

| 292 Things You'll Love! |

best *of* westchester

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Featuring Photography by Andre Baranowski, Phil Mansfield, and Cathy Pinsky

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We hate to brag about the county, but indulge us. It's been a banner year for Westchester. Not one but two scene-making restaurants opened in Armonk—a town that previously had little to boast about on the culinary front—with big restaurant names in tow. Elsewhere in the county, chefs pushed the limits of Indian cuisine, set up new patios facing previously unheralded rivers, and threw down the fried-chicken gauntlet for all challengers. New boutique owners have searched the world to bring us products that are fair trade, eco-friendly, one-of-a-kind, and made by skilled hands. Even faced with a sagging economy, the county's cultural venues have pushed themselves to expand, renovate, and bring us newer, better, and more enriching programs. And we get the benefit of it all. Consult the following pages to find out which restaurants, boutiques, bars, arts groups, home services, health experts, beauty mavens, and other roll-up-their-sleeves-and-get-to-work types have spent the past year making Westchester a better—indeed, the best—place to live.

Personal Trainer

HELEN ANSARI OF THE SAW MILL CLUB

Mount Kisco

(914) 241-0797; sawmillclub.com

ASKED WHAT DIFFERENTIATES HER CLASSES

from others at the Saw Mill club, Helen Ansari has been known to quip that “they are longer, deeper, and harder.” And no one dares to even snicker at the innuendo from this statuesque former Miss Black America and breast cancer survivor. A typical exercise class might start out with this announcement: “Ladies and gents, say hello to your buttocks.” And say hello you will, to the point of near collapse. On Friday mornings when she has her popular modified restorative yoga class, people have to park at the Holiday Inn and hike back to the club. Restorative yoga packing in crowds in a health club? “Most athletes are too hard and thick in muscle to do yoga in its entirety,” she says. “They’re like clay that has hardened—they need to be patient to soften it. It’s like chiseling away at cement to clean up their stuff.” She applies the same approach to her private clients, many of whom come to her to carefully chisel the bad stuff away after recovering from serious illnesses and accidents. “I fuse yoga, cardio, and strength training, according to ability,” she says. “That’s my formula.”



Salon Hairstylist

BILLY GALASSO
AT BILLY'S OF
MOUNT KISCO

Mount Kisco
(914) 666-9077
billysofmontkisco.com

Billy Galasso has been clipping and coiffing hair in his eponymous salon since 1979, and some of his clients have been seeing him for decades. Now that’s loyalty! The shop has a warm, friendly vibe, and it’s a place where everyone seems to know your name.

Colorist
NICK TROMBETTA AT
SALON MAFFEI

White Plains
(914) 428-3555
salonmaffei.com

When you want run-of-the-mill color, you go to any old hairdresser—or to a bottle. But when you want rich, luxurious, customized-for-you color, artfully applied, you go to Nick Trombetta, previously

creative artistic director at It&ly Hairfashion N.A. One of our favorite colorists, Best of Westchester winner Kathleen Troy, agrees. “I’ve seen Nick work, and I am very impressed,” she says. You will be, too.

Zumba
CHRISTINE GONZALEZ
AT BELMARS FITNESS
STUDIO

White Plains
(914) 426-0359
zumbacise.net

Getting in shape has never been this much fun. There are scores and scores of zumba instructors, so what makes Christine Gonzalez special? Ask her students. They fill up her classes week after week, shedding pound after pound—hardly a surprise when a typical session can burn up to 800 calories. Class always ends with a drill sergeant-style, eight-minute ab routine, and students can also enroll in

a *Biggest Loser*-type program every three months, which includes weekly sessions, nutritional guidance, diet logs, and more.

Facials
DERMA GLOW OF
NEW YORK

North Salem
(914) 338-7822

The term “facial” is a bit of a misnomer at Derma Glow; it’s just the beginning of a total head-to-toe experience. In between the creams and peels and masques on your face, you’ll get massaged on your scalp, upper arms and shoulders, décolleté, hands, and feet. We melt just thinking about it. Opened in March 2010 by identical twins Jennifer and JoAnna Sciarrino, the spa is as cozy and inviting as a friend’s front parlor and

also offers body treatments, manicures, pedicures, and traditional and airbrush make-up applications for weddings and other special occasions.

Skincare
Boot Camp
NAJIA'S ESTHETIC
SKIN & LASER CENTER

Mamaroneck
(914) 630-1118
najaiskincare.com

Wimps need not apply. Getting “Najia’d,” as devotees of Moroccan beauty Najia Rohlf refer to her ministrations, puts your skin through its paces, that’s for sure, but the results are worth the, um, discomfort. “Certainly, you can come here and get a nice, relaxing facial,” Rohlf says. “But that doesn’t fix the underlying problem.” And getting to the root of

those problems is Najia’s mission: she incorporates lasers, intense pulsed light (IPL), peels, and microdermabrasion into her treatments to eliminate facial hair (“unacceptable”), diminish age spots and fine lines, and zap broken capillaries to kingdom come. Hey, no pain, no gain.

Makeup Shop
(Plus)
KD STUDIO

Katonah
(914) 301-5798

What do you call a place where you can get a facial or spray-on tan, buy beauty supplies, have makeup expertly applied, or shop for a cute hostess gift or even a cowhide rug? KD Studio, of course, a new shop opened by Kari Puckhaber of Pound