

Hearths & Crafts

“There’s Nothing to Eat”?

by Dr. Richard Craft

Are you kidding? Just mentioning Wawarsing makes my mouth water. There was a time when the Town of Wawarsing had little to offer other than the *Coachman Diner* and *Wenig’s*. Both have given in to the wrecking ball, but in their place exist a surprising number of good eating establishments, something for every taste. Even as I am writing this, two (oops, three) new restaurants/cafes are being put on line. The first one will be at the former *Tennenbaum’s* store on **Canal Street**, the next one at the former *Ridge Runners Roost* on **Rte. 52** near Cragsmoor, and the third at the former *Sam’s Restaurant* on **Center St.** (what memories!)

Well let’s start our tour by beginning at *Aroma Thyme Bistro*, *Hudson Valley Magazine’s* “Best New Restaurant” in 2004. They are located next to the *Shadowland Theater* and feature the most eclectic and exciting menu found almost anywhere. One time it may be a special vegetarian dish, and then will come a thick rib eye or a steamed lobster. Exotic is all I can call it and they play to rave reviews. My favorite appetizer is the shrimp and spinach pizza. The chef and his wife are hometown folks, trained elsewhere, but you know “there ain’t no place like home.”

Next comes a short trip to the *Shawangunk Country Club* and *Richard’s Restaurant*. Richard has been around for a long time and always serves an excellent meal. My favorites are the Wiener schnitzel and liver and onions. This is one of the favorites for the hometown crowd.

Rounding out the top three is of course the *Candlelight Restaurant* in Kerhonkson on **Rte 209**. Although the décor could be upgraded, there is no doubt about the ample portions and excellent cuisine served there. They are always busy, lunch or dinner, and feature such delights as Steak Romano, prime rib (I dare you to finish it), pork chops, etc.

If you’re looking for Italian food, you’ve come to the right place because we have a selection second to none. For nice ambience and a varied menu of Italian dishes, try *Il Paradiso* in the *ShopRite Plaza*. If it’s pizza you’re craving plus the more usual fare we have *Dominick’s* on **Center Street**, *La Bella’s* next to the *Shadowland* on **Canal Street**, *Brother John’s* (the old standby) in the *Napanoch Mall*, and *Cancelliere’s* on **Rte. 209** in Kerhonkson.

If you hunger for a more oriental touch, we’ve got it. At last count there were five Chinese restaurants in the Town. All cater to take-outs and eating on the premises.

Well, by now it is lunchtime and you say you don’t want anything too heavy; may I suggest the *Lighthouse Deli* across from the *Boy with the Boot* statue in the center of town? There you may order a hot lunch from a well-stocked steam table of fried chicken wings, meatloaf, veal and peppers etc. or order a huge deli sandwich with deli trimmings.

And then there is a short trip to *Wilson’s Deli* which caters to the lunch crowd with unique sandwiches, hot and cold, different each day. They are up at the “points” on the western end of **Canal Street**. Then there are the delis at *Peters Market* and *ShopRite*. *Peters* is at the entrance to Napanoch and *ShopRite* is in the plaza near the *Ellenville Hospital*. Their dishes are freshly cooked each day and very high in quality. My favorite is shrimp salad nestled in an avocado (pit removed).

Still not satisfied? Well, I’ve got just the place. Ready for this? How about some freshly-made split pea soup and a kielbasa and sauerkraut on a hard roll? Where? Why the Polish *Euro Deli* just over the *Beerkill Bridge* in Ellenville. You don’t have to speak Polish to eat and discover this treasure right under your nose. They’ve got pig’s feet, dill pickles, headcheese, potato pancakes... all the good stuff.

Don’t tell me you still have not decided? Well let’s take a look at the *209 Diner* on **Rte. 209** between Ellenville and Napanoch or the *Mountain View Diner* in Kerhonkson. There you can have breakfast all day long, or a hot meal with homemade soup (HUGE!), all made fresh on the premises.

And then there is the very popular *Rické Len’s* at the entrance to the *Napanoch Mall*. In addition to good portions and reasonable prices, they feature special cooking contests. See their board for times and featured items.

With all these eating-places you’d think that the “chains” would have left us alone, but they, too, are here: Mickey D’s, Burger King, and Pizza Hut (and Subway is coming!) offering their unique style of food.

And for dessert? Well there’s *D’Lites* on **Main Street** in Ellenville, *Twist King* on **Rte. 209** between Napanoch and Ellenville, and *Mike & Larry’s* just before Kerhonkson on **Rte. 209** (All are seasonal, as one might expect with ice cream “parlors”).

And one more for good measure.

The *Elks Lodge 1971* in Napanoch does a lot of community service. To pay for all their many donations, they feature a Friday night dinner open to the public. You’d better call for reservations, because they fill up fast. They also feature a Sunday morning breakfast, the first Sunday of each month. They also “loan” their facilities out for many fundraisers throughout the community, such as the annual spaghetti dinner that supports the July 4th festivities, and many more. They deserve your special consideration

Not bad for a town that for years has been laughed at for having a lack of taste. If I’ve missed anyone, check the calendar of events for special offerings.

You may ask, “What’s your favorite eating establishment?” Without hesitation, I will tell you that my five-star restaurant that is tops in ambience, service, presentation, flavor, color, quantity of portions, taste and the most bang for my buck is – (trumpets) – HOME. My wife is the best cook there is; I ought to know, for I have been tasting it for over fifty years. She’s come a long way since her first public meal of roasted squirrel. She is a one-woman dynamo when it comes to preparing anything from a fascinating breakfast to a complete dinner party for twenty-five. You can have your cooking channel hosts... I’ve got my own Emeril: D. 

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