4865 Cordell Ave.; 301-986-9592). Settle in at the bar and enlist the bartenders' guidance in navigating the list. Tuesdays are an especially good night—bottles \$100 and less are half price.

SANDWICH STOP: The baguette sandwiches at the gourmet shop/cafe **Cornucopia** (8102 Norfolk Ave.; 301-652-1625) are more dressed down and delicate than most Italian subs—they're accessorized with only a slick of balsamic vinegar and some green-leaf lettuce. That's fine with us, though. The bread and main ingredients—provolone and shavings of hot *soppresatta* or prosciutto are our favorites—are high-quality enough to shine on their own.

QUICK SLICE: The Italian deli institution **Vace** (4705 Miller Ave.; 301-654-6367) has been making takeout pies and slices its own way—with mozzarella baked onto the crust and zesty sauce swirled on top—for nearly 35 years. We're hooked on the plain and pepperoni, but the white pizza with sweet onions is also worthy.

BOUTIQUE PIZZA: You can't have a New Haven-style pizzeria without a white-clam pie, and **Haven Pizzeria Napoletana** (7137 Wisconsin Ave.; 301-664-9412) doesn't disappoint. The coal ovens produce an enviable version, with a strong garlic kick and loads of freshly shucked littlenecks. In the mood for something more mellow? The ultra-simple pecorino-sprinkled tomato pie is nice, too.

VEGETARIAN PLEASURES: The elegantly gilded **Passage to India** (4931 Cordell Ave.; 301-656-3373) serves plenty of meat, but vegetarians have ample run of the menu in this quiet dining room. The kitchen turns out veggie-friendly samosas, fritters, curries, and salads—we often turn to the tamarind-streaked puffed-rice salad known as *sev-murmura chaat*, the excellent *bainghan bartha* (roasted

eggplant in a rich gravy), and the vibrant pickle platter.

CARNIVOROUS CRAVINGS: The high-gloss interior at Bethesda Row's **Redwood** (7121 Bethesda La.; 301-656-5515)—sleek slate, gleaming wood, and Carrera marble—might conjure dainty beet salads more than hunks of beef, but no matter. You're here to indulge in the meatier side of the menu: goat-cheese-stuffed lamb burgers, the classic cheeseburger, a wood-grilled hanger steak, or a sharable tray of charcuterie.

SPECIAL-OCCASION DINNER: Yannick Cam is the chef behind some of the starriest restaurants of Washington's past, from Le Pavillon to Provence. Here, at his three-year-old **Bistro Provence** (4933 Fairmont Ave.; 301-656-7373), Cam's cooking is more casual but no less carefully thought through, from a round of walnut-and-spinach-stuffed clams to a lovely bouillabaisse to a decadent molten chocolate cake with milk-chocolate jam. All befit a celebration, and the cozy, Parisian-style front dining room is as nice a place to clink glasses as the enclosed back patio.



A decadent burger from Food Wine & Co., a good spot for happy hour.



At Newton's Table, dessert that's almost too pretty to eat.



Crisp-crusted pizza from the coal oven at Haven Pizzeria.

The boutique-style pies at Haven Pizzeria Napoletana (below) appeal to both kids and their parents.



Best of Bethesda 2013: Where to Eat

Bethesda has so many restaurants—here are our favorites.

By [Ann Limpert](#) on March 4, 2013



A sampling of excellent vegetarian fare at Passage to India. Photograph by Andrew Propp.

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Boutique pizza: You can't have a New

Haven-style pizzeria without a white-clam pie, and [Haven Pizzeria](#)

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