

Is the new deli everyone's raving about worth the hype?

Attorney General Peter Neronha refuses to pull punches

Animal rescues to find your newest member of the family

Rhode Island

MONTHLY

DON'T consult an app. There's a mag for that!

Where to Eat NOW

Rhode Island dining destinations fit for every occasion.



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The interior at Oberlin.

Where to Eat Now

Rhode Island's top dining destinations, fit for every occasion.
By Jamie Coelho with assistance from Lauren Clem and Dana Laverty



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Power of Attorney

With his penchant for political investigations and social media burns, Attorney General Peter Neronha is relishing his time in Rhode Island's political sandbox. *By Eli Sherman*

PHOTOGRAPHY: WHERE TO EAT NOW: ANGEL TUCKER; POWER OF ATTORNEY: WOLF MATTHEWSON; AT HOME: CHRISTIAN SCULLY.

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ON THE COVER: Chef Sky Haneul Kim from Gift Horse in Providence. Photograph by Angel Tucker. Follow us on the web at RIMonthly.com.



Jacquelynn and Louis Umberto



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Bruce Bieber, Deborah Moe



Sam Ventresca, Katherine Osevala, Ariana and Zachary Goslin



Bill and Cathleen Desrosiers



Tiffany DuBois-Morales, Eric Morales

New Year's Cheer

Guests bid farewell to 2023 in style at the **New Year's Eve Soiree** at the Chanler at Cliff Walk in Newport, where eighty-five patrons enjoyed a night celebrating art, music and — of course — the beginning of the new year. The small gathering created an intimate atmosphere for guests to mingle while observing a live painting demonstration by award-winning artist David Schock. Partygoers also enjoyed a four-course dinner and danced the night away to the Creswell Club, a New York-based jazz band, and a Las Vegas deejay. —**ABBIE CHIPPS**



Lani, John and Jeanie Shufelt



Lissette Vargas, Jeh Meher



Joe and Kim Feo, Donna and Harry Rosen

Photography by ANGEL TUCKER



DATE NIGHT:
Gift Horse

The Slack Tide raw bar platter at Gift Horse comes with oysters, littlenecks, mussels, smoked fish dip and a crudo plate. RIGHT: The interior of Gift Horse.

Rhode Island dining destinations complete with categories for every occasion.

By Jamie Coelho

WITH ASSISTANCE BY LAUREN CLEM AND DANA LAVERTY

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There's some good news and some bad news: Rhode Island's time is up.

The Ocean State can no longer claim to be a hidden-gem dining destination. Our restaurant scene is getting more national press than ever, which is the good news. The bad news? Reservations might be tougher to come by due to popularity.

We're celebrating the fact that our incredible eateries are being recognized on a broader international scale by the James Beard Foundation, *Eater*, *StarChefs*, *Food & Wine*, *Esquire*, *USA Today* and other media outlets. After Sherry Pocknett, owner of Sly Fox Den Too, won the title for the James Beard Foundation's 2023 Best Chef: Northeast, ten different Rhode Island-based chefs and restaurants have earned top spots on the 2024 semifinalists list. Chef Sky Haneul Kim (pictured left) of Gift Horse was named a semifinalist in JBF's "Emerging Chef" category, and Gift Horse was also recognized by *Esquire* as one of the "50 Best New Restaurants in America." *Eater* has also been noticing our charm by naming There, There to its list of the "Best New Restaurants in America 2023."

The widespread media attention has a positive impact on all local businesses and boosts our economy. While we are highlighting all the recent restaurants to earn national accolades, we also want to shine a light on other stellar standouts. Here are some of our personal favorites as well as other under-the-radar spots we want to share with readers, based on where to eat for different dining occasions and varieties of cuisine.

So the next time someone asks "Where should we eat?," don't consult an app. There's a mag for that.

DATE NIGHT: Gift Horse

When Benjamin Sukle closed his beloved birch restaurant in 2020, the city lost a culinary icon of creativity. The team shifted full focus to Oberlin, but we were still missing the exploratory cuisine that we relished in boundary-pushing birch. Enter Gift Horse, Sukle and Bethany Caliaro's new restaurant that highlights the talent of Korean chef Sky Haneul Kim in a more casual rendition that merges Asian cuisine with New England-sourced ingredients. The menu amplifies Rhode Island seafood with Sukle's own specialties and Kim's family heritage cooking, from house-made banchun served with a whole fish, peanut sauce, sticky rice and lettuce wraps to raw scallops with shio kombu and sesame, plus Rhode Island oysters shucked on the half shell at a sexy counter-service-style raw bar that's perfect for conversation with the shucker on staff. The monkfish toast eats like a fancy tuna melt with piri piri dipping sauce. For a potent cocktail, try the Reef Keeper with Blue Acres Aquaculture kelp-infused Industrious Spirit Company gin, seaweed syrup, lime cordial and a crisped nori chip topper. Its flavor is like a spiked sip of the ocean that pairs perfectly with shellfish. 272 Westminster St., Providence, 383-3813, gifthorsepvd.com

DUMPLINGS DONE RIGHT: Sun and Moon

People ask me where to get the best dumplings and my answer is always Sun and Moon Korean restaurant, where they are filled with either pork or vegetables and served in a traditional bamboo steamer basket. Delicate, steamed dumplings give way to juicy meat and veggies enveloped in a warm and comforting package that feels like eating while being wrapped in a warm, fuzzy

blanket. Each meal at Sun and Moon is served with sides of kimchi and pickles that improve the flavor of every bite. The other must-get dish here is the bibimbap made with beef bulgogi. The rice is cooked in the bottom of a hot stone pot which gives it a crispy consistency that can't be recreated without the stone pot. I load mine up with spinach, carrots, zucchini, radish, bean sprouts, spicy chili gochujang, kimchi and a fried egg, and mix it with chopsticks. Finish the meal with mochi for the grand finale. 95 Warren Ave., East Providence, 435-0214, sunandmoonkorean.com

BIRTHDAY MEAL: Giusto

Try the \$55-per-person, seven-course freestyle menu (with an optional \$40 wine pairing) and let the chef feed you whatever is in season. While Giusto's open-air porch with harbor views is the perfect spot for a late spring or summer evening, the food is good for all four seasons. Chef-owner Kevin O'Donnell, executive chef William Rietzel and team recently earned a national James Beard Foundation semifinalist nomination for Outstanding Hospitality, and the accolade is warranted as every guest that slips through the doors might as well be royalty. The restaurant is classified as "freestyle Italian," which means the chefs tap into local sourcing and seafood sustainability when plating house-made pastas and dishes while also putting their own creative spin on Italian-based items. One highlight is their riff on an Olneyville New York System hot wiener, for which they've crafted housemade mortadella, wrapped it in pastry dough and topped it with 'Nduja sauce accented with celery root puree and onions. If it's on the menu, you can bet I'm ordering it, all the way. 4 Commercial Wharf, Newport, 324-7400, giustonewport.com

HOMESTYLE MEDITERRANEAN:

Christopher's Kitchen and Bar

Woonsocket might be a hub for French-Canadian culture, but this newcomer proves you don't need a beachside view to channel the Aegean. Opened in 2019 on scenic Market Square, Christopher's Kitchen and Bar serves homestyle Greek fare alongside casual American and Italian favorites like penne alla vodka and shepherd's pie. Brothers Angelos and Stavros Petropoulos run the restaurant alongside their mother, Maria, and have been embraced in a city that knows a good meal when it sees one. The mixed grill arrives loaded with lamb chops, sirloin tips, chicken skewers, sausage, whipped feta and tzatziki, and the brunch spread includes Mediterranean takes like the breakfast gyro and the tsoureki French toast. Two bars offer ample seating to grab a cocktail before a show at the neighboring Stadium Theatre, and the rooftop patio has a bird's eye view of the city's free music series in the warmer months. Get the baklava for dessert — with walnuts and honey syrup, it's the final piece to make the culinary getaway complete. 2 S. Main St., Woonsocket, 766-3615, christopherswri.com —Lauren Clem

BLIND TASTING MENU:

Cara at the Chanler at Cliff Walk

When there's a real reason to celebrate, only a sensational meal will do, and the Newport waterfront restaurant Cara at the Chanler is the place to do it. The Forbes Five-Star restaurant is perched on the Cliff Walk, overlooking beautiful Easton's Beach and the surfers who brave those waves at any temperature all year long. At Cara, executive chef Jacob Jasinski and team curate special six-course blind tasting menus with optional wine pairings that

are served in a private dining room overlooking the ocean. Chef Jasinski presents each course to guests, explaining where every ingredient comes from, including vegetables just plucked from the inn's gardens and seafood reeled in from Block Island Sound,

visible right on the horizon.

It's called "avant-garde cuisine," and it is in fact high-fashion food, made using the most spectacular ingredients available.

117 Memorial Blvd., Newport, 847-2244, thechanler.com/cara-restaurant

LATE-NIGHT BITE:

The Slow Rhode

When most restaurants shut their doors by 10 p.m., the kitchen is still cranking at the Slow Rhode. Many industry chefs and servers, fresh off their shifts, will settle in at the bar or a table for a



BRUNCH:

Stoneacre Garden

If brunch were a sport, Stoneacre Garden would take it to the Final Four. This Newport garden-within-a-restaurant scores high on lobster Benedict, braised pork chili verde with a fried egg on top and smoked salmon toast with pretty in pink, frothy cocktails to wash it all down. There are many dining options, including the indoor dining room, cobblestone patio and the upstairs roof deck that overlooks the distant harbor. Snap post-worthy pics for Instagram at the selfie wall, in the hanging basket chair inside the dining room and out front in the daffodil-lined courtyard. My favorite cocktail is the Pink Nimbus with Roku gin, Italicus, lemon, raspberry and Bergamotto foam served in a dainty coupe glass with a hibiscus flower on the rim. The restaurant group also owns Stoneacre Brasserie with a French comfort food focus and Stoneacre Experiences, which offers catered picnics at picturesque spots throughout the city and afternoon tea at the Chinese Tea House at Marble House. 151 Swinburne Row, Newport, 619-8400, stoneacre.garden.com