

## Queens Restaurants Offer Varied Cuisines, Excellent Quality

BY RICHARD GENTILVISO

**A**cross the five boroughs, Queens is the place to eat. Sripraphai in Woodside is the number one restaurant for Thai food and Trattoria L'Incontro in Astoria is the number three restaurant for Italian food, according to the 2007 *New York City Zagat Survey*. And for the first time, a Queens street food vendor has edged out the Manhattan competition.

The *Zagat Survey* has been a standard for excellence in dining since Tim and Nina Zagat established it in 1979. They believed compiling the personal experiences of thousands of restaurant customers was more accurate in rating a restaurant than a review by any one person. Today, more than 250,000 people contribute ratings in over 70 cities worldwide.

The two Queens restaurants, Sripraphai and Trattoria L'Incontro, were also among the top 40 restaurants in New York City, an impressive standing, given the number and quality of food establishments in the city and the discerning palates of its denizens. Sripraphai is located at 64-13 39th Ave. and Trattoria L'Incontro is at 21-76 31st St.

Meanwhile, New York City's best street food vendor, Samiul Haque Noor, serves grilled chicken and lamb from his cart, Sammy's Halal, at 73rd Street and Broadway in Jackson Heights. Noor was one of two finalists from Queens and the ultimate winner among 200 nominees at the second annual Vendy awards, making Queens "arguably the city's capital of street food," according to an

October 25 *New York Times* report.

The first Zagat guide was a survey made exclusively for New York City. In addition to restaurants, Zagat guides also rate travel, shopping and recreation. Questionnaires are posted on Zagat's Web site, where consumers can continuously give their ratings and reviews. The published guides are based on the results of the questionnaires pegged to a 30-point scale.

Also receiving high Zagat scores were Piccola Venezia, Agnanti and Taverna Kyclades, all in Astoria, according to an October 19 report in the *New York Daily News*.

"Astoria has become a veritable 'Restaurant Row'—home to hundreds of exquisite restaurants, intimate cafes, quaint coffee shops, and other eating emporiums. Astoria is a whole world of dining in one neighborhood," a brochure entitled "Dine Astoria" by the Central Astoria Local Development Coalition, states.

Indeed, Agnanti (19-06 Ditmars Blvd.), Taverna Kyclades (33-07 Ditmars Blvd.) and Piccola Venezia (42-01 28th Ave.) are surrounded by numerous other food places included in the 2007 Zagat Survey.

They are: Amici Amore (29-35 Newtown Ave.), Ammos (20-30 Steinway St.), Brick Café (30-95 33rd St.), Café Bar (32-90 36th St.), Cavo (42-18 31st Ave.), Christos Steak House (41-08 23rd Ave.), Demetris (32-11 Broadway), Elias Corner (24-02 31st St.),



Emack & Bolio's (21-50 31st St.), Le Sans Souci (44-09 Broadway), Malagueta (25-35 36th Ave.), Omonia Café (32-20 Broadway), Ploes (33-04 Broadway), Ponticello (46-11 Broadway), Sac's Place (25-41 Broadway), S'Agapo (34-21 34th Ave.), 718 (35-01 Ditmars Blvd.), Stamatis (31-14 Broadway), Telly's Taverna (28-13 23rd Ave.), Thai Pavilion (37-10 30th Ave.) and Ubol's Kitchen (24-42 Steinway St.).

In addition, these Astoria food places were cited in a November 3, 2004 *New York Times* article: Butcher Bros. Steakhouse (29-33 Newtown Ave.), Cup Diner and Bar (35-01 36th St.), Fatty's Café (25-01 Ditmars Blvd.), Go Wasabi No. 1 (34-02 30th Ave.), Go Wasabi No. 2 (29-11 Ditmars Blvd.), J.J.'s Fusion Kitchen and Sushi Bar (37-05 31st Ave.) and Uncle George's Tavern (33-19 Broadway).

Over the 27-year history of the *Zagat Survey*, poor service is the most frequently made complaint (63 percent) while complaints about food and prices amount to only about 20 percent. *Zagat Survey* columns appeared in the *Gazette* for more than two years.

### BELLA ITALIA MIA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Nov. 8 Italian Gardens of South Brooklyn
- Nov. 12 "Machiavelli"; Dinner Dance, Riccardo's, Astoria
- Nov. 14 From Wise Guys to Wise Men
- Nov. 17 Honoring Mario Biaggi, Sicily Through Symbolism
- Nov. 18 Canicatti Dinner Dance, Villa Barone Manor, The Bronx; Roberto Iarussi in Concert, Lincoln Center; lecture, Italian American Women's Center
- Nov. 20 Dino Rosi at AARP, Flushing
- Nov. 25 "The Theater of Marcellus In Rome"
- Nov. 29 Dino Rosi Christmas Concert
- Dec. 1 Italian Legion of Merit Dinner Dance, Colony Club
- Dec. 6 "Kings of Christmas"
- Dec. 9 La Festa di Natale all' Italiana Christmas Party
- Dec. 10 Cristina Fontanelli, Kaufman Theater
- Dec. 16 Jeanette Vecchioni in Concert, Carnegie Hall
- Dec. 17 L'Esperienza Christmas Concert
- Dec. 19 Mario Lanza Lodge Meeting
- Dec. 23 Tracing Italian American Immigrant History

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# Councilmember Peter F. Vallone Jr



## State of the Neighborhood Address To be given at our beautiful new

LONG ISLAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL located at 14-30 Broadway, Astoria. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14, 2006 promptly at 8:00pm in the 4th floor Peter F. Vallone Sr. Library.

Principal William C. Bassell has invited us to have our meeting at the 4th floor LIBRARY at LONG ISLAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL named after PETER F. VALLONE SR. We will be able to see what a beautiful state-of-the-art school we have right in our own district. The students of the culinary arts program will provide homemade desserts and coffee.

Chair of the Public Safety Committee, Peter F. Vallone Jr. will address us on the State of the Neighborhood, including his efforts to ensure the responsible placement of cell towers and bring us up to date on tough prosecution of graffiti vandals and the city's current anti-terror efforts.