



2008  
**FOOD**  
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# FARM FRESH

MEET SIX LOCAL CHEFS WHO ARE LEADING  
THE CHARGE FOR FARM-TO-TABLE DINING...  
AND THE FARMERS WHO PROVIDE THE GOODS.

BY KAREN CROKE

**EVER WONDER** where those beets in your Gorgonzola salad came from, or that amazing piece of marbled-steak? Lately, chances are good that the food at your favorite restaurant is not from some far-flung locale, like Japan or Costa Rica, but from right next door. Here in the Hudson Valley, a handful of chefs are changing the way we eat, by using locally grown ingredients—from fingerling potatoes and ramps to farm-raised trout, grass-fed beef, and eggs still warm from the nest. But the equation, of course, is incomplete without the farmers, on the other side. We brought together some of the area's top chefs and the folks who get their hands dirty—literally—to provide them with their tomatoes, beef, eggs, fish, veggies, and more. It's a recipe that makes for some of the most innovative—and rewarding—dining around.



“

Craig only raises animals the pasture can support, in a manner that ensures they have nice lives ... not only does it make for happier animals, it makes for better food.”

It's no wonder Dan Barber is at ease in the fields of the Stone Barnes Center for Food and Agriculture: He and his brother David grew up visiting their grandparents' farm, Blue Hill, in the Berkshires. Today, Barber is a pioneer in bringing farm-fresh food directly to the table, using ingredients grown by farmers he knows—some of them right next door, at the Stone Barnes Center for Food and Agriculture, including Craig Haney, whose family has farmed in the northern Catskills for eight generations. Haney tends to a contented flock that includes sheep, hogs, and poultry, all raised naturally on organic feeds and grass. The Stone Barnes farm and greenhouse provide many of the ingredients in Barber's menus at the award-winning Blue Hill at Stone Barnes restaurant. “What Craig shows is that the great thing for us chefs—and for anyone who cares about eating and cooking—is that the most ecological choice for food, and the most ethical choice, always ends up being the most delicious choice,” Barber says. So, right now, you'll find shelling beans and “black dirt” spinach on the menu, but there's lamb and Berkshire pig, and you might find a farm-fresh egg, too.

**BLUE HILL AT STONE BARNES**  
630 Bedford Rd.; Pocantico Hills;  
366-9600; bluehillstonebarns.com  
**STONE BARNES CENTER** 630  
Bedford Rd.; Pocantico Hills; 366-  
6200; stonebarnscenter.org

MARK VERGARI



“

...all the farmers are passionate and proud of what they do. You can see it and taste it in their products.”

NEIL FERGUSON, MONTEVERDE RESTAURANT ●●●●●  
& TIM STARK, ECKERTON HILL FARMS

Whenever Neil Ferguson makes the trek to Manhattan's Union Square Green Market to buy produce, he usually stops by to see Tim Stark of Eckerton Hill Farms in Pennsylvania. “He is Mr. Tomato,” says Ferguson, of Stark, who is a master at growing beauties with names like Green Zebras and Cherokee Purples. At some point, those Green Zebras will find their way into a salad or maybe a soup at

Monteverde, the Cortlandt Manor restaurant known for its seasonal menus and modern American cuisine. “Using local products goes hand in hand with seasonality, and it makes menu-writing so much easier,” says Ferguson. “And I also think it is just the decent thing to do ... support the ‘local’ food community.” On his fall menu, you'll see pork tenderloin with spiced red cabbage and arctic char with

apple-bacon compote and braised celery, along with Monteverde's market staple—a fall salad with fresh-picked fruit, herbs, and, perhaps, the last of Tim Stark's tomatoes. **MONTEVERDE RESTAURANT** 28 Bear Mountain Bridge Rd.; Cortlandt Manor; 739-5000; monteverderestaurant.com **ECKERTON HILL FARMS** Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday at Manhattan's Union Square Greenmarket

“

A good kitchen respects its sources [and] chooses ingredients that are sound, seasonal, and local.”



**LESLIE SUTTER, FLYING PIG ON LEXINGTON ●●●●●**

**& KEVIN FERRY AND ANNE MARCARIAN, CABBAGE HILL FARM**

Leslie Sutter must be like a kid in a candy shop, what with 200 acres of achingly gorgeous, organic produce, farm-raised trout, even grass-fed beef, nearly at her fingertips. Her ingredient-driven menus at the Flying Pig—which *Gourmet* magazine names as one of its 100 eat-local, farm-to-table restaurants—are made all the easier because of Kevin Ferry of Cabbage Hill Farm,

just a few miles away. “A good kitchen respects its sources,” says Sutter, the restaurant’s executive chef. Which must make Ferry feel good, since the chef this fall is relying on the farm for pears, sun-chokes, butternut squash, leeks, onions, and beets. These will turn up in dishes such as Mrs. K’s Meatloaf, chicken pot pie and possibly a pork chop with pinecone syrup. Sutter, a Northern California

native (she also briefly lived on a working dairy farm in Orange County), was brought up eating locally grown ingredients. “It’s a way of life for me,” she says.

**FLYING PIG ON LEXINGTON**  
251 Lexington Ave.; Mount Kisco;  
666-7445; pigcafe.com

**CABBAGE HILL FARM**  
115 Crow Hill Rd.; Mount Kisco;  
241-2658; cabbagehillfarm.org

ELIZABETH OROZCO



**VIN MOCARSKI & BRANDON COLLINS, VALLEY RESTAURANT  
& BRIAN BERGEN, GARRISON FARM ●●●●●**

To put together Valley Restaurant’s signature salad, all that co-Chefs Vin Mocarski (*far right in photo*) and Brandon Collins (*left*) have to do is stroll over to Garrison Farm. What started as a modest kitchen-garden, right behind the restaurant, is now a two-acre marvel where organic farmer Brian Bergen (*center*) grows nine types of lettuce, 20 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, peas, herbs, rainbow carrots, and fingerling potatoes. Bergen and the chefs work together to plan the restaurant’s menu for the season—then to grow all of the necessary vegetables and herbs. “It’s amazing to be able to have all that fresh food, right at hand,” says Collins. “We know what

went on[to] the produce, when it was planted, and when it was picked.” On Thursday nights, this fall—“Eat Local” nights—the menu will feature short ribs with crispy bone marrow, and braised Garrison Farm broccoli rabe. There’s grilled salmon with Garrison Farm potatoes, and oxtail terrine with black grapes. What happens when they run out of fresh produce? “Brian keeps picking until late November,” says Collins. So if you want a taste of their roasted squash with Hudson Valley apples and Rainbeau Ridge goat cheese, make a reservation now. **VALLEY RESTAURANT**  
2015 Rte. 9; Garrison;  
845-424-3604; thegarrison.com

“

There is nothing better than putting something into your mouth that was just picked, fresh that morning. It’s even better to be able to have that same freshness on your menu.”

ERIC GABRYNOWICZ, TAVERN RESTAURANT, GARRISON ●●●●●

& MIKE MEILLER, MEILLER'S FARM, PINE PLAINS



“

Being able to use local farms is amazing, but there are challenges, too. The beauty is, I get incredible, fresh beef from Mike; the drawback is, I have to buy the entire side of beef.”

Two of the signature dishes at the intimate Tavern Restaurant in Garrison involve meat. The beef ragu and the Tavern Burger are both made with pasture-raised beef that Chef Eric Gabrynowicz (*at right in photo*) gets from his friend Mike Meiller, of Meiller's Farm in Pine Plains. And it's no wonder.

Gabrynowicz is a local boy—born and raised in Orange County—who was a sous chef at one of the area's first farm-to-table eateries, Danny Myer's Union Square Café, before taking over here last year. He has been using Meiller's beef, mainly because it's raised on the fresh grass of 250 acres of farmland that has been in Mike's family for three generations. “We really try to find the best local ingredients for our dishes, because, in my experience, everything just tastes better,” says Gabrynowicz. “And, buying locally helps to build sustainable agriculture.” Which makes you feel better about eating every last bite of his cranberry and *pancetta* appetizer, with its moist bleu cheese, made from local sheep's milk. He gets his eggs and chickens from Glynwood Farms in Cold Spring, and produce, such as sweet corn, and onions, from Blooming Hill Farms—some of which will surely turn up this fall in his Heritage Turkey Pot Pie.

**TAVERN RESTAURANT**

955 Rte. 9D; Garrison; 845-424-3257; highlandscountryclub.net

ELIZABETH OROZCO