

.....
 what you love

70+ winners of the Readers' Choice Awards

BEST

food, shops, people, fun

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TRY THEM AT BERGENFEST *details page 12*



+ Our own Biggest Loser • 3 award-winning abodes
 • Breast cancer update ... news, a survivor story and more

BEST OF

by Francesca Moisin

BLUE-RIBBON BERGEN

OUR READERS' CHOICE AWARD WINNERS!

FINALLY, IT'S YOUR TURN. For the past seven years, we at *Bergen Health & Life* have worked hard to keep you in the know about all the local spots worth knowing. We've looked for the finest restaurants, the hippest bars, the best boutiques. We've conducted taste tests to uncover the best scoop of ice cream, slice of pizza, bowl of chili, cup of coffee and more.

And then we turned to you—not because we got lazy, but because it's only common sense to tap the pooled wisdom of the people who know Bergen County best. We asked you to divulge your favorite local haunts and were overwhelmed by the sheer enthusiasm of your replies, which surpassed all our expectations.

The following pages contain a comprehensive guide of all the winning spots selected by you, our readers. And while we highly recommend a county-wide expedition to each victorious locale, we've also devised a short-cut tour—a can't-miss bash where you can sample many of the winning offerings all in one night! Bergenfest 2008 is scheduled for Thursday, October 2—flip to page 12 for details.



DINING OUT

Best local gems for all your dining occasions



ROMANTIC RESTAURANT Chakra

(144 Route 4 West, Paramus; 201-556-1530; www.chakrarestaurant.com) Silk-tented tables are set atop Asian throw rugs. Cushy banquettes are strewn with plush pillows. Flickering candles cast their warm glow across exposed-brick walls. A water wall creates soothing background music. It doesn't get any more romantic than Chakra. "This beautiful bistro was also your pick for **best cosmopolitans** and **best singles' scene**."



ON THE TOWN

A stellar selection of nighttime spots

MARTINIS:

Chakra (144 Route 4 West, Paramus; 201-556-1530; www.chakra-restaurant.com) With libations like the Winter Kiss (Stoli strawberry vodka, Grand Marnier, white crème de menthe, cranberry juice) and the Chakra Brownie (vanilla vodka, Frangelico, Malibu rum, crème de cacao), it's no wonder so many martini enthusiasts flock to Chakra.



BEST ROMANTIC RESTAURANT



BEST COSMOPOLITAN



BEST MARTINI



BEST SINGLES SCENE