

OUR 18TH ANNUAL ROUNDUP OF THE REGION'S FINEST

Hudson Valley

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BEST

of the Valley

Featuring: Restaurants, shops, boutiques, wineries, treats, favorite attractions, musicians and artists, places to go and people to watch

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banana nut, and according to manager Linda Naturale, "There's a secret ingredient, but I can't tell you what it is because it's a secret."



*TAPAS

BLUE MOUNTAIN BISTRO *Woodstock, Ulster County* The Spanish eat tapas (it means "small plates") as an accompaniment to their evening cocktails. Blue Mountain offers such a staggering (and yummy) array — olives and Moroccan eggplant, salmon cakes and Swiss chard gratin, tabouli salad and Tuscan duck liver paté — that there's a good likelihood you won't need to proceed to dinner.

BRUNCH

THAYER HOTEL *West Point, Orange County* There are lots of traditional events at the U.S. Military Academy: football games, summer concerts at Trophy Point, and, of course, Sunday Champagne Brunch at the Thayer Hotel. The buffet tables are laden with so many goodies — waffles, omelets, carving stations, pastries, fruit — you'll have no urge to eat again until Monday morning.

PIZZA (TIE)

FOUR SEASONS *Kingston*
COSMO'S CORNER RESTAURANT & PIZZA *Highland, Ulster County* "It's got some substance; it doesn't taste like a cracker," says the guy who answered the phone at Cosmo's when asked what sets its pizza apart from the cheesy masses. It also helps that "everything is homemade," using the best sauce and flour. The same is true at Four Seasons, where "good-quality ingredients" were judged the key to a great pie. It doesn't hurt, either, added the lass behind the counter, that the owners "still believe in old-fashioned ways."

• EDITOR'S PICK

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sides (like haricots vert with sun-dried tomatoes or tortellini with almond pesto dressing). Finish up with one of the pastries displayed tantalizingly in the front case, sip a cup of gourmet coffee, and you're set for the afternoon. In warm weather, you can even dine under an umbrella on the patio.

*BAR

THE COUNTRY INN *Knoxville, Ulster County* If beer is your bag, log on to Mapquest and get directions to tiny Knoxville, where the Country Inn offers an ever-changing lineup of brews — as many as 300 — from Indian pale ales and German rice beer to the latest stout from

