

rural palates : reviews



OLIVIA SAVARESE AND OWNER/CHEF ALISON MILWE GRACE
AMG CATERING AND EVENTS, LLC

AMG CATERING AND EVENTS, LLC Wilton, CT

AMG Catering and Events has a brand-new, state-of-the-art home and cooking school for adults and children at 196 Danbury Road in Wilton. Classes are taught by Owner/Chef Alison Milwe Grace and event planner Olivia Savarese at AMG Catering and Events' professional kitchen. The adult cooking school offers single-session, two-hour classes in which adult students enjoy hands-on instruction and learn priceless kitchen tips from a veteran restaurant chef. AMG's children's classes are for kids ages 8 and up, and are offered in three-week sessions, covering food preparation, presentation, and kitchen safety. March themes include: Sensational Side Dishes, Not so Boring Snacks, Asian Dumplings, Breakfast for Dinner, and a Phyllo Dough-Greek inspired class.

Olivia officially joined Alison in this new venture, an idea they toyed with for years, especially after each having children of her own. With their combined expertise in education—Alison in her eighth year as chef/instructor at Staples High School, and Olivia as a veteran pre-school teacher/leader—it felt like a natural extension of their talents and passions to start their own cooking school for young people.

The new space can accommodate up to 20 and has also housed many successful corporate team-building events. AMG divides employees into groups and directs cooking competitions, bringing all kinds of people from the world of work into a fun, fresh setting.

For more information on class schedules and menus: 203-227-5535;
www.amgcatering.com.

RENAPOLI

Greenwich, CT

The recently opened ReNapoli in Old Greenwich is a tiny pizzeria serving outsized pizza varieties and favorites. Choose from pizza Napoletana, Romana, or New York style, with a great variety of crusts and toppings. For those who like a thin, chewy crust with a classic consistency, the individual-sized Neapolitan pizza Margherita is the way to go. Cooked in a wood-fired oven at 900 degrees for 90 seconds, this pizza is the closest thing to what you'd get in Naples this side of the Atlantic.

Pizza Romana, which comes in a huge square pan and has a much puffier crust, is divided into three sections and moves through toppings from savory to sweet that pack a wallop: cherry tomatoes, olives and garlic; soppressata, arugula and parmesan; and prosciutto, fig jam and gorgonzola. For those who have moved out from the city, the New York pie, with a chewy crust and



large diameter, is a welcome reminder of home.

Excellent ingredients such as Caputo flour, extra virgin olive oil, sea salt and Fior di Latte mozzarella are used on all pies. Co-owner Bruno DiFabio, who is a champion pizza maker

and competes often in Naples, Italy, is also a co-owner of the International School of Pizza in San Francisco, CA. Here students are taught



pizza technique, theory, the history of pizza, and the scientific principles of dough making. DeFabio is serious about yeast, dough and his ultimate product.

In addition to pizza, ReNapoli serves an array of salads (try the shaved finocchio with lemon) artisanal cured meats, and a "Chicago Italian Beef Sandwich" of slow roasted, seasoned beef thinly sliced, topped with vegetables on a baguette and dipped in beef jus.

216 Sound Beach Avenue, Greenwich, CT.
203/698-9300; www.renapoli.com.

MODERNE BARN

Armonk, NY

Moderne Barn is a stunning, casually chic New American restaurant that blends the elements of design, cuisine and service to deliver a terrific dining experience. With vaulted ceilings, richly colored banquettes, huge windows and enormous photographs of wild horses, Moderne Barn offers a vibrant interior that is both exciting and pleasing. Executive Chef Ethan Kostbar makes sure to deliver farm to table dishes with an emphasis on local ingredients and seasonal pizzazz that live up to the dramatic setting in which they are served.

Start with oven-dried Roma tomatoes with house-made mozzarella, watercress, a drizzle of pesto and balsamic dressing; fragrant pumpkin soup; or a half order of pasta such as sardine all'perciatelli with house-cured sardines, pine