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Bergen

HEALTH & LIFE | FOOD & FASHION | HOME & HAPPENINGS

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HOT SPRING
5 STYLE PROS SHARE
THE SEASON'S TRENDS

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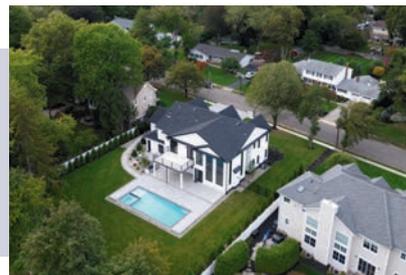
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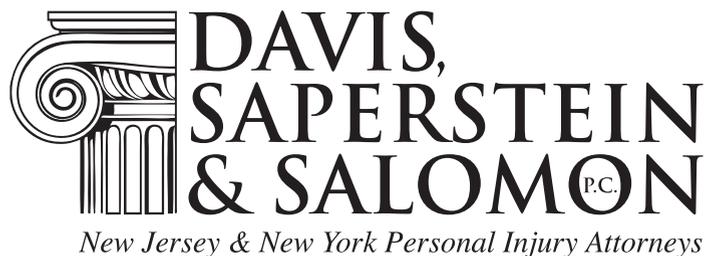
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PC Medical Director,
& Medical Director of LGBTQ+ Health and Wellness



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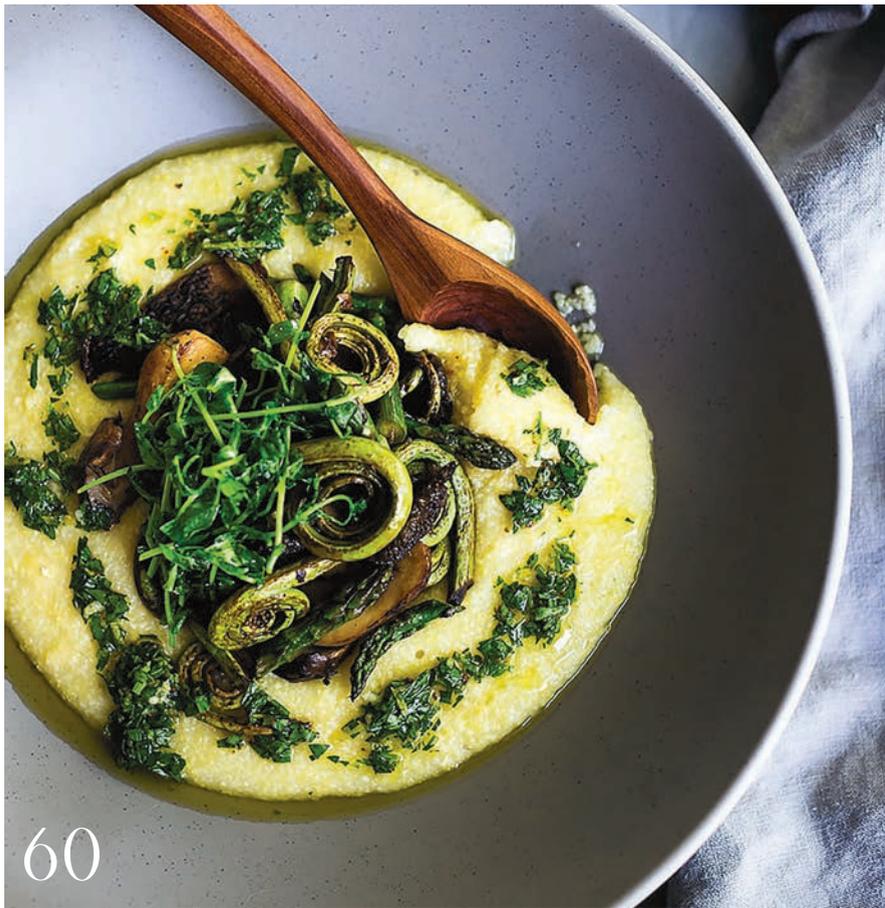
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Your Time Of Renewal

Suppose for a moment there were no such thing as spring. The skies remained gray, the trees stayed bare, and March was just a longer February. Would we still find an excuse to go out and buy some new duds?

My answer is an emphatic yes—unless we've suspended the rules of humanity along with those of meteorology. A periodic refresh in the way we present ourselves to the world isn't fussy or superficial; it's a human need. It's perfect for a season of renewal, and if there weren't such a season we'd have to invent one.

So it's with pride that I present BERGEN's March Fashion Issue. As usual, you'll find it a source of inspiration. On page 38, five local fashion gurus each share a favorite tip for what to wear this season and how to wear it smartly. On page 52 you'll read about no-hassle ways to employ eight classic items—from boxy clutch bags to double-chain necklaces—to new effect, creating a look you'll be proud of. And, starting on page 44, this issue's fashion photo essay showcases flowing maxi-dresses for the warm weather that's coming.

Do you have an opinion about Pantone's Color of the Year? It's called Cloud Dancer, and as you'll read on page 36 it's a soft, billowy shade of white that is meant to be calming and serene. Tips on how to repair what you wear? They're on page 18. And so are three "community closets" that are eager for your donations when you decide that garments have outlived their usefulness for you, but not, perhaps, for others.

Our Special Report (page 54) stays right on topic. It's about "thrifting," the business of second-hand clothes shopping, which is on the rise in Bergen as it is nationwide. Of course, there's a right way and a wrong way to hop aboard this bandwagon, and our article package offers 14 practical pointers to keep your "thrifting" thrifty.

International trip coming up? Make fashion a stop or two on your itinerary. On page 58, we describe five fashion museums (four in Europe, one in Canada) that chronicle and illustrate the history of style. (The "Flora" scarf that belonged to Grace Kelly—Princess Grace—is just one of many sights to see.)

What else have we? The lowdown on supplements you take for your health (page 32). A new Mexican restaurant that has the confidence not to try to be trendy (page 104). And meet an endlessly creative "idea" woman (page 28) who boasts: "I make not knowing things an art form."

Finally, you'll find on page 67 our annual list of the county's Top Doctors, based on independent research. Of course, the array of honored medical talent here is one of several ways Bergen County is outstanding.

Happy St. Patrick's Day and happy equinox!

Spring does, of course, exist, and we couldn't be more grateful and ready to celebrate it. It's on its way—I promise.



Rita

Rita Guarna
Editor in Chief
rita.guarna@wainscotmedia.com

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Dr. Eric Liberman, OB-GYN
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- **Conrad's**, 107 Westwood Ave., Westwood, 201.664.2895; conrads1928.com
- **Critchley's**, 812 Kinderkamack Rd., River Edge, 201.967.1800; critchleyscandies.com
- **Genevieve's Home Made Chocolates**, 174 Ray St., Garfield, 973.233.5149; genevieveschocolates.com
- **Luxx Chocolat**, 133 Kinderkamack Rd., Park Ridge, 201.312.7936; luxxchocolat.shop
- **Trina's Treats**, 296B Stuyvesant Ave., Lyndhurst, 201.804.7659; trinastreatsxo.com

Visit bergenmag.com/local-sweet-spots to read about more great chocolate shops, and don't forget to vote for your favorites in this year's Readers' Choice contest. Fill out a free online ballot at bergenmag.com/bergen-readers-choice-2026-voting.



SHOO THE FLU

Spring is right around the corner, but we're still in flu season. (It can continue into May!) In fact, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention this year classified flu activity in New Jersey as "very high."

How to keep you and your family safe?

"If you test positive for the flu, stay home until you are fever free for at least 24 hours to avoid exposing others," says Dmitry Volfson, D.O., chief medical officer at CityMD urgent care, which has locations in Paramus, Ramsey, Northvale, Elmwood Park and Teterboro. "If your fever lingers for more than five days, or if you experience any shortness of breath or chest pain, it is important to get evaluated by a doctor. Those symptoms can be a sign of one of the more serious complications of the flu, such as pneumonia."

For more advice, visit bergenmag.com/how-to-protect-yourself-from-the-flu.



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Bergen Buzz

OUR GUIDE TO NEW IDEAS, TIPS, TRENDS AND THINGS WE LOVE IN OUR COUNTY.

AS MARSHALS GO, HE'S GRAND

The Bergen County Saint Patrick's Day Parade turns 44 this year, and it steps off on Sunday, March 15, in Bergenfield. In the lead will be the 2026 Grand Marshal, Brian Clancy, New Milford's chief of police.

Born and raised in New Milford, Clancy is the grandson of four Irish immigrants, all of whom came to New York City in the 1930s on White Star Line ships. His father served more than 20 years with the New York City Fire Department, and Clancy continued that legacy of service, joining the New York City Police Department in 2000 before coming to his hometown police department in 2001. He became New Milford's police chief in 2019.

A lifelong musician, Clancy has been playing the bagpipes since age 16. He has played with the Clan Na Vale Pipe Band, the Iona College Pipe Band and the Bergen Irish Pipe Band and regularly attends Irish-music sessions and concerts all over the tri-state area. His wife, Erin, an accomplished Irish dancer, judges Irish dance competitions around the world. According to the Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Clancy "represents a lifetime of service, cultural commitment and Irish heritage." Wave to him as you watch the parade!



REPAIR WHAT YOU WEAR

The average American throws away about 81.5 pounds of clothes every year, and we're all spoiled by how easily garments can be replaced. While there's nothing wrong with a wardrobe refresh (see page 44 to browse styles we love) and donating or selling to thrift shops is a hot option (on page 54, you'll read about the popularity of "thrifting"), there's also much to be said for rehabilitating a favorite garment so that you can continue to wear it—and love it. So before you toss the sweater with the hole in the sleeve, consider these tips:

- **Don't knock glue.** Fabric glue can be a lifesaver in a pinch, particularly for unraveling hems or stubborn synthetic fabric that rejects a needle and thread. Don't dismiss your mother's old tricks, either—iron-on hem tape is particularly effective on cotton, wool and denim and can save a pair of jeans. (Iron-on patches can also be colorful and fun!) For fixing small holes, consider the iron-activated "fusible bonding web," which can bond two layers of fabric together in a jiff.
- **Thread a needle.** Mending holes or re-attaching buttons doesn't require immense skill. For instance, if a favorite sweater gets caught in your earring or necklace and you pull a snag, you can use the eye of a large needle to pick up the yarn sticking out and tuck it back into the garment, and simple darning for socks and sweaters is less sewing and more weaving a fabric patch over the hole with your thread. A total beginner? Twice a month the shop Bayou of Saddle River (bayouofsaddleriver.com) gathers people of all levels working on needle projects, and they share wisdom.
- **Consult an expert.** Is it time to turn to a pro? Thankfully, Bergen has many options—and these experts also can alter a garment to new measurements or tastes. Giorgio's Tailoring (73 Park Ave., Park Ridge, 201.746.6500; giorgiostailoring.com) has more than 30 years' experience doing alterations and repairs, and Ani's Tailoring (100 Midland Ave., River Edge, 201.599.0830) is known for a detail-oriented eye. If it's your shoes that give you trouble, consider Bill's Shoe Repair (658 Godwin Ave., Midland Park, 201.493.1011; billsshoerepair.com) or Quality Shoe Repair (18 Oak St., Ridgewood, 201.445.5811; qualityshoerepair.weebly.com).

YOUR GARMENTS' NEXT LIFE

So you're ready to part with some clothes—how do you make sure they'll be put to good use? Consider donating to a community closet. These initiatives, including the three below, offer free or low-cost clothing to those in need, often targeting a specific population.

• **Bergen Community College's Bergen Threads.** Local college students who may be struggling will find many options both personal and professional here, from suits to shoes to accessories. Always particularly needed: pants and T-shirts.

—400 Paramus Rd., first floor, Paramus, 201.879.7074; bergen.edu

• **Families for Families Clothing Closet.** Local families with children in need can browse and choose the clothes they need in an environment that feels like a shopping trip. Desired: items in any size for men, women and children.

—250 Braen Ave., Wyckoff, 201.499.5622; families4families.com

• **The Women's Rights Information Center's Career Closet.** Aiming to prepare women to enter the workforce with confidence, this establishment offers free clothing appropriate for job interviews and business settings.

—108 West Palisade Ave., Englewood, 201.568.1166; womensrights.org

PUPPY LOVE

Dog: Brady, 5-year-old golden-doodle

Owner: Katherine Martinelli of Hackensack

Moving into your first apartment is exciting, but doing so during the pandemic quickly became a lonely experience. So in 2021 Martinelli decided to bring a puppy into her home. "I always wanted a dog of my own and I was working from home, so the timing was right," she says. She fostered and eventually adopted Brady (who's named after the former New England Patriots star) through a Rockland County, N.Y., rescue group, and the pup and "parent" have been inseparable ever since.

"He's my little shadow," Mama reports. "He follows me from room to room in the apartment and always sits next to me and has to lean against me." When Brady's not by his mother's side or playing with his plush squirrel and Kong toys, he can be found strolling with his owner along the Hackensack River walkway and making new furry friends (and picking out new toys) at the local Petco.

"He's such a character at the pet store," Martinelli says. "He sees the New York Giants pet costumes and barks at them like he wants one. I guess despite his name he wants to be a Giants fan."

Want to see your pet in an upcoming issue? Email a photo and details of your furry friend to Editor Rita Guarna at rita.guarna@wainscotmedia.com.



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CULINARY CORNER

Feast on Irish-style corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day, then try one of these recently opened restaurants for cuisine inspired by other nations:

Raising the 'steaks'

For a refined sushi program and the warmth of a classic Italian steakhouse, swing over to Rare Bird at Ramsey Country Club. Under the guidance of Michelin-starred chef Joey Sergentakis, the relaxed yet elevated restaurant offers perfectly grilled steaks, handcrafted pastas, fresh nigiri and thoughtful small plates, each complemented by craft cocktails, wine and—on select evenings—live music. With both indoor and scenic outdoor seating, Rare Bird is ideal for date nights, celebrations and memorable meals with friends and family.

- Rare Bird, 105 Lakeside Dr., Ramsey, 201.327.0009; rarebirdnj.com

Spain reigns

In La Cuchara, downtown Englewood has gained a new destination for authentic Spanish cuisine. Centered on freshly made paella and traditional recipes designed for sharing, the menu also features tapas (for instance, patatas bravas, spicy tips and an Iberian ham board) that showcase rich, vibrant flavors. And save room for dessert—Basque cheesecake, for instance.

- La Cuchara, 21 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, 201.408.2333; la-cuchara.com

Indulge in India

Bringing beloved South Indian comforts to Ridgewood, Dosa House is where crisp, golden dosas and fragrant regional specialties take center stage. From savory masala dosa to medu vada and hearty vegetarian favorites, the menu celebrates authentic flavors that appeal to longtime fans and curious newcomers alike. With options like idli, uttapam and flavorful biryani, it's a go-to for those craving—or exploring—Indian cuisine.

- Dosa House, 22 Oak St., Ridgewood, 201.300.0015



A BERGEN IDOL?

It's music to our ears! Paramus native Jake Thistle is making waves on the latest season of ABC's *American Idol*, which began airing at the end of January. Thistle has been growing his music career in recent years and was working on a full album in Nashville when he turned to network TV looking for a big break—and it seems he may have found it. The 2022 Paramus High School grad announced Jan. 16 that he would be featured on the show, and Bergen instantly started buzzing. (Paramus Public Schools' social media began calling the season Paramus Idol.)

Thistle is known for his story-heavy songwriting and a sound that blends classic rock and modern pop; he cites Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers as a major influence. We're rooting for you, Jake!

IN THE RUNNING

Spring is coming, time to trade cozy couches for sunlit streets! This season's 5Ks, community runs and road races are calling all walkers, joggers and sprinters into the fresh air for friendly competition and a little endorphin boost. Grab your sneakers, rally the crew and hit the pavement—what better way to celebrate the return of longer days and warmer weather?

- **March 8:** International Women's Day 5K Run/Walk, Overpeck Park, Ridgewood Park, 10 a.m. This inaugural race will benefit JBWS (formerly Jersey Battered Women's Service), a nonprofit that provides protection and support for victims of domestic violence. Info: runsignup.com
- **March 14:** GoodWill Shamrock Shuffle 5K, Saddle River County Park, Ridgewood, 8 a.m. This event will benefit the Goodwill Foundation, which raises funds and awareness for Angelman syndrome, a congenital condition marked by intellectual limitations and uncoordinated movements. Info: runsignup.com
- **March 14:** Michael Cassidy Shamrock 'N' Run 5K, Memorial Park, Rutherford, 10 a.m. Participants will raise money for the National Brain Tumor Society. Info: shamrocknrun5k.org
- **March 15:** River Vale Shamrock 5K, Mark Lane Sports Complex, River Vale, 8 a.m. Proceeds will benefit the River Vale Police Association. Info: runsignup.com
- **March 21:** Noel O'Malley Memorial Run for Tomorrow 5K and 1-mile run, John L. Hogan Park, Northvale, 9 a.m. This inaugural race is a fundraiser for cancer research. Info: runsignup.com



ENGLEWOOD HEALTH



Englewood Health congratulates all of our ***Bergen Magazine*** Top Doctors.

To find one of our top doctors or make an appointment, visit englewoodhealth.org

A BOUNTY OF BRUNCHES

Instead of just munching decorated eggs and chocolate bunnies on Easter Sunday (April 5), why not take the family out for a hearty meal? Easter brunch is an excuse to gather your group for fresh pastries, seasonal specialties, sparkling cocktails and kid-friendly favorites. Find all of that and more at these spots, each a former Best Brunch honoree in BERGEN's Readers' Choice contest. (Visit bergenmag.com to vote in this year's poll.)

• **Bacari Grill**, 800 Ridgewood Rd., Township of Washington, 201.358.6330; bacarigrill.com

• **Biagio's**, 299 Paramus Rd., Paramus, 201.652.0201; biagios.com

• **Farm & Flour**, 434-436 Pulis Ave., Franklin Lakes, 201.942.2066; farmandflournj.com

• **Fleming's Steakhouse**, 90 The Promenade, Edgewater, 201.313.9463; flemingssteakhouse.com

• **Graze**, 611 N. Maple Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, 201.543.0144; grazehhk.com

• **Haven Restaurant and Bar**, 2 Main St., Edgewater, 201.943.1900; havenedgewater.com

• **Ivy Inn**, 268 Terrace Ave., Hasbrouck Heights, 201.393.7699; ivyinn.com

• **Just Janice**, 23 Sheridan Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, 201.445.2666; justjanicenj.com

• **Steve & Andrea's**, 298 Park Ave., Rutherford, 201.939.7668; steveandreas.com

• **Willow & Whisk**, 319 Franklin Ave., Wyckoff, 201.425.9931; willowandwhisk.com

HELPING MOMS HELP BABIES

Founded in 2020, Baby Bundle is a Hackensack-based non-profit that supports first-time mothers in need, creating "maternity packages" filled with essentials

such as diapers, wipes, clothing, bottles and pacifiers. Recently the organization received a \$5,000 grant from the NVE Bank Community Foundation in Englewood. These funds support struggling mothers, providing baby items for families in need.

Says Mia Forsberg-Villon, Baby Bundle's founder: "This support allows us to ensure that no mother feels alone as she welcomes her newborn."

For more information, visit babybundle.org.



A KISS, A HUG

Downtown Hackensack wears its heart on its sleeve with the debut of "XO," a bold new public art installation that brings color, creativity and connection to Main Street. Unveiled as part of the city's ongoing arts efforts, the 6-foot letters offer a playful yet meaningful symbol of love, community and togetherness—an invitation to pause, smile and engage with the city in a new way. "XO" has quickly become a gathering point and Insta-worthy spot for Bergen County residents, adding personality and vibrancy to the streetscape.

"It invites visitors to stop, connect and feel the love in our city's heart," says John T. Peters, executive director of Hackensack's Main Street Business Alliance. The installation was designed by artist Chinedu Okigbo and crafted from powder-coated aluminum.

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833.247.2473

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Marc Jacobs The Suede Mel Boot
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Italian Suede Crescent Shoulder Bag
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Prada Belted Suede Midi Skirt
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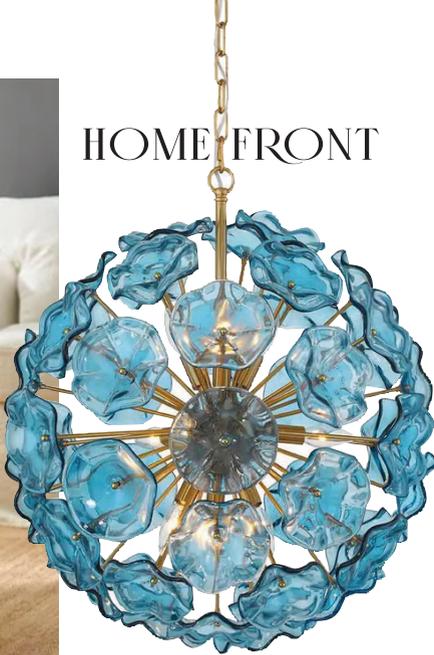
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Hulala Home Udine Modern Patterned Tufted Side Chair with Golden Legs hulalahome.com



Crystorama Lighting Group Esme 9-Light Sputnik Chandelier
Ferguson Home, Mahwah, 201.252.8730



Maine Cottage Marnie Chair mainecottage.com

In Full Bloom

Petal-inspired designs can bring a fresh dose of spring indoors.

Allan White & Gold Round Flower-Shaped Wood Coffee Table The Home Depot, multiple locations



Tov Furniture Halio Blue Floral Shell Side Table amazon.com



Modern Sectional, Left Facing theinside.com



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She's Full Of Ideas

Cliffside Park's Randice-Lisa Altschul, inventor of the disposable cell phone, says she makes "not knowing things an art form."

Lifelong Cliffside Park resident Randice-Lisa ("Randi") Altschul, 66, began her career in toy and game development. Eventually she invented the world's first disposable cell phone, which won the market-research company Frost & Sullivan's Product of the Year award in 2003. She's also the founder and CEO of Palisades Therapeutics, which develops new medicines and medical technologies.

Could you describe what you do?

I'm a serial inventor and a serial entrepreneur—a concepts person. I come up with ideas and pitch them—sometimes I make them, sometimes I find smart people to help me bring them to life. My first sale was to the ABC television network in my early 20s. My *Miami Vice* board game in the mid-'80s was very popular. I also did *The Simpsons* game, the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game, Barbie's 30th-birthday game. I patented the disposable cell phone and its super-thin technology in 1999.

What's your invention process?

It just feels like the project is there, in my head. It appears like a marketing sheet. I find that when my conscious mind is occupied—if I'm driving or on a hike or walking my dog—my subconscious mind does the work. It's different if someone comes to me with a request for a certain category—"a game for ages 7 to 12," for instance. That takes more conscious brainstorming. I've licensed more than 250 products in the toy-and-game industry, the television industry and technology. Then I fell into pharmaceuticals.

How does one "fall into" pharmaceuticals?

First I hit rock bottom. I lost my mom, my dad and my company, Diceland Technologies—the one that focused on the disposable cell phone and similar projects—in one year. My financial consultant scammed me, and I lost everything. But I couldn't just feel sorry for myself and give up. I had a good cry and tried to figure out how to move forward.



How did you do so?

I needed to make money while having time during the day to do meetings, because I was still conceptualizing and pitching ideas. I became a night nanny for a wealthy woman who didn't want to wake up after 10 p.m. for feedings. I took care of the babies at night, and I started getting a reputation for being good at it. I was contacted by this woman, Sandi Peterson. She was a pharmaceutical executive, the CEO of Bayer. She needed help keeping an eye on her son because she traveled a lot. I started working for her, and we became friends. She is the catalyst for everything I do now.

What next?

One day she happened to mention that the world was scrambling for a noninvasive diabetes testing system. I said, "I could do that." She laughed, but the next day I conceptualized what I called the "Pop Test." It was in the shape of a lollipop, and it was a saliva diabetes test. And Sandi gave me the guts

to go out and find the right people to make it a reality.

Like who?

My cousin Neil Theise, a research scientist [and clinical professor at NYU's Grossman School of Medicine]. We sat down together, and it all developed from there. Palisades Therapeutics became my full-time job. Suddenly we were also looking into oncology, diagnosis tech, antivirals. I spend all day looking through medical data, funneled to me from colleges and organizations all over the world, for new ways to use it. We've directed more than \$50 million in funding into our science through grants and collaborations with institutions and government agencies.

Your greatest talent?

I make not knowing things an art form. Sometimes only having a little bit of knowledge is dangerous. Your thoughts get siloed, and you get stuck. I don't know enough for that to happen to me. I can think about things in ways the Ph.D.s I'm surrounded by don't, because they think in their expertise and I think broadly.

Someone you find inspiring?

Did you know the man who invented xerography, or a Xerox copy machine, didn't make a dime from that technology for almost 20 years? I love stories about persistence.

Experiences being a woman in a male-dominated field?

I've never felt like a glass-ceiling breaker, honestly. My gender has never been a problem because people like good products and I provide them.

Technology you're excited about?

AI. The things you can do with data using tools like Perplexity are incredible.

Memories of growing up in Cliffside Park?

I still live in the house I grew up in with my parents and siblings. I love the cliffs overlooking NYC. Things have changed a lot—back then it was this small Italian town, and I felt like I was from the one family who wasn't Italian. But it's still a place I love.

—Kirsten Meehan



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Director Talent Acquisition
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HEALTH RISKS FOR BABIES OF MOMS WITH EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders in mothers-to-be are linked to a heightened risk of asthma and wheezing in their children, irrespective of the type of disorder, presence of co-existing depression/anxiety or the timing of their child's exposure, finds research.

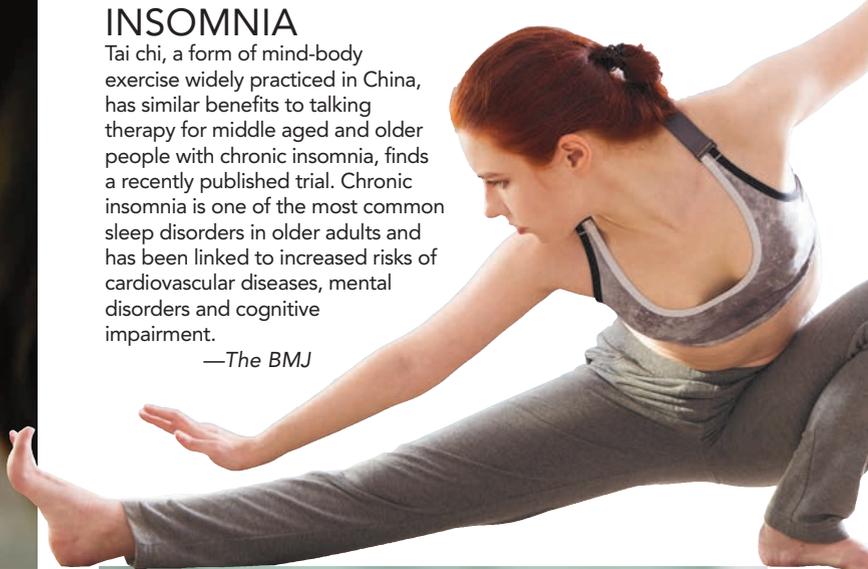
—Thorax



TAI CHI TO EASE INSOMNIA

Tai chi, a form of mind-body exercise widely practiced in China, has similar benefits to talking therapy for middle aged and older people with chronic insomnia, finds a recently published trial. Chronic insomnia is one of the most common sleep disorders in older adults and has been linked to increased risks of cardiovascular diseases, mental disorders and cognitive impairment.

—The BMJ



BEST EXERCISE FOR KNEES

For patients with knee osteoarthritis, aerobic activities such as walking, cycling or swimming are likely to be the best exercise for improving pain, function, gait performance and quality of life, finds a recent study. While other exercises may offer complementary benefits, they should not replace aerobic exercise as the main strategy, say the researchers. Nearly 30 percent of people over the age of 45 show signs of knee osteoarthritis on X-rays, half of whom also have severe knee symptoms.

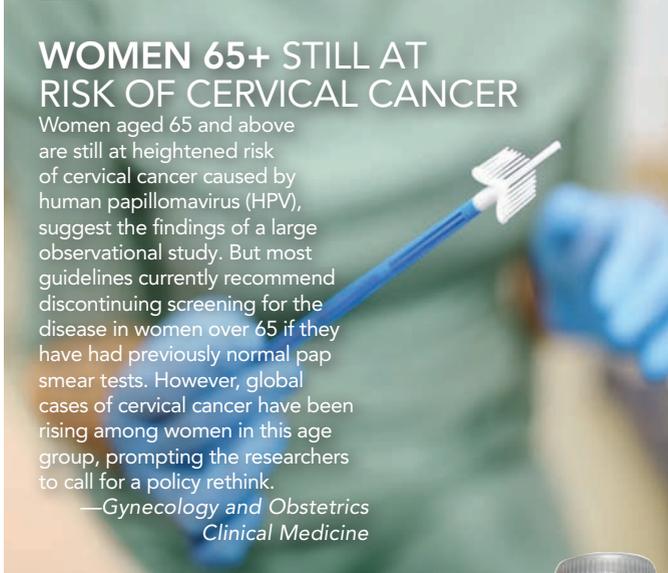
—The BMJ



WOMEN 65+ STILL AT RISK OF CERVICAL CANCER

Women aged 65 and above are still at heightened risk of cervical cancer caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), suggest the findings of a large observational study. But most guidelines currently recommend discontinuing screening for the disease in women over 65 if they have had previously normal pap smear tests. However, global cases of cervical cancer have been rising among women in this age group, prompting the researchers to call for a policy rethink.

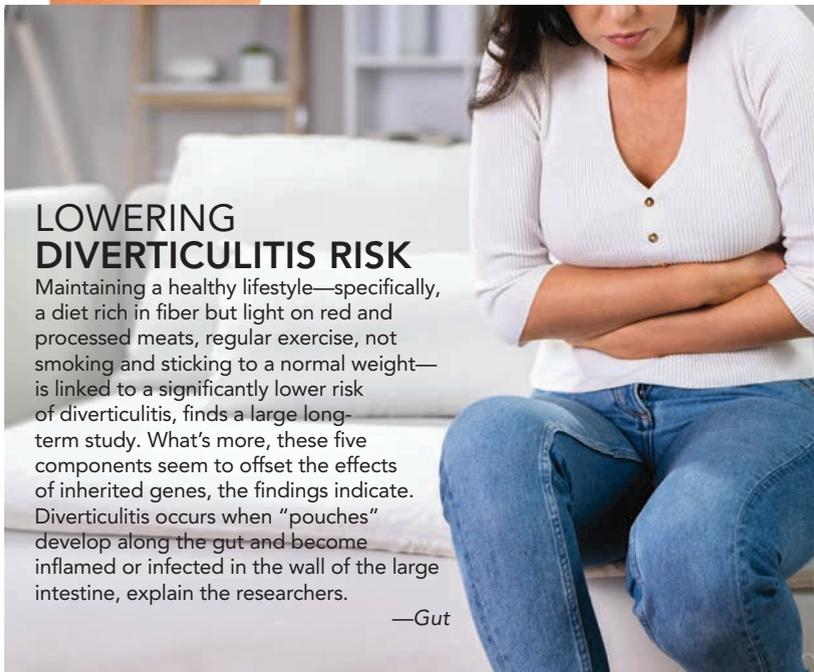
—Gynecology and Obstetrics Clinical Medicine



LOWERING DIVERTICULITIS RISK

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle—specifically, a diet rich in fiber but light on red and processed meats, regular exercise, not smoking and sticking to a normal weight—is linked to a significantly lower risk of diverticulitis, finds a large long-term study. What's more, these five components seem to offset the effects of inherited genes, the findings indicate. Diverticulitis occurs when "pouches" develop along the gut and become inflamed or infected in the wall of the large intestine, explain the researchers.

—Gut



LIMIT ENERGY DRINK CONSUMPTION

Drinking several energy drinks every day may pose a stroke risk. Doctors noted an otherwise fit and healthy man in his 50s with a daily eight-can habit, who suffered a stroke. Each of the energy drinks contained 160 mg of caffeine, totaling a daily intake of 1,200-1,300 mg of caffeine. (The recommended maximum daily intake is 400 mg.)

—BMJ Case Reports



—Compiled by Paul Rance Jr.



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Plan With Confidence. Choose With Clarity.

A GUIDE TO CHOOSING
THE RIGHT SENIOR LIVING OPTION



Planning a Future That Fits

Today, older adults have more senior living options than ever before, with communities designed to meet a wide range of needs, preferences, and lifestyles. If you or your loved one are considering a move to senior living, making decisions early will help you maintain control, reduce stress, and create a plan that reflects your goals.

The need for advance planning has never been greater – the population of older adults continues to grow at a historic rate, increasing the demand for senior living, caregiving support, and long-term care solutions. If you or a loved one are ready to consider your future, this guide will walk you through the journey, step by step.

64%

OF OLDER ADULTS
MAY HAVE **IMPROVED**
COGNITION WITH
COMMUNITY SUPPORT¹

91%

OF ASSISTED LIVING
RESIDENTS SAY
THEY FEEL SAFER
THAN IF THEY WERE
LIVING ALONE AT HOME



Sources: 1. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9488112>

2. <https://www.ahcancal.org/News-and-Communications/Press-Releases/Pages/Just-The-Facts-Assisted-Living-Is-A-Safe,-High-Quality-Long-Term-Care-Option-For-America%E2%80%99s-Seniors.aspx>

Questions to Ask Yourself

Before choosing a senior living option, it's important to reflect on your or your loved one's desired lifestyle, health concerns, and priorities. These questions will help you clarify what type of community will best serve your or your loved one's needs.

To get personalized guidance from a senior living expert, call (201) 581-8460 or visit [BergenSeniorLiving.com](https://www.BergenSeniorLiving.com).



1. Are daily tasks becoming more difficult for me?
2. Do I feel safe living alone?
3. How are my mobility, balance, and overall physical health?
4. Do I manage my medications easily and consistently?
5. Am I feeling isolated or lonely?
6. Do I want to participate in planned activities and social events?
7. Do I want to remain responsible for home maintenance?
8. How much support do I need with cooking, cleaning, or transportation?
9. Do I want to live in a social, community-focused environment?
10. How close do I want to be to family or friends?
11. What health care needs do I expect in the next few years?
12. What aspects of my independence are most important to me?
13. Do I prefer to age in place and move to a community with multiple care levels?
14. What financial resources do I have to support my future care?
15. What type of environment makes me feel most secure and at ease?

Independent Living

Independent living communities are for older adults who don't currently require medical care or support with daily tasks. Activities, maintenance, and other amenities are often included, and some types of independent living communities also offer access to care services should you or your loved one need them in the future.

Life Plan Options and CCRCs

Life plan communities, also known as continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), are ideal for adults who want an active, maintenance-free lifestyle now with access to future care – such as assisted living, skilled nursing, or memory care – if needed. This option can also help you or your loved one effectively plan finances long-term, as many of these communities offer contracts where all future care costs are included.

Don't Wait for a Problem

Moving into a senior living community while you are still active and independent allows you to experience all the community has to offer for as long as possible. Plus, because these communities are designed to promote socialization, activities, and a rich, vibrant lifestyle, you or your loved one will likely enjoy good health and vitality even longer.

Avoid Home Maintenance and Get More Free Time

Making the move to senior living will give you or your loved one the gift of free time to relax, enjoy hobbies, and make new friends. Let someone else shovel snow, rake leaves, and in some communities, even make the home repairs – which means more time to enjoy the amenities, visit with family, and prioritize your wellness.

79%

79.2% of fall-related emergency room visits are due to falls at home

Source: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8669898/> (2015)



Home Care

Home care services allow older adults to stay in a comfortable, familiar environment, with assistance tailored to their needs. If you or your loved one would prefer to age in place at home, a home health aide can be a great option.

The Safety of Support

Home health aides help promote safety and comfort by providing support with self-care tasks, such as bathing, grooming, and dressing; mobility assistance; household chores; and even errands like grocery shopping. Having a caregiver in the home not only helps you or your loved one prevent painful falls and injuries – they also provide peace of mind in knowing that someone is there if something does happen.

Companionship Improves Mental Health

Many older adults struggle with isolation, especially if they have limited mobility and cannot leave home often or on their own. Home health aides can provide meaningful companionship and social interaction, which promotes a healthy body, mind, and mood.

Home Care Can Be Anywhere

Home care isn't limited to a private residence – you can also receive home care in a senior living community. This way, you or your loved one can enjoy the benefits of senior living – such as maintenance services and a robust activity calendar – with the personalized assistance and support home care provides.

Assisted Living vs. Skilled Nursing

If you or your loved one are considering a community that provides medical care or support services, assisted living or skilled nursing might be right for you.

How do you determine which is right?

Assisted living is designed for older adults who need help with everyday tasks but still want to maintain independence in a comfortable, community-focused setting. Skilled nursing provides round-the-clock medical care for those with more complex health needs or those recovering from an illness or surgery, as well as daily meals and social activities.

To move into assisted living or skilled nursing, you or your loved one will likely undergo an assessment to determine the necessary level of care. Assessments evaluate mobility and fall risk, medication needs, cognitive functioning, ability to complete daily activities, and any chronic health conditions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What care services are included in the monthly rate?
2. What social activities or amenities are provided?
3. How are care plans created and updated?
4. What training does the staff receive?
5. Are nurses available on-site 24/7?

Choosing the right level of care can be complex. To speak with a senior living expert for personalized guidance call (201) 581-8460 or visit BergenSeniorLiving.com.

COMMON DISCOVERIES

Residents Enjoy Independence and Choice

In skilled nursing and assisted living communities, you still have an active role in what activities you participate in, your health care decisions, and even how you decorate your room or suite. Both types of communities encourage residents to be as independent as possible.

Communities Feel Like Home

It is a misconception that skilled nursing and assisted living communities are cold, clinical places. These communities are often warm and homey, with friendly, compassionate caregivers providing personalized care and support to residents.

Privacy, Dignity, and Respect Are Prioritized

Modern assisted living and skilled nursing communities prioritize dignity, privacy, and comfort. Caregivers are trained to respect privacy and will always knock before entering a space. The goal is to ensure all residents are safe and cared for as well as content.



Memory Care

Memory care communities help individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia thrive in a secure, comforting environment. Through therapeutic activities and a specialized care approach, these communities are designed to enhance memory, encourage socialization, promote calm, and ensure safety.

What to Expect

Finding out a loved one has dementia can be extremely difficult. They may experience changes in memory, communication, and behavior, as well as an increasing need for assistance with daily tasks. Their confusion, mood swings, and personality shifts can be challenging to navigate, and you may be unsure how to best support them through these changes and help them have an optimal quality of life.



An estimated 7.2 million Americans aged 65 and older have Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, or about 1 in 9 people in that age group.

Source: Alzheimer's Association (2025); <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/facts-figures>

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What type of supervision is provided throughout the day and night?
2. What training do staff members receive specifically for dementia care?
3. Do you offer opportunities for social engagement, outdoor time, or quiet spaces?
4. What support is provided for bathing, dressing, and other personal care tasks?
5. Can you support residents with changing needs as their dementia progresses?

How to Keep Them Safe

A dedicated memory care community can greatly improve safety and well-being for your loved one. Daily chores and self-care can become overwhelming and even risky. A warm, structured community will give them the support they need so you have peace of mind knowing they are safe. In a secure environment with friendly, caring staff, they can connect with others, enjoy meaningful routines, and rediscover a sense of joy through specialized programs.



LEVELS OF COGNITIVE LOSS

Typically, memory loss progresses through stages, from mild impairment to advanced dementia. Each stage comes with different support needs, which memory care communities are equipped to meet.

Early Stage In the early stage, your loved one may have frequent memory slips or difficulty finding the right words. They may get confused in familiar places or struggle with planning and organizing.

Middle Stage In the middle stage, memory loss becomes more noticeable and starts to affect daily life. Tasks like cooking, dressing, and managing medications can become challenging, and confusion or mood changes may appear more often.

Late Stage The late stage brings significant memory loss, and your loved one may no longer recognize you or communicate easily. They need help with all daily activities, including eating and mobility, and often experience physical decline.

Prepare for Progression

The best way to prepare for this progression is by seeking a supportive community for your loved one when they are still in an earlier stage. Receiving specialized care may improve or slow the progression of their symptoms as well as ensure they are safe, engaged, and comfortable.

How to Have the Conversation with a Loved One

Starting a conversation with your loved one about senior living can feel overwhelming. Plan ahead and have an open dialogue before problems arise to prevent stress later.

Signs to Look For

- Frequent falls or safety concerns
- Increasing forgetfulness or confusion
- Changes in hygiene or nutrition
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Difficulty managing medications or bills

Collaborate on Decision-Making

People often get defensive if their concerns are ignored. Acknowledge and respond to your loved one's opinions so that they feel validated.

Make sure to take a collaborative approach – think about what you and your loved one both care about, such as safety, convenience, or socialization.

Then, highlight how senior living will enhance your loved one's life in those areas to ease worries and promote the move as a wise choice.

Take time to research some different communities together. Set up tours, meet the staff, ask questions, and discuss any personal preferences, needs, and concerns. Once you find the perfect community that ticks every box, the decision to move in will be an easy one.



Addressing Concerns

Here are some common topics your loved one may be thinking about – and ways you can reassure them.

Independence and Choice

Senior living communities encourage you to live as independently as possible and make the most of your freedom. You can make your own decisions about your care, home, and time.

Connection and Community

Senior living not only promotes interaction and socialization but also encourages visits from family and loved ones. You can enjoy games and events with your new friends and neighbors as well as visits from family as often as you like.

Transitioning from Home

Change can feel overwhelming because home is a place of comfort and familiarity. However, what many people find reassuring about senior living is that it removes the stress of home maintenance and upkeep, while still giving you a private space that feels truly your own. At the same time, having others nearby often brings more connection, better well-being, and a fuller, more enjoyable day-to-day life.

You don't have to navigate these conversations alone. To speak with a senior living expert for compassionate, personalized guidance, call (201) 581-8460 or visit [BergenSeniorLiving.com](https://www.BergenSeniorLiving.com).



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Memory Care	(201) 485-5994 LVAmissions@ChristianHealthNJ.org
Assisted Living	(201) 831-7169 LVAmissions@ChristianHealthNJ.org
Home Care	(201) 689-5162 HCO@ChristianHealthNJ.org
Skilled Nursing Care	(201) 778-6508 LongTermCare@ChristianHealthNJ.org

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Counseling	(201) 581-4003 LiveWellIntake@ChristianHealthNJ.org
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Outpatient Rehabilitation	(201) 903-4781 OutpatientRehab@ChristianHealthNJ.org

THAT EXTRA SOMETHING

OUR DIETS AREN'T PERFECT. TAKING A SUPPLEMENT MAY MAKE UP FOR WHAT THEY LACK—BUT KNOW THE RISKS BEFORE YOU POP THAT FIRST TABLET, CAPSULE OR GUMMY.

Most of us try to eat right to give our bodies the nutrients they need. And if we don't accomplish that task perfectly, we figure, that's why supplements exist—hundreds of pill bottles in your local pharmacy that promise an extra dose of vitamins or other compounds to compensate for what we ought to eat, but don't. Most supplements require no prescription, but you do need to bone up on the pros and cons before you take one.

Explains Nora Zabel Tossounian, M.D., a Lodi-based internist with Hackensack Meridian Health: "Most vitamins come from the food we consume, and some people don't get enough because of their diets. For instance, a vegetarian may not be getting vitamins most people get from eating meat."

Some supplements provide a vitamin or a multivitamin combination. Others include, for example, post-workout protein powders and herbal preparations such as turmeric. "Traditionally," says Jari Becker, a registered pharmacist and director of women's health at Town & Country Compounding Pharmacy in Ramsey, "you take vitamins and supplements because you need to put something into your body that it isn't getting, maybe because of the foods you're eating or the exercise you're doing, because your body uses it more quickly than other people or because your body processes it differently."

But supplements should be considered medicines. "Many people don't realize that vitamins and supplements have drug interactions with prescription medications, over-the-counter medications and each other," says Becker. "They can interact badly, or just cancel out benefits. With antidepressants, blood thinners and blood-pressure medication, you

need to be particularly careful."

Adds Dr. Tossounian: "Mention any supplements you take every time you seek health care, whether in the emergency room, the office of a primary care physician or a specialist, or in an urgent-care facility. They count. We need to know about them."

What else should you understand? BERGEN asked our experts about common supplements:

- **Calcium.** As you may remember from those famous "Got Milk?" ads, this is the building block for strong and healthy bones. Dairy products are the most common source, and Dr. Tossounian suggests starting there. "I don't encourage calcium supplements unless blood work specifically indicates low calcium in the blood," she says. "This is something better absorbed in the diet, because supplements can cause calcium buildup in the body." This buildup can lead to kidney stones or stiffening arteries. "If you want to boost your calcium intake, opt for cheese, milk or yogurt," says the doctor. "If you need a non-dairy version of those, make sure it's fortified."

"Taking calcium can also affect the absorption of certain antibiotics and thyroid medications," says Becker. "And use caution

if you're taking a medication for osteoporosis, because you can overload your system."



Nora Zabel Tossounian, M.D.,
Internist, Hackensack
Meridian Health



Jari Becker
Women's health
director, Town & Country
Compounding Pharmacy

- **Collagen.** Always buzzy in the beauty space, collagen is what keeps your skin bouncy and supple. Your body produces it naturally, but as you age it produces less and breaks it down faster. Taking oral collagen can help. "It improves skin elasticity and can help reduce wrinkles, though you need to take it consistently for two to six months before you see improvement," says Dr. Tossounian. "I also like it for reducing joint pain and boosting bone health."

Becker cautions: "Not every collagen product is just collagen. Sometimes there are added products, and you need to know what you're taking." Another thing to keep in mind? "These supplements are derived from beef and chicken," says Dr. Tossounian. "If a patient is allergic or does not wish to use animal products, it's not for them."

- **Coenzyme Q10.** Also known as CoQ10, this is an antioxidant your body also makes. It helps give you energy and protect your cells. However, some things deplete it faster than your body can replace it—things like cholesterol-lowering statin medications, says Becker. "In my experience, they are among the most commonly prescribed medications," she says. "And people don't realize that, when taking one, they need to put CoQ10 back in their body or they're depleting it."

ving their cells of something they need.”

“Statin drugs can cause muscle pain,” says Dr. Tossounian. “When CoQ10 is taken with them, it reduces that pain enough that patients can continue taking the medicine. We also use it preventatively for migraines, and I sometimes suggest it to patients who are trying to fight off an infection or an illness such as COVID-19.”

• **Omega-3s.** These fatty acids, often taken as fish-oil tablets, are superstars for brain and heart health. “Some studies show that they can reduce your chances of death from cardiovascular disease and some geriatricians like them because they’re neuroprotective,” says Dr. Tossounian. Becker adds: “They’re important for your brain health and eye health; they can help with inflammation and with hormone balance in premenopausal or menopausal women.” One thing to watch out for? “This one has mild blood-thinning effects,” Dr. Tossounian says. “I’ve seen patients on blood thinners such as baby aspirin [compounding these effects] start taking this and also start bruising easily.”

“Remember, anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen are also blood thinners,” says Becker. “And some people don’t like taking Omega-3s because they cause indigestion and can give you the burps. Medical-grade brands often won’t give that reaction.” Dr. Tossounian advises starting at a low dose and gradually building up.

• **Iron.** Found in red meat; dark, leafy greens and beans, iron plays an important role in making red blood cells. You probably shouldn’t reach for this one unless it’s recommended by a doctor. “Women and girls who are still cycling and are losing excess blood sometimes need it,” says Becker, as do people with anemia, a condition most often caused by an iron deficiency. Some women in the later stages of pregnancy also develop iron deficiency and require it. Fortunately, red-blood-cell count is part of most standard blood work and is tested for often.

Dr. Tossounian says: “If you are a postmenopausal woman or a man, you must speak to your doctor before starting iron supplements. I actually suggest a colon-cancer screening and a colonoscopy or an upper endoscopy with a gastroenterologist before taking iron.”

• **Magnesium.** Leafy green vegetables, whole grains and seafood are great sources of magnesium, which offers many benefits. “It’s good for your cardiovascular system, nerves, muscles and bones,” says Becker. And Dr. Tossounian says, “Magnesium

is very helpful for easing leg cramps. Many cardiologists like to use it at a low dose for patients with heart palpitations, and neurologists use it as part of a holistic approach to migraine prevention.”

Adds Becker: “There are multiple types of magnesium. When you look at a magnesium bottle, it always has a salt after it. There’s magnesium citrate, magnesium oxide, magnesium glycinate—they all target different things.” Magnesium citrate can be used to treat constipation, for instance, while magnesium oxide helps prevent migraines. “It’s important to double-check which magnesium you’re taking to make sure you’re getting the proper benefit,” she adds. And one population should avoid it entirely. “No one with kidney disease should take magnesium,” says Dr. Tossounian. “Kidney dysfunction because of the accumulation of magnesium can easily occur in those patients and cause problems.”

• **Probiotics.** Rather than a mineral or a vitamin, this supplement consists of live bacteria and yeasts that help maintain the “microbiome” of your body. “I love probiotics!” says Becker. “They balance out the microflora in your gut, which keeps you healthy. They’re important for your immune health, digestive health and vaginal health in women. As with magnesium, there are different types of probiotics that target different things.”

“They’re useful to take after using an antibiotic,” says Dr. Tossounian. “If someone is treating pneumonia, a sinus infection or a urinary-tract infection, a probiotic can keep the gut bacterial balance intact, because sometimes the antibiotic can also kill the good bacteria your body needs.” That’s why people sometimes experience nausea and vomiting as a side effect of antibiotic use. “There’s discussion in the medical community about whether you should wait between taking a probiotic and an antibiotic so that they don’t interact with each other,” she adds. “I’ve never found it to matter much but, if you’re worried, wait two hours between taking them.”

• **Fiber supplements.** Fiber is a mainstay in treating constipation, which is important for more than just comfort. “We eliminate toxins through bowel movements, so if you’re not having them regularly, you definitely want to be taking a fiber supplement,” says Becker. It’s very possible to get all the fiber you need via your diet but, as more and more of our food becomes ultra-processed, meeting those needs without a supplement can become difficult.

Fiber is also good for more than just digestion.

“Some patients with mild cholesterol elevations use it to bring that number down,” says Dr. Tossounian. “And certain blood thinners may not be absorbed properly, so it’s smart to wait between taking fiber and taking any traditional medications. Again, about two hours.”

• **Vitamin B12.** This vitamin helps convert your food into glucose, which is what gives you energy, Becker explains. “It combats fatigue.” That fatigue can be a symptom of a deficiency, Dr. Tossounian adds, particularly when combined with “anemia and memory impairment, especially in an older population. Doctors don’t screen for the deficiency very often because there are so many sources of it our diets.” They include fish, meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products—which does put persons avoiding animal products at risk of not getting enough. “The deficiency is also common in people who use proton-pump inhibitors for acid reflux,” the doctor says.

She also adds a tip: “Here’s the one vitamin you don’t want to take as a gummy or a pill. Look for a form you can put under your tongue, like a spray or a pill that dissolves. B12 can actually be rendered ineffective by stomach acid if swallowed.”

• **Vitamin D.** Sometimes called “the sunshine vitamin,” D comes to us mostly through sun exposure—which means it’s a supplement Bergenites may wish to consider. “Here in the Northeast, we don’t always get enough sunlight to provide that vitamin D we need,” says Becker, “but it’s also important that you don’t take it in excess. Happily, most doctors test for vitamin D levels regularly.”

“There’s good evidence that vitamin D helps with bone support, reduces the risk of osteoporosis and osteopenia and has great antioxidant effects,” says Dr. Tossounian. “A recent British study indicated that daily intake of vitamin D in winter can lower your risk of the flu. However, you need to be very careful with the dose—too much vitamin D over months and years can cause kidney stones.”

Our experts agree that it matters where you buy supplements. “You need to buy vitamins and supplements from trusted sources,” says Becker. “If not from a pharmacy, then from a direct-to-consumer, medical-grade brand. Do not order vitamins and supplements on Amazon—you have no way to know what you’re actually getting.”

“This is part of your health care,” says Dr. Tossounian. “Talk to your doctors and your care team and be open about what you’re taking—or even just trying. It can be vital to your health.”



A Shade That Says 'Serene'

Quiet yet elegant, Pantone's Color of the Year—Cloud Dancer—is a gentle reminder that less can be more.



CO Essentials Elastic-Waist Pleated Skirt Saks Fifth Avenue, East Rutherford, 201.559.7780



Carven
S/S 26

Color of the Year 2026

PANTONE®
11-4201 TCX
Cloud Dancer

Every year, as we push deeper into lives dominated by screens and hurried multiple stimuli, designers and creative folk search for visual cues that reflect not just what we see, but how we feel. After years of saturated palettes and rich, cozy tones, the folks at Carlstadt-based Pantone—recognized by many as a global authority on color—have taken a surprisingly minimalist turn for 2026.

The 2026 Pantone Color of the Year is Cloud Dancer, a soft, airy white that feels more like a breath than a pigment. Far from a stark, clinical bright, this billowy white conveys an ethereal serenity, a visual calm in an ever-accelerating world. It symbolizes clarity, quiet reflection and the desire for a fresh start, offering what Pantone describes as a neutral foundation that soothes the mind and opens creative possibilities.

In fashion, Cloud Dancer invites us to step back from noise and excess.

It shows up beautifully in fluid tailoring, crisp shirting and relaxed knits, elevating everyday pieces without overpowering them. Worn head to toe, it reads modern and confident. Paired with texture—linen, silk, soft leather—it feels quietly luxurious. This gentle off-white serves as both a backdrop and a statement: a canvas for bold ideas and a reminder that simplicity can speak volumes.



Marks and Spencer Retro Runner Trainers
marksandspencer.com



Seychelles Sand In My Boots Boots
Nordstrom, Paramus, 201.843.1122



**Lack of Color Holiday
Bucket Hat** Saks Fifth Avenue,
East Rutherford



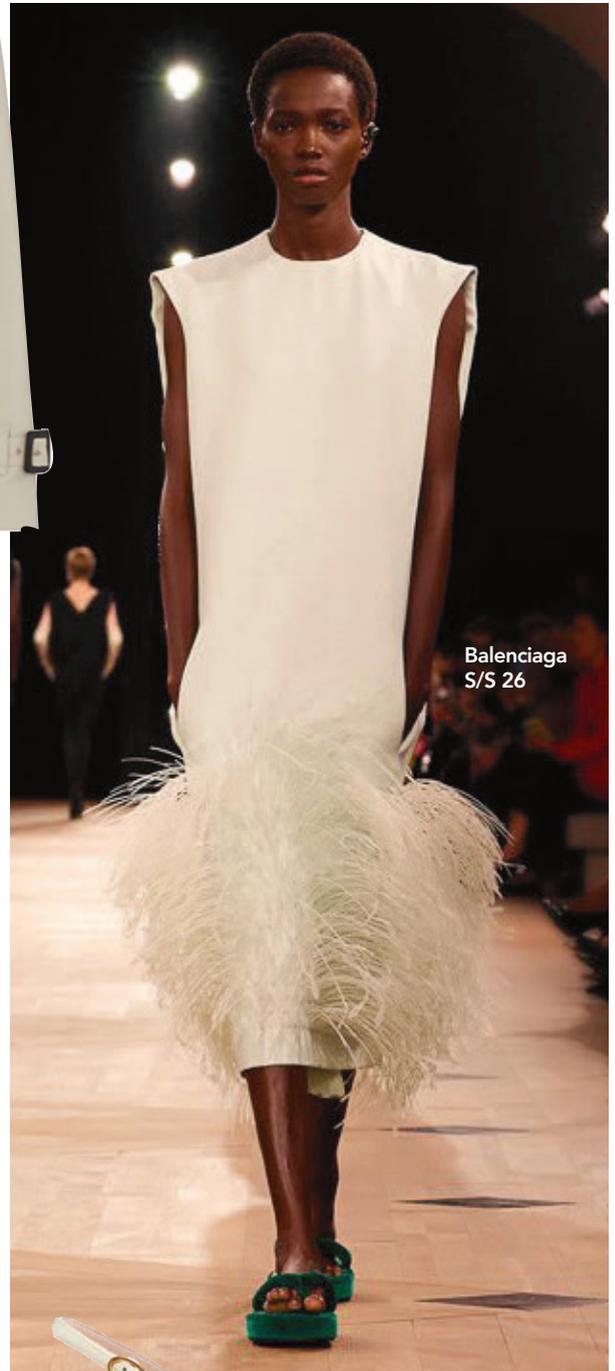
Knatchbull Trench Coat
knatchbull.com



Blanket Scarf
Loft, Edgewater,
201.941.9592



Prada Galleria Medium Leather Bag
Neiman Marcus, Paramus, 201.291.1920



Balenciaga
S/S 26



Valentino Bowow Slingback Pumps In Kidskin
Neiman Marcus, Paramus

HOT SPRING

WHAT IF YOU
COULD GET EXPERT
GUIDANCE FROM
FIVE LOCAL FASHION
MAVENS, EACH ON A
DIFFERENT LOOK FOR
THE SEASON? (YOU
CAN—READ ON!)

The fact that it's annual doesn't mean it's not dramatic. We "spring forward" every March, embrace a later sunset, brush off the mental cobwebs of a long winter and hurry into the warmer months ahead. And what do we wear? A spring wardrobe refresh pushes us forward and fills us with hope and excitement for the coming season as we pick out the perfect dress to don for a Friday night out with friends (we're dying to eat al fresco again) and the ideal blouse for a warm afternoon errand run (can't you just feel the sun on your shoulders?).

The good news? The spring offerings of 2026 will carry you from one to the other with ease. These are styles made to live in, created with your lifestyle in mind, effortlessly chic but never overthought. Here, five Bergen fashion experts share insights on how to wear this season's trends well and ensure that it's your best "spring forward" yet—and maybe your most fashion-forward spring.



A LITTLE LACE

"This look is all vintage-inspired Boho, and I love it! From Victorian-era lace collars to delicate and sheer blouses, skirts and dresses, these textures are everywhere. You can't go wrong pairing a lace blouse with jeans and boots. For a more modern twist, try wearing a lace skirt with a basic white T-shirt and sneakers."

—*Laura Callias,*
owner,
Suburban Revival,
Maywood

LA Double J





OUTERWEAR IS IN

"This spring, a jacket-first approach to styling is a must. I'm seeing lots of trench coats, both traditional lengths that go past the knees and cropped, swifty versions that speak to elevated style. Bold outerwear in bright colors or with chunky hardware will do the heavy lifting in your outfit. A tip: Make sure your statement coat is belted so it doesn't overwhelm your shape."

—Neepa Sikdar,
owner and stylist,
Accessible Style,
Oakland

SPRWMN



GARDEN PARTY

"Bold florals feel fresh, confident and playful, especially when paired with modern silhouettes. I love styling bold florals with clean, structured pieces, such as a classic denim and a leather bag, to balance the print. With that styling, any outfit stays polished."

—*Madison Vacco,*
owner,
Madison Lux Boutique,
Dumont

Hope For
Flowers





SLEEK AND STYLISH

"Denim trends are moving toward slimmer silhouettes this season. Think bootcut, straight or slim flare. These are super-flattering fits for every body shape. Popular washes include a dark, clean rinse, which adds a vintage yet polished feel if you pair it with a pretty blouse. Light, white and ecru washes are essential for spring and offer a bright ground for bold florals, polka dots and gingham."

—Sue Bahng, owner,
Ginger N' Cream,
Westwood

Banana
Republic



RELAXED AND REFINED

“‘Sporty chic’ is basically how we all want to dress and feel right now—it’s super-comfortable but still polished and pulled together. A great sneaker with a tailored jacket or a chic jogger paired with a cute top or blouse instantly makes any look feel both cool and intentional.”

—Erica Thomas, co-owner,
Lulu + Bo Boutique,
Midland Park

Fore All





SUMMER DREAMS

Looking great doesn't have to be a fantasy. Wear one of these maxis, and prepare to turn heads—for real!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DANIEL SPRINGSTON** STYLING BY **SEBASTIAN PATARIC**

L'Angence Maxi Dress. Available at Boutique 811,
Franklin Lakes, 201.485.8650.



Alexis Kayleen
Dress. Available
at Boutique 811,
Franklin Lakes.



Dress Forum Floral
Sleeveless Maxi Dress.
Available at Ginger
N' Cream, Westwood,
201.664.2440.



Aqua Mesh Maxi
Dress. Available at
Bloomingdale's,
Hackensack,
201.457.2000.





Elliatt Solene
Halter Gown
in Purple Floral.
Available at
Suite 201,
Ridgewood,
201.670.0200.



ASTR One Shoulder Burnout Dress. Available at Ginger N' Cream, Westwood.



STEP UP YOUR STYLE

8 key pieces for this season are items you've loved before—but never quite like this.

Illustrations by **Stephen M. Vitarbo**

This season's fashion story is less about starting over and more about reimagining the classics with fresh eyes. Familiar favorites return with fresh proportions, modern textures and thoughtful updates that feel both timeless and of-the-moment. Great style, after all, thrives on refinement—finding new ways to wear what we already love.

With our full schedules and plenty of things competing for our attention, getting dressed should feel effortless, not overwhelming. Happily, elevating your look can be as simple as introducing one or two well-chosen pieces that do the work for you. A subtle update, a confident touch and a little joy in the process—sometimes that's all it takes.

Wide-waisted belts

This accessory is making a bold comeback in 2026, now with a modern twist. Designed for today's fashion landscape, these belts embrace sustainability with eco-friendly materials such as recycled leather and innovative fabrics. They're crafted to enhance your natural silhouette, perfectly positioned above the hips to sculpt and define without relying on belt loops. "A wide belt is an easy way to pull a look together," says Miriam Stekete, co-founder of Lulu + Bo Boutique in Midland Park. "I love adding one to a dress to define the waist and instantly make it feel more polished and styled." Whether layered over flowy tunics, sleek jumpsuits or oversized blazers, wide belts add instant structure and a confident, refined edge.

Head scarf

Wrapped, tied or knotted, head scarves are having a moment. In 2026 they've moved beyond retro novelty into the realm of cool-girl styling, showing up everywhere from street style to high-fashion runways.

Among them are fluid silks, graphic prints and unexpected color stories—often sourced secondhand or vintage for a look that feels intentional but not strictly nostalgic. Wear one bandana-style with oversized sunglasses, twist it into a structured headband or weave it directly into a braid for texture and contrast. For maximum impact, tie it under the chin and pretend you’ve come straight out of Paris Fashion Week.

Statement hats

A baseball cap will always have its place, but in spring 2026 statement hats are doing some real style work. A bold headpiece can be more than just a triumphant finishing touch. “A good hat makes it look like you tried—even when you didn’t,” Steketee says. “It’s my go-to for elevating a simple outfit or saving a bad hair day.” Try a sleek visor, a sculpted bucket hat or a modern fedora: There are no hard rules, only confidence.

Layered double-chain necklace.

Those perfectly layered necklace looks all over your feed aren’t intentional—they’re strategic. This year it’s all

about intentional stacking, with chains at varied lengths to create movement and dimension. Mix metals, play with texture and balance one statement piece with something finer. Charms, initials and meaningful stones add personality, making a necklace stack something uniquely yours.

Floral print skirts

Yes, flowers are a spring staple, but for this season they’re being styled with a sharper point of view. The key is contrast—balancing soft, romantic prints with clean lines and fitted pieces for an appeal that is bracingly current. Pair a floral skirt with structured pieces like a crisp tee, a tailored button-up or a modern blazer to balance the softness.

Finish with espadrilles, flat sandals or sleek booties, depending on the mood. The result feels modern, polished and anything but predictable.

Chunky platform boots

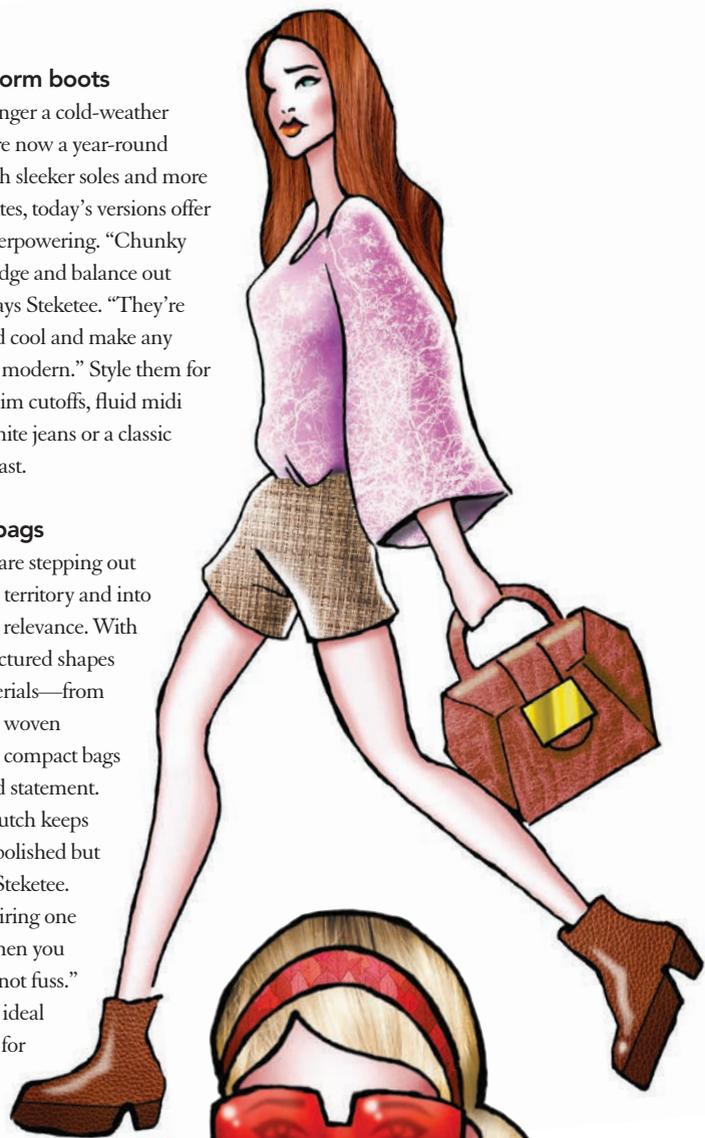
These are no longer a cold-weather holdover; they’re now a year-round style staple. With sleeker soles and more refined silhouettes, today’s versions offer flair without overpowering. “Chunky platforms add edge and balance out softer pieces,” says Steketee. “They’re comfortable and cool and make any outfit feel more modern.” Style them for spring with denim cutoffs, fluid midi dresses, crisp white jeans or a classic trench for contrast.

Boxy clutch bags

These clutches are stepping out of evening-only territory and into full-on daytime relevance. With clean lines, structured shapes and varied materials—from matte leather to woven textures—these compact bags can make a bold statement. “A structured clutch keeps things looking polished but still cool,” says Steketee. She suggests pairing one with denim “when you want effortless, not fuss.” They’re also an ideal finishing touch for outfits with tailored blazers, wide-leg trousers and slip dresses.

Cherry-red accessories

Though Pantone is all about soft white in 2026, Instagram and TikTok users love cherry red. “It’s a fun pop without going overboard,” our expert says. “I love adding it through accessories—it instantly brightens neutrals and makes a look feel fresh.” Pair cherry-red accents with neutrals for a chic pop of color, combine them with other bold tones for a fashion-forward mix or let one standout piece take center stage. Eye-catching, versatile and modern, these accessories are one of the simplest, sprightliest ways to jazz up the impression you make while still checking the “effortless” box.



Special Report

'THRIFTING' IS THRIVING

In Bergen and across the country, buying secondhand goods has gone big-time. Here's why—and how to get in on the fun. BY LESLIE GARISTO PFAFF

My visit to Goodwill, a vast barn of a store off Route 4 in Elmwood Park, is purely for the purpose of research. Or so I keep telling myself as I admire my reflection in a floral velvet kimono, originally from Zara, and now bearing a tag with the come-hither price of \$7.99. And really, wouldn't it be research if I bought my daughter the fetching military-style jacket from Free People, also for \$7.99? And since I've already got my wallet open, how about this pair of large, metal pet-food bowls for \$3.99?

I'm starting to understand why "thrifting"—buying from thrift shops—is booming. And by all metrics, it definitely is. According to Forbes, the U.S. secondhand market is projected to reach \$74 billion by 2029, having grown from \$28 billion in 2019 to \$56 billion in 2025. (For comparison, that last figure is roughly equivalent to 15 percent of the 2025 U.S. apparel market, which saw sales of about \$365 billion last year.) While some of this growth is happening online, on sites like The RealReal, Poshmark, ThredUp and Vinted, brick-and-mortar sellers report a 40 percent increase in foot traffic since 2019. And last year, Goodwill's sales exceeded \$7 billion, a record for the nonprofit and a 7 percent increase over 2024. Smaller resale operations are reporting similar upticks. "Business over the past year was better than the year before," says Sara Henderson, owner of Mikayla's Thriftique in Rutherford. It's an experience shared by many in the resale sector, in Bergen and elsewhere.

BEHIND THE BOOM

Not surprisingly, economics is one factor fueling the expansion of thrifting. While the U.S. saw continuing economic growth in 2025, inflation has remained stubbornly high and unemployment is rising. Bergenites are continuing to spend, but many of us are growing cautious about how and where we're spending. Ridgewood resident Diana Steffens, for instance, says that she only buys jeans at thrift stores. "Why pay \$40 at The Gap," she says, "when you can get the same jeans for 12 bucks or less at a thrift shop?" (Admittedly, jeans may be a special case, since custom dictates that they aren't supposed to look new.)

On the other end of the spending spectrum, a stratospheric rise in the pricing of designer apparel and accessories is also driving the upsurge in thrifting. Simona Kornberg, who's owned the high-end thrift boutique Mint in Tenafly for 25 years, notes that "a classic Chanel bag that was \$3,500 10 years ago is now selling for \$12,300. Designer prices are insane, and the quality is down. My customers would rather buy vintage at a much lower price and have an amazing bag for life."

Beyond economics, many thrifters cite environmental concerns. In an age of fast fashion—cheaply manufactured apparel designed to reflect changing fashion trends and not intended to last more than a season or two—more and more of our cast-off clothing is ending up in landfills. Thrifting can help counter that trend.

Steffens, for example, recently issued a family edict that all birthday gifts be thrifted—something her college-age kids were already doing more often than not. "It just feels like the responsible thing to do," she says. Lynn Cilsick, founder of Westwood's Caring About The Strays, a thrift shop that supports an animal rescue operation of the same name, has found that younger clients in particular "understand the importance of reusing and recycling items to help the planet stay healthy."

Perhaps it's not a coincidence that collecting—everything from coins to cameras to vintage video games—has risen in popularity alongside thrifting. Matthew Michaels of Midland Park says that for him thrifting is "genetic." "My parents collected antiques, so they'd go to antique and thrift shops to find them, and I started getting into it as a kid." Today, he collects sports memorabilia, musical instruments and pop-culture toys and games and admits, a little sheepishly, that he's likely to visit his favorite thrift stores three or four times a week to satisfy his habit. "It's the thrill of the hunt," he says. "You might go to five stores and find nothing and then go to one store and find five things." On a recent hunt, he bagged an electric guitar worth \$2,000, for which he paid \$100.

The joy of the quest, in fact, is what keeps many thrifters returning to their favorite shops again and again. "It's almost like a treasure hunt," says Bergen resident Raquel Bruno (who asked that her hometown



“It’s the thrill of the hunt. You might go to five stores and find nothing and then go to one store and find five things.”

—Matthew Michaels, Midland Park

not be named for reasons of privacy). She still remembers the joy she felt at finding a 1970s-vintage suede jacket in near-mint condition for five dollars at Goodwill, and she visits her favorite thrift shops at least once a week in an effort to replicate that high.

Whatever stigma the buying of used clothing or other items may once have had seems to have disappeared. “Thrifting is definitely a thing—it’s become a verb,” says Barb Tobin, who manages Ye Olde Thrift Shoppe in Oradell. Teens in particular, she says, are attracted by the prospect of finding something fun and funky—and dirt cheap—to boost their wardrobes. Henderson says that teens are among her regulars. “They’ll try on clothing and jewelry and hats—it’s like this camaraderie thing.” And the outfits they put together often end up on TikTok and YouTube, which, in turn, has helped to fuel the thrifting trend among Gen Zers and Millennials.

GETTING THE GOODS

It’s easier than ever for thrifters to find merchandise. But even in our throwaway society, hunting down inventory can be a challenge for those in the resale business. Henderson says she finds her goods “everywhere and anywhere—it could be from estate or garage sales, or it could be from acquaintances who have items they know I’d be interested in.” Other shops sell on consignment, accepting items from individuals with whom they split the profits from sales. And some shops, like Caring About The Strays, support nonprofits, so donations are tax-deductible. (Other thrift stores benefiting Bergen-based charities include Oakland’s REWAR Thrift Store, supporting REW Animal Rescue; The Wyckoff PTO Economy Shop, which aids the town’s parent-teacher organization; Habitat Bergen ReStore in Westwood, with profits going to Habitat for Humanity; and of course, the Goodwills in Elmwood Park and South Hackensack.)

BERGEN’S RESALE LANDSCAPE

Thrift shops in Bergen run the gamut from large and largely impersonal like the Goodwill locations to tiny holes in the wall chockablock with treasures like Midland Park’s Gingerbread (which used to be a small neighborhood bakery, as suggested by the gingerbread men that still decorate its façade). The larger shops offer inventory—lots of it—while smaller stores tend to curate their merchandise more carefully. Marie Purritano, who’s owned and operated Westwood’s Fabulous Finds for the past 27 years, describes her shop as “borderline high-end women’s clothing, shoes and accessories.” It’s a description that could also be applied to Gingerbread, where you’re likely to find women’s (and children’s) clothing bearing labels from quality brands like Loft, Banana Republic and J. Jill. On a recent trip, a vintage alligator bag, whose silk lining was marked “Saks Fifth Avenue,” was priced at \$200—far less than a similar bag on Poshmark selling for \$2,000.

Smaller shops tend to have more of a community feel, with loyal customers returning on a regular basis. “I’ve had some customers for 20 years,” says Purritano.

Then there’s Tobin, who says that “a lot of my customers are like family.” She calls her shop “the Cheers of thrift shopping. Here, everyone knows your name.”

HOW TO FIND THOSE FINDS: TIPS FOR SMART ‘THRIFTING’

You can make mistakes in thrift shopping, just as you can in any activity—especially one that involves laying down cash. So BERGEN asked two experts for guidance on how shoppers can be savvy and avoid pitfalls. Maureen Wuerfel, owner of Midland Park’s Gingerbread, and longtime thrifter Diana Steffens share advice on how to score big while spending small:

- **Carry cash.** Many shops don’t accept credit cards.
- **Call first to confirm** that a store is open. Actual hours can differ from those posted online.
- **If you don’t know** the store’s typical inventory, ask before you shop. Some only carry women’s clothing, for instance; others may not sell home décor or small appliances.
- **Schedule plenty of time.** You’ll need it to tease out all those half-hidden treasures.
- **Look for signs** advertising discounts. Some stores use color-coded tags to alert customers to special sales.
- **Make at least two rounds.** Amid all that resale bounty, it’s easy to miss a potential score.
- **Inspect the goods well.** Many thrift stores don’t accept returns, so make sure that clothes fit and are in good condition. If you’re buying glassware, Steffens advises, run your finger around the rims to make sure there are no tiny chips. Before buying electronics or appliances, plug them in to make sure they work. (Most shops have outlets for that purpose.)
- **Wear layers.** Some stores lack dressing rooms, so you’ll have to create your own “privacy” with lightweight T-shirts and/or leggings under your clothes. “If you’ll be trying on pants,” says Wuerfel, “don’t wear boots.”
- **Use Google Lens.** It’s an object recognition tool that can help you determine the provenance and value of vintage and other items.
- **Carry an item you’re considering.** If you find something you like but aren’t convinced you’ll buy, pick it up anyway and take it with you in the shop. “More than once,” says Steffens, “I’ve gone back to grab something I liked and found it gone.”
- **Hunt for sets.** Sets of dish- and glassware are often broken up, so check all the shelves to find missing components. Steffens, for instance, found some vintage teacups she loved, but they were clearly missing saucers—which she subsequently found on a different shelf.
- **Go often.** Inventory is always coming in and can change from day to day.
- **Don’t be turned off by tarnish.** Thrifter Karen Hamilton of Rochelle Park notes that “I’ve found some really cool silver bowls—people don’t realize they’re just tarnished.” If silver is your quarry, carry a polishing cloth with you to discover what’s under the surface. (But bear in mind that silverplate can tarnish too.)
- **Wash everything.** Good thrifting doesn’t end when you get home. Wash (or dry-clean) clothes and carefully wash, wipe down, or vacuum home goods.

WHERE TO SCORE

Bergen County boasts an array of spots for “thrifting,” and each has its own special aura and variety of merchandise. Some favorites:

- **Browse Consignment,** 129 Queen Anne Rd., Bogota, 201.342.4455
- **Caring About The Strays (CATS),** 80 Kinderkamack Rd., Westwood; care4strays.org
- **Community Thrift Shop,** 85 Godwin Ave., Midland Park, 201.652.7661
- **Fabulous Finds Consignment Boutique,** 186 Center Ave., Westwood; fabulousfindsnj.com
- **Gingerbread,** 228 Godwin Ave., Midland Park, 201.652.2814
- **Goodwill NYNJ Stores & Donation Centers,** 30 Broadway, Elmwood Park; 400 Huyler St., South Hackensack; goodwillnynj.org
- **Habitat Bergen ReStore,** 121 Carver Ave., Westwood; bergenrestore.org
- **Mikayla’s Thriftique,** 155 Park Ave., Rutherford; mikaylasthriftique.com
- **Mint,** 15 West Railroad Ave., Tenafly; mintdesignernj.com
- **REWAR Thrift Store,** 350 Ramapo Valley Rd., Oakland; rewar.org/thrift-store
- **Shop of Hope Thrift Shop,** 79 West Palisade Ave., Englewood; hopethriftshop.com
- **The Wyckoff PTO Economy Shop,** 399 Main St., Wyckoff; wyckoffptoeconomyshop.org



GO WHERE THE

Five museums—each in a different nation—showcase the finest of the fashion world, past and present.

“Fashion is the most powerful art there is,” the renowned quote says. “It’s movement, design and architecture all in one.” These wise words come not from a titan of the industry, but from the series of novels and TV shows called *Gossip Girl*. (Its fictional heroine Blair Waldorf has certainly been a style inspiration for many.) There is a truth to them, though; for many of us, fashion is the form of self-expression and art we interact with most. So isn’t it logical that museums should celebrate fashion—with beautiful garments and the innovators who created them?

Five fashion museums in five countries, here, deserve a visit by the style-minded. The surrounding cities and sights? It’s great to have an excuse to see them too.



GUCCI GARDEN, FLORENCE, ITALY

The museum. Inside the historic Palazzo della Mercanzia (built in the 1300s and restored in 1905), you’ll find a celebration of the history and creative power of one of the world’s most recognizable fashion houses. Gucci Garden was created under the meticulous vision of brand creative director Alessandro Michele, and the space unfolds like an ode to both luxe fashion and the opulent, eclectic maximalism Gucci is known for. Wander rotating exhibits that celebrate iconic pieces and garments (Grace Kelly’s “Flora” scarf, for instance) or get lost in the “Bagology” room, where some 400 handbags in mirrored glass cases take you on a visual journey from 1950 to the present day. See retro advertising campaigns and art from frequent brand collaborators (like Yuko Higuchi). Oh, and the attached Gucci Boutique puts designer clothes and accessories at your fingertips.

The city. Florence is an art piece in itself, considered both the birthplace of the Renaissance and a center of the fashion and art worlds today. The Uffizi Gallery holds some of the most recognizable art from the old Masters (Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt, to drop three names), and the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, an architectural marvel, is one of the world’s largest churches. You’ll find a wealth of luxury hotels to choose from (the Brunelleschi Hotel is nestled within a medieval church and Four Seasons Hotel Firenze is often described as a “Renaissance palace”), to-die-for food (from traditional Tuscany trattorias to high-end modern cocktail bars such as the super-trendy Locale Firenze) and endless historic walking tours to fill your days.

More information. palazzogucci.gucci.com



CHRISTIAN DIOR MUSEUM AND GARDEN, GRANVILLE, FRANCE

The museum. Dior is synonymous with elegance, and it revolutionized femininity after World War II with its cinched waists, full skirts and daring silhouettes. Situated on a cliffside with a breathtaking ocean view, this museum is housed within the Villa Les Rhumbs, where Christian Dior (1905–1957) spent his early childhood. The three floors of the house are resplendent with haute couture garments and accessories from Dior’s archives, and the exhibits rotate every year to present the founder’s vision and artistry in new and engaging ways. The villa itself is also a treat, done in Belle Époque style and featuring stunning cliffside gardens, arranged as an English landscape park by Madeleine Dior, Christian’s mother. In the summer, keep an eye out for exclusive perfume workshops.

The city. If you want the best of France’s breathtaking Normandy seaside, Granville is a good place to start. It’s a dramatic sight, with a raised and fortified headland surrounded by steep cliffs, the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel and jaw-dropping Gothic churches. (Make sure you tour the historic “upper town.”) Take a ferry or charter a sailboat to the nearby Chausey Islands, known for their stunning beaches and abundant bird and animal life. Enjoy some of the best seafood Europe has to offer. (The blue lobster is a must.) For Michelin star dining, check out L’Eduilis, which puts a modern spin on regional favorites. For accommodations worthy of this upscale resort spot, look no further than the Hôtel Mercure Granville Le Grand Large, which offers stunning ocean views and direct access to the beach.

More information. musee-dior-granville.com



GLAMOUR IS



MUSEO CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA, GETARIA, SPAIN

The museum. In life, designer Cristóbal Balenciaga (1895–1972) had a reputation for uncompromising standards. His structured and architectural designs changed the way the rest of the industry created clothes, and designer-entrepreneur Coco Chanel once famously called him “the only couturier in the truest sense of the word; all the rest are simply fashion designers.” The museum dedicated to his legacy meets that standard. The permanent exhibit consists of nearly one hundred historical pieces and garments, each a testament to elegance and style, including the wedding dress of Queen Fabiola of Belgium and dresses designed for actress Grace Kelly. The Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation’s further 1,200 pieces are exhibited on a rotating basis. Also on display are explanations of the designer’s specific techniques and preferred materials—and the historical context for both.

The city. A jewel of the Spanish seaside, Getaria offers much to explore. This spot is known for its gastronomy and food culture, particularly for grilled seafood and *txakoli*, an acidic, sparkling white wine that pairs perfectly with sea breezes and a bite of fish. Its most lauded restaurant is Elkano, which boasts a Michelin star and has made it onto the World’s 50 Best Restaurants list. Here the fish is grilled on a charcoal grill at the table, right in front of you. If you’re an oenophile, local *txakoli* vineyards offer tastings and tours. Stroll the beautiful beaches and the working harbor, where fishermen bustle in and out at all hours. Or take a hike up Mount San Antón and enjoy the lighthouse at its summit.

More information. cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com



BATA SHOE MUSEUM, TORONTO, CANADA

The museum. You can tell a lot about a person by her or his shoes, and about a culture by its footwear too—from Chinese bound-foot shoes to light sandals created with deserts in mind to clogs designed to crush chestnuts. Inside an award-winning building created by legendary Canadian architect Raymond Moriyama, you’ll find more than a thousand shoes and related artifacts from around the planet and across nearly 4,500 years of history. See a full display of cowboy boots and their history, a deep dive into the work of Italian-French shoe designer André Perugia (1893–1977) and historic footwear through the ages—and that’s just the beginning.

The city. Toronto is the beating heart of business and culture in the Great White North, the capital of Ontario and a bustling metropolis with endless things to do. For shopping and great bites, wander the Kensington Market, which offers multicultural supermarkets and street food, hole-in-the-wall boutiques, trendy cafes with a thriving arts culture and vintage clothing stores—and eye-popping street art for all to see. Something more high-end? The legendary Bloor-Yorkville district, often called the “Mink Mile,” for storefronts such as those of Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Cartier and Harry Rosen, plus luxury home and lifestyle boutiques and artisanal beauty brands, including bespoke fragrances.

More information. batashoemuseum.ca



MODEMUSEUM (MOMU), ANTWERP, BELGIUM

The museum. In the mid-1980s and ‘90s, Antwerp made a big splash in the fashion world with its “Antwerp 6”:
Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Bikkembergs, Dirk Van Saene and Marina Yee. Known for their bold, experimental and avant-garde styles (eclectic prints, saturated colors and incorporating sportswear silhouettes into couture are a few examples), these designers pushed forward the wild fashion of the ‘80s and put their city on the map. The ModeMuseum was originally designed to honor them, and you can walk through a full, curated exhibit of their best work. You’ll also find garments and pieces by a wealth of contemporary designers, often with an emphasis on the Belgian and always with a slant toward the daring, the avant-garde and the under-represented voice. (Palestinian embroidery is on display now.)

The city. Rich in history and culture and resplendent in beautiful architecture (gothic, neoclassical and Art Deco all blend together on these streets), Antwerp is often overlooked in favor of the more instantly recognizable European metropolises, and that’s a shame; there’s much to love here. If you’re up for another museum visit after MoMu, the Plantin-Moretus is the only museum in the world that is also listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. Housed in a 16th-century mansion, it’s home to the world’s oldest printing press. The city’s nightlife is upscale and sophisticated—look for swanky jazz bars (De Muze has been pulling crowds since the ‘60s) and speakeasy-style cocktail bars. (Dogma Cocktails is cozy, and the drinks are always unexpected.)

More information. momu.be



—Kirsten Meehan



On The Green

These delicious, spring-ready dishes prove that vegetables can be the main event.

CREAMY POLENTA WITH SPRING VEGGIES

Yields 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

Polenta:

- 2½ cups water
- ½ cup dry polenta or cornmeal
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. granulated onion powder (or garlic powder)
- ¼ tsp. pepper (white pepper is nice)
- 2–3 Tbs. olive oil (or butter, or ¼ cup goat cheese)

Gremolata:

- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- zest of one lemon
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ pepper, more to taste
- pinch of chili flakes, optional

Spring Veggies:

- 1 cup morel mushrooms (brush them clean, don't wet)
- 1 cup porcini mushrooms (brush them clean, don't wet)
- 2 cups asparagus, tough ends removed, cut into 1- to 2-inch slices
- 1 cup fiddlehead ferns
- handful pea shoots
- other veggie options: cremini mushrooms, spring peas, snow peas, english peas, edamame, green beans
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 2 Tbs. sherry wine, white wine or water
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme (or tarragon)

DIRECTIONS

Bring water to boil in a medium pot. Season with salt, pepper and spices. Once it's boiling, gradually whisk in the cornmeal, bring to a simmer, cover and turn heat to low. Mix again in 10 minutes. Then cook for another 10 minutes (20-25 minutes total). Stir in the olive oil, butter or goat cheese. Turn heat off.

While the polenta is cooking, make the gremolata. Place chopped parsley, garlic, zest, lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Stir and taste, adding more lemon juice if you like. For a looser consistency, add a little more oil. Add a pinch of chili flakes for heat. Set aside.

Sauté the veggies. Cut veggies into bite-sized pieces. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add mushrooms first, and sauté until just tender, 4-5 minutes. Add shallot and other veggies. Season with salt and pepper and stir often. Lower heat and take your time, cook about 5 minutes until al dente, or just fork tender. Give a splash of wine or water, turn heat up to medium to help cook off the wine. Taste, adjust salt, remembering the gremolata will add a lot of flavor, so keep the veggies simple. If you have very thick asparagus, or larger pieces of veggies, you could cover the pan for a few minutes to lightly steam them, being careful not to overcook or you may lose their lovely color. If using pea shoots as the garnish, make a well in the center of the pan and lightly sauté them (keeping them separate).

Assemble 2 bowls or make one large beautiful platter or bowl and serve it from there.

If polenta has thickened too much, reheat it, whisking in a little splash of water, until loose and creamy again. Retaste for salt. Pour polenta into bowls, top with a mound of the veggies, then top with optional pea shoots. Spoon the flavorful gremolata around the veggies, over the polenta.



"This creamy polenta is naturally gluten free and provides steady, sustained energy. Spring vegetables like asparagus and mushrooms contribute fiber, antioxidants and essential micronutrients that support gut and immune health. Choosing olive oil or a touch of goat cheese instead of heavy cream keeps saturated fat in check without sacrificing richness."

—Megan Triolo, clinical dietitian,
MLT360 Nutrition, Saddle Brook



ASPARAGUS RISOTTO

Yields 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch asparagus
- 1 large leek (or white onion, diced)
- 4 Tbs. olive oil, divided
- 4 garlic cloves, rough chopped
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- ¼ cup white wine, optional
- 3½ cups hot vegetable broth
- ½ cup basil leaves (or sub flat leaf parsley)
- 1 lemon, zest and juice to taste
- ½ tsp. salt, more to taste
- ¼ tsp. pepper

DIRECTIONS

Bring a small pot of salted water to boil on the stove to blanch asparagus.

Prep the asparagus: Cut the fibrous ends off the asparagus and discard. (You can tell where this is by breaking an end off with your fingers, usually about an inch from bottom. Then using this as a guide, cut the rest to match. Toss all the fibrous ends.) Cut the pretty tips off (about 1½ inches) and set them aside. Cut the “middles” into 1-inch pieces. Take 1½ cups of the “middles” and set aside (to blanch and blend into a creamy asparagus sauce). We will stir this risotto at the end. Add any remaining “middles” to the tips pile and keep these set aside. So you’ll have two piles of asparagus, 1½ cups of the “middles” and one with the tips and leftover middles.

Make the asparagus puree: In the small pot of boiling water, blanch the 1½ cups of asparagus “middles” (without the tips) until tender and vibrant, about 5 minutes, depending on size. Drain, and reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Place both in the blender. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil and basil leaves and blend until silky smooth. (Alternatively, use an immersion blender.) Set this aside to add to the risotto at the end.

Start risotto: Thinly slice leeks into half-moons, and rinsing away any dirt, strain. (Rinsing will

also help prevent them from scorching.) Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a pot or dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add leeks and garlic and sauté until softened and fragrant.

Add Arborio rice and stir to coat, one minute. Deglaze with white wine (if using) and cook the wine off. Add 1 cup hot veggie broth, scraping up any browned bits, bring to a gentle simmer over med-low heat stirring occasionally, until the rice absorbs all the broth. Continue adding the hot broth 1 cup at a time, letting the rice absorb it slowly each time, stirring often. Keep in mind you may not need it all because you will be adding the asparagus puree at the end. At the same time that you add the last ½ cup of broth, add the fresh asparagus tips, letting them cook in the risotto 3 minutes or so. At this point, rice should be creamy yet slightly al dente.

Combine: Stir in blended asparagus “puree,” add the salt, pepper, a squeeze of lemon juice and taste. Adjust salt, pepper and lemon to taste. (Pecorino will add more depth and flavor here.) Heat gently over low heat letting it thicken a bit if you like, but taking care not to cook too long here, or you’ll lose the vibrant color.

Divide among bowls, garnish with pecorino cheese, lemon zest and chili flakes or a drizzle of the optional leek oil.



“Asparagus shines in this recipe, which feels indulgent but hits all the veggie-forward notes! Pro-tip: For quality vegetable stock, I like to save all my veggie scraps in a ziplock bag in the freezer until I’m ready to make stock. Just add onion, carrots, celery and other veggie scraps in a pot filled with water and boil for at least two hours. The result is way better than store-bought, and you can control the amount of salt in the stock.”

—Ali Senatore, registered dietitian nutritionist,
Reimagined Nutrition, Edgewater

Holy Smoke!

The classic Old Fashioned gets a dark, smoldering twist that's rich, aromatic and intensely flavorful.

SMOKED OLD FASHIONED

Makes: 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz. 110- to 115-proof bourbon, barrel strength preferred
- ½ oz. demerara simple syrup
- 1 dash Angostura bitters
- 2 dashes Hella Bitter Smoked Chili
- toasted orange peel, for garnish
- smoked cinnamon stick, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Combine bourbon, simple and bitters in a mixing glass and add ice. Stir well to combine and strain into an Old Fashioned glass with a large cube of ice. Express the orange peel over the top of the cocktail and enjoy.

COURTESY OF
COCKTAILCONTESSA.COM



"If you don't have demerara sugar on hand, try using maple syrup as your sweetening agent. It works really well with the bourbon. And if you prefer something with a little less heat, reach for a smoked cinnamon bitter instead of chili to keep the 'smoky' essence of this cocktail."

—Lia Dionisio,
chief cocktail creator,
Jersey Drinks,
Bergen County



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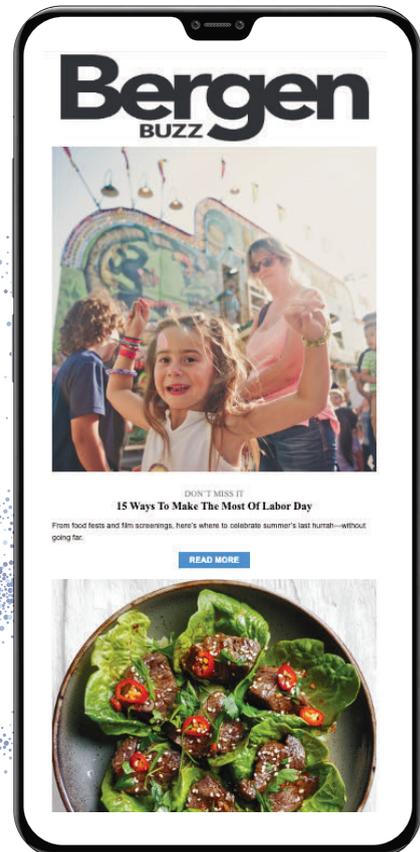
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To help you find the best of the best, across more than 60 specialties, Bergen magazine commissioned Professional Research Services (PRS) of Troy, Michigan to conduct a peer-review survey of thousands of practicing and active physicians across the county. Doctors were asked to select peers whom they deem are the best within their practice areas and whom they would seek out for particular procedures.

All the final honorees were fact-checked with the State of New Jersey and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs License Verification System. The highest vote getters within each specialty who are in good standing with the state are included here in the 2026 "Bergen County's Top Doctors" list.

While not every outstanding area doctor is listed in the 2026 "Bergen County Top Doctors" list, we think you will find it to be a valuable resource in the future for all your physician needs.



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James W. Cahill, MD

Cahill Orthopedic Sports Medicine & Joint Replacement

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111 Dean Dr., Suite 1 North, Tenafly, NJ 07670 • 201.489.0022 • www.cahillorthopedic.com

THE PHYSICIANS AT CAHILL ORTHOPEDICS offer specialized care in sports-related injuries, joint replacements, spine and fractures. The office has a friendly staff who also handles emergencies and urgent care patients.

Dr. James Cahill is a board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon with expertise in ACL reconstruction, arthroscopic shoulder stabilization and rotator cuff repair, as well as the management of pediatric sports injuries and trauma. Dr. Cahill's educational background includes John Hopkins University and Columbia University. Dr. Cahill is

proud to serve as the Chief Orthopedic Team Physician for Saint Peter's University in Jersey City. Having completed advanced fellowship training at NYU in sports medicine, he routinely provides care for professional, collegiate, and high school athletes. His practice is affiliated with Hackensack Meridian Health, where he is a senior attending orthopedic surgeon. He also performs surgery at Valley Hospital. His surgical techniques are at the forefront of orthopedic sports medicine and joint replacement, including Mako robotic-assisted hip and knee replacements, which he is an expert in and performs on a regular basis.



ERIK S. CONTRERAS, MD



JIGAR GANDHI, MD, PHARM D

Dr. Erik Contreras is a fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon who specializes in shoulder and elbow surgery, sports medicine, and fracture care. Originally from Texas, he completed his orthopedic residency training at The Ohio State University, where he trained with expert surgeons taking care of NCAA Division 1 athletes. He then completed his fellowship training at the prestigious NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital in New York City, where he trained in all aspects of shoulder and elbow surgery under the guidance of world-renowned orthopedic surgeons. Dr. Contreras has a particular interest in shoulder replacement surgery, including anatomic, reverse, and revision shoulder replacement. He also serves as an orthopedic team physician for Saint Peter's University and routinely performs surgery for sports-related injuries of the shoulder and elbow including shoulder stabilization, UCL repair, and Tommy John surgery.

Dr. Jigar Gandhi is a fellowship-trained spine surgeon utilizing innovative, cutting-edge, minimally invasive techniques, including robotics and intraoperative navigation to treat a range of spine conditions. He believes in a patient-centered approach, always focused on delivering the best outcome and patient experience. Dr. Gandhi completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at Cooper University Health Care, one of the only three Level 1 trauma centers in New Jersey, known for its demanding training with high volume exposure to complex and critical surgical injuries. During the final year of residency, he served as Administrative Chief Resident. Following residency, Dr. Gandhi completed a Combined Spine Surgery Fellowship with Harvard Medical School at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical School in Boston, MA.



MICHAEL F. PIZZILLO, M.D.



PETER A. SALOB, M.D.



ASIT K. SHAH, M.D., PHD



JESSICA FLEISCHER, M.D.



JONATHAN LEE, M.D.



DONALD CHUANG, M.D.

Englewood Orthopedic Associates

Englewood Cliffs • Fair Lawn • Jersey City • Paramus • 201.569.2770 • www.Englewoodortho.com

ENGLEWOOD ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES HAS BEEN A TRUSTED CORNERSTONE OF MUSCULOSKELETAL CARE in northern New Jersey for decades, with a legacy that spans three generations of physicians. Deeply rooted in the communities it serves, the practice continues to grow and evolve alongside its patients while remaining committed to the values that defined it from the beginning: clinical excellence, accessibility, and compassionate care. Today, Englewood Orthopedic Associates operates as a private group proudly affiliated with Englewood Hospital, blending the personalized attention of a community practice with the resources and standards of a leading health system.

With four conveniently located offices in Englewood Cliffs, Fair Lawn, Jersey City, and Paramus, the practice brings high-level orthopedic

care closer to home. Its team includes 17 highly trained providers, ranging from orthopedic surgeons and pain management specialists to occupational therapists and physician assistants. What truly distinguishes Englewood Orthopedic Associates is its sub-specialty model which is rare in a community-based setting allowing patients to receive expert care for virtually any musculoskeletal condition under one roof. The group functions much like an academic practice, with every physician board-certified and fellowship-trained in their area of expertise. "What makes Englewood Orthopedic Associates unique is that patients don't have to choose between community-based care and academic-level expertise. We've built a collaborative structure that allows specialists and our compassionate staff to work together as a unified team ensuring seamless coordination of care when patients require multiple levels of



DAMIEN DAVIS, M.D.



RAMI ALRABAA M.D.



RICHARD SALZER M.D.



JAY PANCHAL M.D.



EYTAN ROSENBLOOM D.O.



ALANDRA GREENLEE, DPM

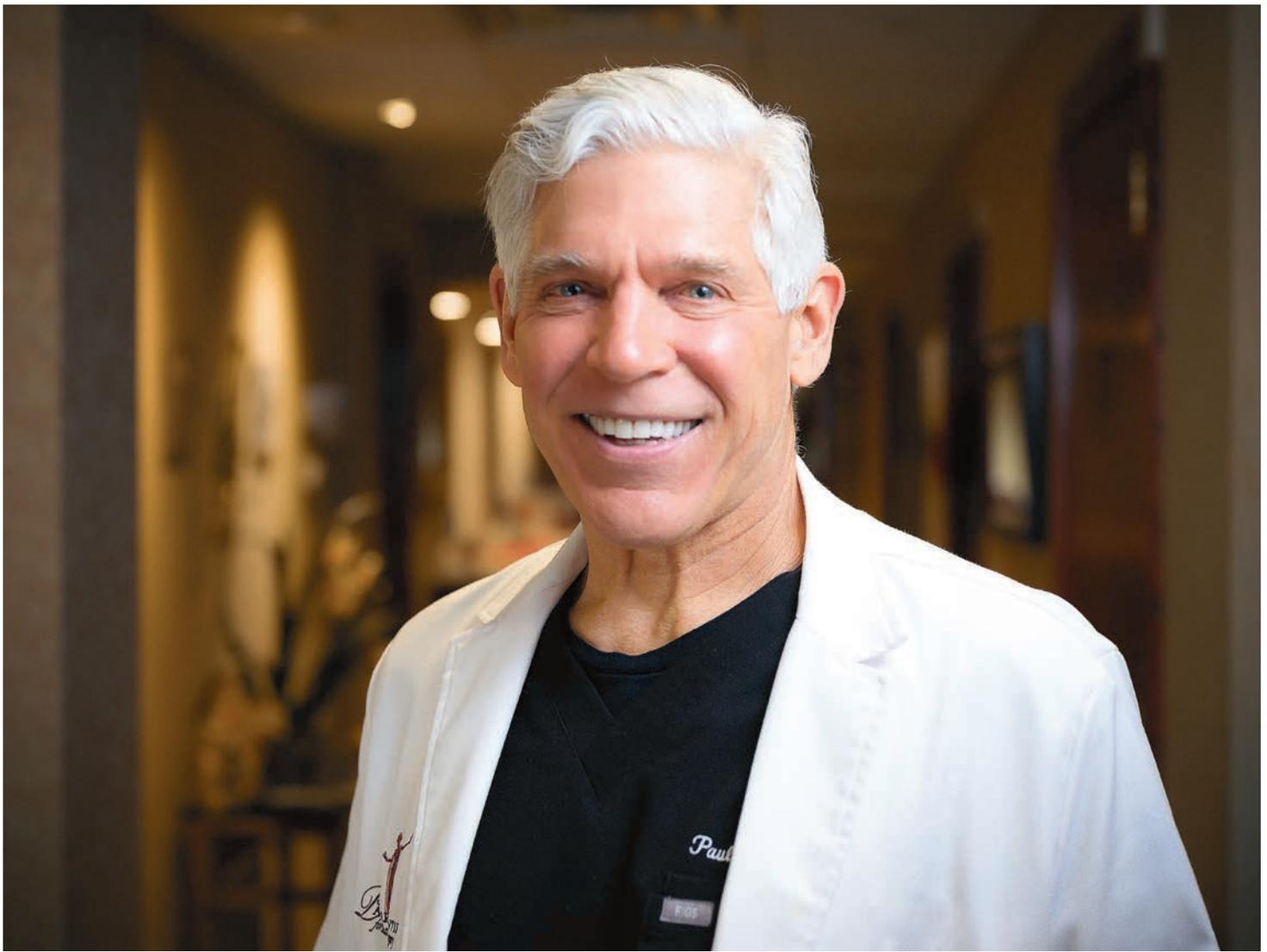
specialization in order to deliver the best possible outcome,” say Rami Alrabaa, MD, Partner, Sports Surgery & Shoulder Reconstruction specialist. This team-based approach helps streamline decision-making, reduce delays in treatment, and provide patients with clarity and confidence throughout their orthopedic journey.

In many ways, the practice functions as primary care physicians for comprehensive musculoskeletal health guiding patients through injury prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. While the practice is fully equipped for complex surgical care, the majority of patients are treated conservatively, with an emphasis on personalized, non-surgical solutions whenever possible. Dr. Alrabaa emphasized, “We don’t just treat problems when they arise; we help patients prevent them. That means educating, planning, and creating strategies that support lifelong musculoskeletal health.”

A defining feature of the practice is its commitment to knowing the patient beyond the diagnosis. The same injury may be treated differently

depending on a patient’s age, lifestyle, hobbies, work demands, and personal goals. “Orthopedic care isn’t one-size-fits-all. The right treatment for a competitive athlete is very different from what’s right for a grandparent who simply wants to stay active with their grandchildren,” Dr. Alrabaa explained. “Our job is to understand each patient’s goals and tailor care around their life, not just their diagnosis.” Physicians take the time to build rapport, listen carefully, and craft treatment plans that reflect each individual’s needs. That commitment continues well beyond the office visit with physicians personally calling patients pre and post surgery to check in and provide reassurance.

Englewood Orthopedic Associates also reflects the rich cultural diversity of the communities it serves. Multiple languages are spoken throughout the practice including Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, and Spanish, helping patients feel understood and comfortable from the moment they walk through the door. Same-day appointments are always available, and an orthopedic surgeon is on call 24/7 to ensure continuity of care when patients need it most.



Paul M. Parker, MD, FACS

Parker Center For Plastic Surgery

122 East Ridgewood Avenue, Paramus, NJ 07652 • 201.967.1212 • www.parkercenter.net

DR. PAUL M. PARKER IS A BOARD-CERTIFIED PLASTIC SURGEON who brings together precision, innovation, and a genuinely human approach to aesthetic care. Located next door to Valley Hospital, the practice integrates a medical spa for non-surgical treatments and – just one flight down – a fully accredited surgical center, allowing patients to move comfortably and confidently through every stage of care. This thoughtful design creates a seamless and reassuring patient experience that guides them from consultation through recovery.

Renowned for his ability to deliver natural, refined results, Dr. Parker performs a wide range of procedures including tummy tucks, mommy makeovers, rhinoplasty, and breast reduction and augmentation. His work is guided not only by technical expertise, but by an understanding that great outcomes depend on exceptional care before and after surgery. To support healing, Dr. Parker has developed a rapid recovery plan that includes tailored medications and attentive follow-up that starts with a manual lymphatic drainage massage to help reduce swelling at the surgical site by directing excess fluid to surrounding lymph nodes, supporting a smoother and more comfortable recovery.

With patient safety first and foremost, the surgical center is certified by national accrediting boards and staffed by two highly respected anesthesiologists with whom Dr. Parker has worked for many years. This long-standing partnership ensures consistency, trust, and coordination in the operating room. His team also includes expertly trained surgical technicians and clinical staff, all focused on precision, preparation, and patient comfort.

From the very first visit, Dr. Parker emphasizes communication and education. He takes time to review medical history, understand each patient's goals, perform a thorough examination, and outline a personalized plan while clearly discussing risks and expectations. Every patient also receives a one-hour pre-operative education visit, reinforcing confidence and clarity. Dr. Parker looks at evolving technologies and techniques with a critical eye always refining his approach to create a better, safer, and more rewarding patient journey supported by a warm, welcoming, and nurturing staff at every step.



Peter Denoble, MD, FAAOS David Ratliff, MD, FAAOS

Modern Orthopaedics Of New Jersey

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3799 US-46, #207, Parsippany, NJ 07054 • 201.751.2301 • www.modernorthonj.com

MODERN ORTHOPAEDICS OF NEW JERSEY, LED BY TOP DOCTOR PETER DENOBLE, MD, is a premier team of orthopedic surgeons specializing in conditions of the upper and lower extremities. His partner, David Ratliff, MD, also a Bergen Top Doctor, shares the group's commitment to a "modern approach" to orthopedic care—combining cutting-edge regenerative and surgical treatments with a focus on an exceptional patient experience. The practice treats a wide range of conditions, including athletic injuries, hand and wrist disorders, shoulder dislocations, rotator cuff tears, ACL and meniscus tears, carpal tunnel syndrome, nerve entrapment syndromes, and hip and knee arthritis.

Modern Orthopaedics proudly calls Route 17 North in Paramus home, with its flagship office located directly across from IKEA. The building, once the iconic "Paramus Fabric Center," has been thoughtfully transformed into a state-of-the-art medical facility while preserving its classic architectural charm. Designed for 21st-century musculoskeletal care, the facility offers ample, easily accessible parking from Route 17 and North Farview Avenue. It also features an on-site podcast studio for *Beyond the Bones*, hosted by Dr. DeNoble.

Modern Orthopaedics of New Jersey is the first orthopedic practice in Northern New Jersey to offer Focused Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT) and Electromagnetic Transduction Therapy (EMTT). These cutting-edge, non-invasive treatments activate the body's natural healing process—stimulating growth factors and stem cells to relieve pain, accelerate recovery, and even help avoid surgery. With zero downtime, ESWT and EMTT effectively treat tendon conditions like Achilles tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, rotator cuff tendonitis, and tennis elbow, while also promoting faster bone fracture healing and post-surgical recovery.

All of the surgeons at Modern Orthopaedics are board-certified or board-eligible, and hold staff privileges at the prestigious Hackensack University Medical Center, The Valley Hospital, Chilton Medical Center, and St. Joseph's University Medical Center. The surgeons at Modern Orthopaedics of New Jersey also have published numerous original research articles in national peer-reviewed orthopedic journals.



Marc A. Fiorillo, M.D.
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THE GASTROENTEROLOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

represents the premier gastroenterology practice in the region. Our goal is to provide excellence in clinical care in a safe and compassionate environment. The practice offers expertise in all aspects of gastrointestinal diseases, including acid reflux, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, hepatitis, pancreatic and gallbladder diseases, as well as screening for colon cancer and polyp detection.

We utilize biologic and immune-modulating therapies for select conditions. Many of our physicians are specially trained in advanced endoscopic procedures, including ERCP, endoscopic ultrasound, Bravo wireless pH testing, Manometry and video capsule endoscopy. Infusion therapy for severe or chronic conditions is provided in-house for patient comfort.

We proudly participate in a state-of-the-art endoscopy center in Englewood Cliffs in partnership with Englewood Hospital and SCA Health. Board-certified anesthesiologists and highly skilled nurses support a safe and comfortable patient experience.

For over 50 years, our gastroenterology practice has delivered high-quality care to the community. Our twelve physicians are fellowship-trained and board-certified in both gastroenterology and internal medicine and are frequently listed as Top Doctors in the New York Metro area. All physicians are members of the Institute for Patient Blood Management and Bloodless Medicine and Surgery at Englewood Hospital and are experienced in bloodless procedures and the medical management of patients who do not accept blood transfusions.

In addition to Englewood Hospital, some of our physicians maintain privileges at Holy Name Hospital. Many of our doctors and staff are fluent in Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Korean. We congratulate our Top Doctors, including Drs. Eugene S. Han, Marc A. Fiorillo, Michael E. Meininger, Mark S. Sapienza, Mitchell K. Spinnell, and Barry M. Zingler.



Donald A. McCain, M.D., PH.D., FACS

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IT IS ESTIMATED THAT NEARLY 104,960 new melanoma cases are diagnosed annually in the United States, resulting in 8,430 deaths. Dr. Donald McCain, Chief of Surgical Oncology at Hackensack University Medical Center, explains:

“The increasing incidence of intermediate and deep malignant melanomas has made genetic analysis for gene expression profiling and sentinel lymph node biopsy a necessary step in determining the risk of spread.”

Dr. McCain has the largest single practice performance of sentinel lymph biopsies and dissections—over 4,600 amid 25 years of experience. He

advises melanoma patients to have all suspicious lesions biopsied by their dermatologist, followed by a careful pathology review. Dr. McCain is vice chairman of the John Theurer Cancer Center and the physician in charge of operations at Hackensack Medical Center. Furthermore, he is the chief of surgical oncology and completed his fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. McCain holds memberships in key national and regional professional organizations and is recognized for his research excellence in areas which include: gastric cancer, colorectal cancer, hepatobiliary cancer, breast cancer and sarcoma.



Scott B. Pomerantz, MD

Metro Eye Care

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RECENTLY HONORED BY NEWSWEEK AS ONE OF AMERICA'S LEADING CATARACT SURGEONS IN 2025 and highly regarded as a longstanding leader and trusted presence in Bergen County eye care for more than 25 years, Dr. Scott Pomerantz is the founder of Metro Eye Care, a practice built on clinical excellence and innovation. Dr. Pomerantz is widely respected for both his surgical expertise and his patient-first philosophy. Together with his fellow associates and the loyal Metro Eye Care staff, he has cultivated an environment where compassion, respect, and teamwork are prioritized. Kindness toward one another and toward every patient is central to the culture of the practice, ensuring patients feel welcomed, supported, and confident in their care.

A board-certified ophthalmologist and a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons, Dr. Pomerantz is recognized as a prominent cataract surgeon and one of the first surgeons in Bergen County to offer laser-assisted cataract surgery. This advanced technology allows for a gentler, highly customized procedure with a level of precision that cannot be achieved through traditional manual techniques. By incorporating laser guidance, Dr. Pomerantz is able to correct astigmatism with greater accuracy, leading to improved visual outcomes and enhanced quality of life for his patients.

Over the past decade, cataract surgery has evolved dramatically, and Dr. Pomerantz has remained at the forefront of these advancements. At Metro Eye Care, cataract patients undergo a comprehensive refractive evaluation, including detailed measurements and a personalized surgical plan designed to address the unique characteristics of each eye. These customized plans are carried seamlessly from the office to the operating room, allowing cataract removal and vision correction to occur simultaneously. In today's era of advanced technology, surgical accuracy has never been more important and Dr. Pomerantz takes that responsibility seriously.

Dr. Pomerantz is particularly proud of his Metro Eye Care team. He is joined by his partner, Sejal Patel, MD, a cataract refractive surgeon who is a fellowship-trained glaucoma specialist and head of dry eye department, David Gerstenfeld, MD, Thomas LoPresti, OD, and James Cindrario, OD. With today's cutting-edge technology and the specialists' meticulous attention to detail, patients benefit from unprecedented precision and better visual outcomes than ever before.



RICHARD C.E. ANDERSON
MD, FACS, FAAP



GAETAN MOISE
MD, FAANS



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Neurosurgeons of New Jersey

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NEUROSURGEONS OF NEW JERSEY HAS EARNED NATIONAL RECOGNITION for excellence in neurosurgical care, ranking number one in New Jersey and number two in the United States in the 2026 Castle Connolly Accolades for Top Neurosurgical Private Practice. Founded with a vision to bring world-class neurological care to the region, the practice has grown over more than two decades into one of the most sub-specialized neurosurgical groups in the tri-state area, with 25 board-certified physicians delivering care across 11 convenient locations throughout New Jersey and New York.

Each surgeon focuses deeply on specific neurological conditions so patients are matched with specialists who have dedicated their careers to treating complex issues such as spine surgery, brain tumors, cerebrovascular conditions, trigeminal neuralgia, movement disorders, pediatric neurosurgery, and advanced pain management. This highly specialized model is supported by strong academic affiliations, ongoing participation in clinical research, and collaboration with leading medical centers, ensuring patients benefit from evidence-based practices, advanced surgical technology, and comprehensive care before and after treatment. The practice also offers a Full-Service Spine Center at its Ridgewood location, providing patients access not only to minimally

invasive spine surgery and renowned spine surgeons, but also to integrated physical therapy and pain management services for a more seamless, multidisciplinary approach to spine care.

Neurosurgeons of New Jersey places a strong emphasis on patient-centered care, prioritizing clear communication and individualized treatment planning so patients and their families feel informed and supported from the initial consultation through recovery. The practice also offers modern conveniences such as telehealth visits and dedicated insurance support to help patients navigate their care with confidence. Additionally, Neurosurgeons of New Jersey is affiliated with NYU Langone Health through the NYU Langone Neurosurgery Network. This allows patients access to the world-class resources of NYU, conveniently located in Bergen County.

This combination of clinical excellence, accessibility, and compassionate service has established Neurosurgeons of New Jersey as a trusted destination for patients seeking advanced neurological care throughout the region.



Stavros Christoudias, MD, FACS Farshad Mansouri, MD, FACS

Heritage Surgical Group

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DR. STAVROS CHRISTOUDIAS AND DR. FARSHAD MANSOURI ARE THE LEADING SURGEONS OF HERITAGE SURGICAL GROUP, bringing complementary expertise and a shared commitment to patient-centered care. Dr. Christoudias, the group's founder, is a board-certified general surgeon who specializes in complex abdominal wall hernias. He serves as Medical Director of the Holy Name Institute for Wound Healing in Teaneck and is a member of the New Jersey Medical Examiners Board. Dr. Mansouri is Chief of the Division of General Surgery and Vice Chair of the Department of Surgery at Pascack Valley Medical Center in Westwood. He is among a select group of surgeons in New Jersey offering Transanal Hemorrhoidal Dearterialization (THD) with Hemorrhoidopexy, a less painful and advanced treatment for hemorrhoids.

Both physicians are deeply committed to a traditional, patient-first approach to medicine. Early in his career, Dr. Christoudias practiced alongside his father, Dr. George Christoudias, an experience that shaped his belief in attentive listening, thorough communication, and unhurried visits. Dr. Mansouri shares this philosophy, emphasizing that patients

should always feel heard, informed, and confident in their care. Together, they ensure that every patient is treated with respect, compassion, and individualized attention.

With more than 53 years of combined experience, Drs. Christoudias and Mansouri—along with colleagues Dr. David Radvinsky and Dr. Vinesh Anandarajan—offer comprehensive surgical services. Their practice includes complex abdominal reconstruction, abdominal wall hernias, gallbladder and appendix surgery, alimentary tract disorders, colon cancer, diverticulitis, and soft tissue masses. The group is also at the forefront of modern surgical innovation, utilizing minimally invasive laparoscopic and robotic-assisted techniques to improve outcomes and recovery times.

The surgeons maintain hospital affiliations with The Valley Hospital in Paramus, Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, Pascack Valley Medical Center in Westwood, and Chilton Medical Center in Pompton Plains.



Robert Morin, MD, MBA, FACS

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www.robertmorinplasticsurgeon.com

ROBERT JASON MORIN, MD, MBA, FACS, HAS BUILT A PRACTICE ROOTED IN PRECISION, TRANSPARENCY, AND RESPECT FOR BOTH FORM AND FUNCTION. Board certified in plastic surgery with fellowship training in craniofacial and pediatric plastic surgery, Dr. Morin handles some of the most complex cosmetic and reconstructive cases involving the face, particularly the nose.

Patients describe their first visit as calm and honest. Dr. Morin encourages open conversation, allowing patients to express their concerns and goals before he outlines realistic options and outcomes. This approach, paired with meticulous surgical technique, is reflected in the practice's 4.9 Google rating from patients who consistently praise the clarity, care, and results they experience.

Rhinoplasty is a central focus, drawing patients from across Bergen County, New York City, other states, and abroad. Dr. Morin uses advanced techniques including ultrasonic and preservation rhinoplasty, which allow for greater precision while maintaining natural structure and appearance. He is also widely respected for revision rhinoplasty, a complex area that requires a higher level of anatomical understanding and surgical judgment.

Beyond cosmetic surgery, Dr. Morin's work in pediatric and craniofacial reconstruction plays a defining role in his career. He treats infants and children with conditions such as cleft lip and palate, craniosynostosis, microtia, and giant congenital nevi. Some procedures are performed within the first few months of life, and in rare cases immediately after birth, allowing for normal development and improved quality of life. Philanthropy is another cornerstone. Dr. Morin is co-founder of Developing Faces, a nonprofit providing surgical care to children with facial abnormalities in underserved regions worldwide. Through this work, he has participated in multiple international missions, offering life changing care to patients who would not otherwise have access to specialized treatment.

After surgery, care remains highly personal. Dr. Morin checks in with patients the night of surgery, sees them the following day, and continues follow-up throughout the year. This hands-on approach reflects the values that define his practice: openness, reliability, and a commitment to achieving the best outcome for every patient.



Aaron Capuano, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Northern Center for Plastic Surgery

**Immediate Past President of the New Jersey Society of Plastic Surgeons
Vice Chair Department of Plastic Surgery, The Valley Hospital**

700 East Palisades Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 • 201.820.5280 • njplasticsurgerycenter.com

DEDICATED TO EXCEPTIONAL & HIGHLY ATTENTIVE CARE. At Northern Center for Plastic Surgery, Dr. Aaron Capuano & his team are known for building lasting relationships with patients; rooted in trust, precision & individualized attention.

Dr. Capuano is a double-board-certified plastic surgeon (ABPS, ABS) with more than 21 years of surgical experience. He is consistently recognized as a NJ, 201 & Bergen County Top Doctor in Plastic Surgery. His practice focuses on specific cosmetic surgery of the face, breast, & body, as well as advanced breast reconstruction following breast cancer & complex abdominal wall reconstruction.

Our practice is proud to welcome Dr. Michael Marchese, a board-certified general surgeon & board-eligible plastic surgeon, to help meet our expanding needs.

A Comprehensive Aesthetic Destination: We offer a full continuum of care, from non-invasive treatments to advanced surgical solutions; delivered in a refined, private setting.

Non-Invasive & Non-Surgical Care: Patients benefit from an array of laser services, microneedling, PRP, toxins, biostimulatory fillers. Our team is

known for their balanced, natural approach to facial fillers, enhancing contour & restoring volume without an overdone appearance.

Surgical Mini Face & Neck Rejuvenation: Dr. Capuano performs refined mini face & neck-lifting procedures that elevate the face & neck through discreet incisions hidden above the temple hairline & behind the ear lobes, leaving the face free of visible scars.

Surgical Excellence: We specialize in achieving exceptional results in cosmetic surgery, our areas of expertise include breast augmentation/mastopexy, reduction, facial rejuvenation, body contouring, customized Mommy Makeovers & post weight loss transformations—as well as reconstructive surgery, including oncoplastic surgery, implant-based & autologous breast reconstruction, & complex abdominal wall reconstruction.

Personalized Care, Natural Results: The guiding philosophy is simple: individualized treatment plans & results that look refined—not overdone. With a welcoming, professional team & a commitment to excellence at every step, we invite you to experience results that are as natural as they are transformative.



Rehan Ali, M.D.

Complete Pain & Spine Institute, Complete Vein & Vascular

1144 East Ridgewood Ave., Floor 2, Ridgewood, NJ 07450 • 201.336.0188

www.njpainandspine.com • www.njveindoc.com

DR. REHAN ALI, MD IS A DOUBLE BOARD-CERTIFIED PAIN MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST recognized for his clinical excellence, innovative care, and patient-first philosophy. He is the founder and medical director of Complete Pain & Spine Institute, a multi-location practice in New Jersey dedicated to helping patients regain function, independence, and quality of life.

Known for his thoughtful, precision-based approach, Dr. Ali designs individualized treatment plans that address both the physical and emotional dimensions of pain. His clinical focus includes advanced interventional spine procedures for neck and low back pain, regenerative and minimally invasive joint therapies, peripheral nerve interventions, and comprehensive treatment of varicose vein and vascular disease. He is widely regarded for combining technical expertise with compassionate care, ensuring that patients feel heard, informed, and empowered throughout their treatment journey.

Dr. Ali remains at the forefront of modern pain medicine by integrating cutting-edge technologies, image-guided techniques, and evidence-based therapies into his practice. From minimally invasive interventions and tailored physical therapy programs to complementary approaches such as acupuncture, his goal is to offer a full spectrum of solutions—matching the right therapy to the right patient at the right time.

As a physician-leader, Dr. Ali has built a multidisciplinary care model that prioritizes safety, efficiency, and long-term outcomes. Under his leadership, Complete Pain & Spine Institute has become a trusted destination for patients seeking both relief and results. His commitment to clinical excellence, innovation, and human-centered care continues to set a new standard in the field of pain management.

ENT & Allergy Associates

433 Hackensack Ave., Suite 204, Hackensack, NJ 07601 • 201.883.1062 • www.entandallergy.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP DOCS!

ENT & Allergy Associates is proud to congratulate the physicians named “Top Doctors” in *Bergen Magazine*: Doctors Steven M. Gold, MD; Robin Brody, MD; Jonathan A. Lesserson, MD; and Jared M. Wasserman, MD (Missing Top Doc: Won-Taek Choe, MD). All practice at our Hackensack office. To schedule an appointment, call 201-883-1062 or visit entandallergy.com/booknow.

As the largest ENT, Allergy, and Audiology practice in the country, ENT & Allergy Associates (ENTA) brings together more than 450 clinicians across 80+ locations in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Each office is staffed with world-class physicians and specialists, delivering expert care to patients of all ages. Experience the difference of a practice that puts your health first.



ENT & Allergy Associates

650 From Rd., Suite 170, Paramus, NJ 07652 • 201.722.9850 • www.entandallergy.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP DOCS!

ENT & Allergy Associates is proud to congratulate the physicians named “Top Doctors” in *Bergen Magazine*: Doctors Jason Abramowitz, MD; I. David Bough Jr., MD; Cristen Cusumano, MD; Douglas Leventhal, MD; and Justin Skripak, MD. All practice at our Paramus office. Also pictured is fellowship trained pediatric ENT Christen Caloway, MD, who is joining the office in Spring 2026. To schedule an appointment, call 201-722-9850 or visit entandallergy.com/booknow.

As the largest ENT, Allergy, and Audiology practice in the country, ENT & Allergy Associates (ENTA) brings together more than 450 clinicians across 80+ locations in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Each office is staffed with world-class physicians and specialists, delivering expert care to patients of all ages. Experience the difference of a practice that puts your health first.



Jocelyn Lieb, MD, FAAD

Skin & Laser Center of NJ

500 N. Franklin Tpke., Suite 318, Ramsey, NJ 07446 • 201.500.7525 • www.skinandlasernj.com

JOCELYN LIEB, MD IS A BOARD-CERTIFIED DERMATOLOGIST with over 15 years of experience. She believes exceptional dermatologic care begins with understanding each patient's individual concerns, goals, and lifestyle. Dr. Lieb takes a thoughtful approach, creating treatment plans that are effective, realistic, and designed to help patients feel comfortable, and confident. She has personally trained her team at Skin and Laser Center of NJ to reflect her standards, and trusts them completely - even with the care of her own family members.

A cornerstone of Dr. Lieb's practice is her commitment to staying current in a constantly evolving field. She continually incorporates the latest advances, technologies, and evidence-based treatments in both medical and cosmetic dermatology so she can offer care that is effective and thoughtfully tailored to each patient. Dr. Lieb provides comprehensive dermatologic care with a strong focus on the early detection of skin cancer, using state-of-the-art diagnostic tools. She also has extensive experience in laser and cosmetic dermatology and enjoys helping patients look and feel their best by improving overall skin health. In addition, she and her team create personalized treatment plans to help maintain skin firmness of the face and body, particularly in the setting of weight loss.



Xelena Depeña, MD, FAAFP

Valley Medical Group Primary and Walk-In Care

40 Washington Avenue, Suite A5, Dumont, NJ 07628 • 201.387.7055
valleyhealth.com/locations/vmg-primary-walk-care-dumont



XELENA DEPEÑA, MD, FAAFP IS A BOARD-CERTIFIED FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN with a big heart and a genuine passion for caring for people at every stage of life. The practice offers convenient primary and walk-in care with extended hours outside of traditional schedules, making healthcare more accessible for today's busy lifestyles. Dr. DePeña treats a wide range of patients from management of chronic or complex conditions to individuals needing acute or occupational care. Known for her approachable,

compassionate style, she takes time to listen, build trust, and create thoughtful, personalized care plans for patients. Dr. DePeña also finds great fulfillment in teaching students and mentoring future healthcare professionals.



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Where To Eat

Getting three squares a day has never been easier—Bergen County is home to a selection of restaurants diverse enough to satisfy all of your cravings.



Mezza Luna,
Allendale



De Novo European Pub, Edgewater

ALLEDALE

Allendale Bar & Grill
67 W. Allendale Ave.
201.327.3197
allendalebarandgrill.com

Allendale Steakhouse
95 W. Allendale Ave.
201.962.9797
allendalesteakhouse.com

Mezza Luna
96 W. Allendale Ave.
201.327.6556
mezzalunabistro.com

Nirvana Indian Kitchen
29 W. Allendale Ave.
201.818.2300
nirvanaindiankitchen.com

Savini
168 W. Crescent Ave.
201.760.3700
savinirestaurant.com

ALPINE

Kiku
385 Rte. 9 W.
201.767.6322
kikurestaurantsnj.com

BERGENFIELD

Bamboo Grill
54 S. Washington Ave.
201.384.5951
bamboo-grill.com

Chapala Grill
52 S. Washington Ave.
201.387.2107
chapalamexicangrill.com

The Cuban Around The Corner
260 S. Washington Ave.
201.574.8600

Nihon Kai
41 S. Washington Ave.
201.384.3000
nihonkaijapanesenj.com

Tommy Fox's Public House
32 S. Washington Ave.
201.384.0900
tommyfoxs.com

BOGOTA

Luka's Italian Cuisine
10 River Rd.
201.440.2996
lukasitaliancuisine.co

CARLSTADT

Biggie's
430 Rte. 17 S.
201.933.4000
biggies.com

Hunkar Restaurant
319 Hackensack Ave.
201.507.0606
hunkarrestaurant.com

Il Villaggio
651 Rte. 17 N.
201.935.7733
ilvillaggio.com

CLIFFSIDE PARK

354 Steakhouse
354 Lawton Ave.
201.941.0499
354steakhouse.com

Avos Grill
720 Anderson Ave.
201.945.9038
avosgrill.com

Rudy's
591 Anderson Ave.
201.943.9252

Sedona Taphouse
679 Anderson Ave.
201.943.2300
sedonataphouse.com

Villa Amalfi
793 Palisade Ave.
201.886.8626
villaamalfi.com

CLOSTER

Brasserie Mémère
107 Vervalen St.
201.660.8822
brasserie-memere.com

The Hill
252 Schraalenburgh Rd.
201.899.4700
thehillcloster.com

Lucio's
208 Piermont Rd.
201.750.3233
luciosnj.com

Sear House
411 Piermont Rd.
201.292.4612
searhousenj.com

Stern & Bow
171 Schraalenburgh Rd.
201.750.3350
sternandbowrestaurant.com

CRESSKILL

Chef Mediterranean
38 Union Ave.
201.367.9565
chef-mediterranean.res-menu.com

Hanami
41 Union Ave.
201.567.8508
hanamirestaurant.com

Mami
15 E. Madison Ave.
201.266.8931
mami-hospitality.com

Samdan
178 Piermont Rd.
201.816.7343
samdanrestaurant.net

DEMAREST

Yasou Mykonos
134 Hardenburgh Ave.
201.768.8500
yasougreekfood.com

DUMONT

Foschini's Brick Oven Kitchen
21 E. Madison Ave.
201.387.9998
foschinisbrickovenkitchen.com

Grant Street Café
25 Grant Ave.
201.385.1705
thegrantstreetcafe.com

La Taberna
31 W. Madison Ave.
201.374.1661
latabernanj.com

Mexico Mi Amor
132 Veterans Plz.
201.244.5555
mexicomiamor.com

EAST RUTHERFORD

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1 Hoboken Rd.
201.939.1128
aldilaitalianbistro.com

Annabella's House of Mozzarella
900 Paterson Plank Rd.
201.804.0303
annabellasmozz.com

Blarney Station Pub
258 Park Ave.
201.531.0001
blarneystation.com

Elia Mediterranean
240 Hackensack St.
201.939.9292
elianj.com

The Roosevelt
356 Paterson Ave.
201.713.3145
theroosevelt.us

EDGEWATER
Brownstone Pancake Factory
860 River Rd.
201.945.4800
brownstonepancakefactory.com

De Novo European Pub
1257 River Rd.
201.496.6161
denovoeuropeanpub.com

Fleming's Steakhouse
90 The Promenade
201.313.9463
flemingssteakhouse.com

Greek Taverna
55 The Promenade
201.945.8998
greektavernausa.com

Haven Riverfront Restaurant and Bar
2 Main St., Suite G
201.943.1900
havenedgewater.com

Original Pancake House
15 The Promenade
201.366.4065
ophedgewater.com

Rebecca's
236 Old River Rd.
201.943.8808
rebeccasedgewater.com

River Palm Terrace
1416 River Rd.
201.224.2013
riverpalm.com

Roberto's II
936 River Rd.
201.224.2524
robertosii.com

Seak
725 River Rd., #30
201.402.3400
seaknj.com

Tommy's Tavern + Tap
11 The Promenade
201.386.1700
tommytavernandtap.com

ELMWOOD PARK

Taverna Mykonos
238 Broadway
201.703.9200
tavernamykonos.com

EMERSON

Pimaan Thai
79 Kinderkamack Rd.
201.967.0440
pimaanthai.com

ENGLEWOOD

Akai Lounge
23 E. Palisade Ave.
201.541.0086
akailounge.com

Cassie's
18 S. Dean St.
201.541.6760
cassiespizzeria.com

CZEN Restaurant
36 N. Van Brunt St.
201.431.9199
czenrestaurant.com

*Editor's note: Patrons are encouraged to confirm individual restaurant hours as well as policies regarding reservations and curbside service.

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Hummus Elite
39 E. Palisade Ave.
201.569.5600
hummuselite.com

Khao Thai Cuisine
4 E. Palisade Ave.
201.894.0344
khaothainj.com

La Fonda Paisa
95 W. Palisade Ave.
201.871.3544
lafondapaisausa.com

Lulu Mediterranean Grill
63 Nathaniel Pl.
201.569.2662
lululoungejersey.com

Noches de Colombia
90 W. Palisade Ave.
201.567.4950
nochesdecolombia.com

Pintxo y Tapas
47 N. Dean St.
201.569.9999
englewoodtapas.com

Rose's of Englewood
126 Engle St.
201.541.0020
rosesplacenj.com

Sofia
36 Engle St.
201.541.8530
sofiaenglewood.com

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS
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717 E. Palisade Ave.
201.945.4800
brownstonepancakefactory.com

Café Italiano
14 Sylvan Ave.
201.461.5041
cafeitaliano.net

Cliffs Steakhouse
18 Sylvan Ave.
201.944.0233
cliffssteakhouse.com

Lefkes Estiatorio
495 Sylvan Ave.
201.408.4444
lefkesn.com

Grissini
484 Sylvan Ave.
201.568.3535
grissinirestaurant.com

FAIR LAWN
Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza
2101 Promenade Blvd.
201.796.2625
acfp.com

The Craftsman
1609 Maple Ave.
201.773.8985
thecraftsmannj.com

Fair Lawn Diner
13-48 River Rd.
201.791.2895
fairlawndiner.com

Jerry's Hot Chicken
7-09 Fair Lawn Ave.
201.402.9300
jerryshotchicken.com

Oceanos Oyster Bar & Sea Grill
2-27 Saddle River Rd.
201.796.0546
oceanosrestaurant.com

Rose's Place
32-01 Broadway
201.475.8800
rosesplacenj.com

RP Prime Steakhouse
41-11 Rte. 4 W.
201.267.0702
rpprime.com

Sage Restaurant
17-15 Broadway
201.797.0500
sagefairlawn.com

Saigon Bistro
24-08 Fair Lawn Ave.
201.398.1883
saigonbistro.com

FAIRVIEW
Patsy's
344 Bergen Blvd.
201.943.0627
patsysbistro.com

FORT LEE
Aquarius
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201.592.8338
aquariusrestaurantnj.com

Baggios
212 Main St.
201.585.7979
baggiospizza
restaurant.com

Big Red Tomato
1205 Anderson Ave.
201.224.6500
brtnj.com

Cap't Loui
210 Main St.
201.461.7080
captloui.com

Chillers Grill
2191 Fletcher Ave.
201.461.0075
chillersgrill.com

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116 Main St.
201.947.2500
inapoli.com

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201.585.1601
kubarestaurant.com

Pho Today
2151 Lemoine Ave.
201.585.8818

Pomodoro
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201.224.0800
pomodoro1.com

Prime & Beyond
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201.461.0033
primeandbeyond.com

Punta Cana
2151 Lemoine Ave.
201.849.5556
puntacanarestaurante.com

Ventana's
200 Park Ave.
201.583.4777
ventanasatthe
modern.com

FRANKLIN LAKES
Harmony Mediterranean Grill
842 Franklin Ave.
201.485.8707
harmony-nj.com

Sushi Cocoro
856 Franklin Ave.
201.560.1333
sushicocoro.com

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42 Plauderville Ave.
973.478.2226
firehousefamily
restaurantnj.com

Goodfellas
661 Midland Ave.
973.478.4000
goodfellasrestaurant
nj.org

La Fortaleza
361 Midland Ave.
973.928.4470
lafortalezagarfield.com

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Glen Rock Inn
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201.445.2362
glenrockinn.com

Stone & Rail
175 Rock Rd.
201.345.0709
stoneandrail.com

Tani Sushi & Asian Grill
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201.612.1188
taniofglenrock.com

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Casual Habana Café
125 Main St.
201.880.9844
casualhabanacafe.com

The Cheesecake Factory
390 Hackensack Ave.
201.488.0330
thecheesecake
factory.com

Hot Fish
450 Hackensack Ave., #6
201.881.0180
hotfishhackensack.com

Houston's
1 Riverside Sq.
201.488.5667
houstons.com

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201.487.8721
thelidorestaurant.com

Maggiano's Little Italy
70 Riverside Sq.
201.221.2030
maggianos.com

Morton's The Steakhouse
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mortons.com

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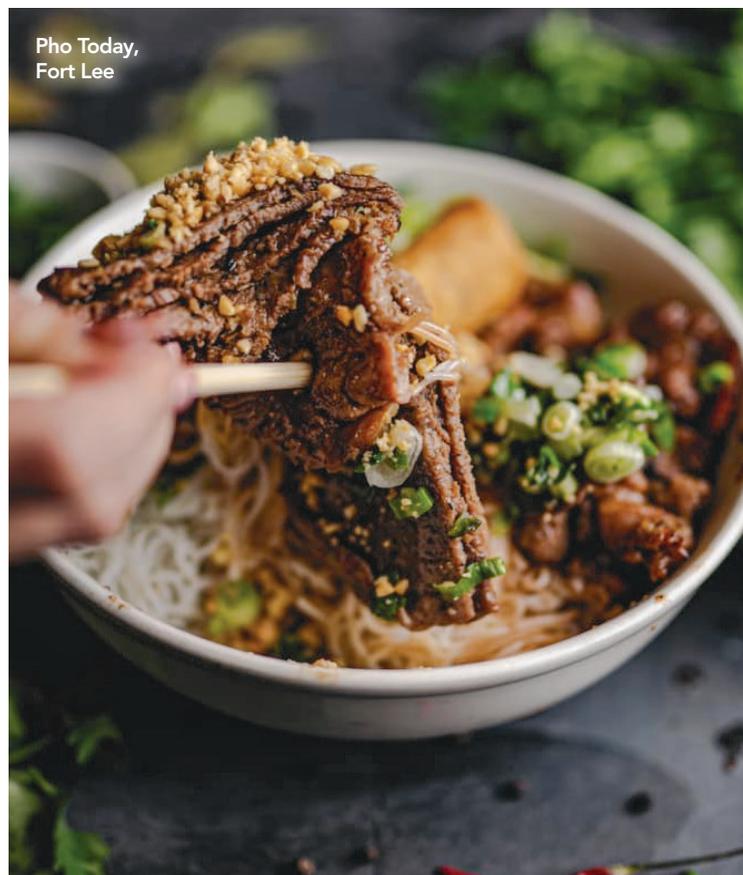
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bensihh.com

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heightsbarandgrill.com

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s4shops.com

Ivy Inn
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201.393.7699
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Domani
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figandtomatoeatery.com

Koon Thai Eatery
126 Broadway
551.246.3646
koonthaieatery.com

Matsu Sushi & Grill
140 Broadway
201.930.1896
matsusushibest.com

Oso Buco
343 Broadway
201.664.1600
ossobucogrill.com

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201.444.1300
alteatscafe.com

Catchy Café
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201.445.6400
thecatchycaterer.com

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201.445.4115
hohokusinn.com

Ho-Ho-Kus Sushi Café
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201.670.7677
hohokussushicafe.com

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201.857.4717
stevesnj.com

LEONIA
Dante's Place
373 Broad Ave.
201.592.9071
dantesplace.com

Shumi Japanese Cuisine
354 Broad Ave.
201.272.6577
shumiomakase.com

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217 Main St.
201.814.1100
segoviasteakhouse.com

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Kaya
334 N. Main St.
973.779.1128
kayalodi.com

ReBar & Kitchen
132 Essex St.
201.368.8181
rebarkitchen.com

Sergio's Missione
2 Mercer St.
973.778.4545
sergiosmissionelodi.com

LYNDHURST
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263 Ridge Rd.
201.939.1922

Foschini's Brick Oven Kitchen
298 Ridge Rd.
201.460.7600
foschinisbrickovenkitchen.com

Michael's Riverside
528 Riverside Ave.
201.939.6333
michaelsriverside.com

MAHWAH
Mahwah Bar & Grill
2 Island Rd.
201.529.8056
allendalebarandgrill.com

Nagoya
1007 MacArthur Blvd.
201.818.9933
nagoyamahwah.com

Nonna's
11 Franklin Tpke.
201.529.1151
nonnasmahwah.com

Novino Restaurant
64 Ramapo Valley Rd.
201.529.1900
novinonj.com

Roxanne's
150 Franklin Tpke.
201.529.0007
roxannesrestaurant.com

RP Prime Steakhouse
209 Ramapo Valley Rd.
201.529.1111
rpprime.com

Sangria
1033 MacArthur Blvd.
201.962.3310
sangriamahwah.com

State Line Diner
375 Rte. 17 N.
201.529.3353
statelinediner.com

MAYWOOD
Angelo's Greek Taverna
245 Maywood Ave.
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angelosgreektaaverna.com

Maywood Inn's Twin Door Tavern
122 W. Pleasant Ave.
201.843.8022
twindoortavern.com

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maywoodpancakehouse.com

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201.857.5800
fionasristorante.com

Rosario's Trattoria
29 Central Ave.
201.445.3335

MONTVALE
Delpino Restaurant
108 Chestnut Ridge Rd.
201.391.6866
delpinorestaurant.com

Bellissimo
12 S. Kinderkamack Rd.
201.746.6669
bellissimonj.com

Fire & Oak
100 Chestnut Ridge Rd.
201.307.1100
fireandoak.com

Gen Sushi & Hibachi
14B Chestnut Ridge Rd.
201.930.9188
gensushimontvale.com

Hearth & Tap Co.
125 N. Kinderkamack Rd.
201.307.6300
hearthandtap.com

Yuki
2 S. Kinderkamack Rd.
201.391.9877
yukimontvale.com

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bazzarellirestaurant.com

Bistro 107
107 Moonachie Rd.
201.440.3339
bistro107nj.com

Segovia
150 Moonachie Rd.
201.641.4266
segoviarestaurant.com

NEW MILFORD
Barrel & Brew
872 River Rd.
201.483.3329
barrelandbrews.com

Casual Habana Café
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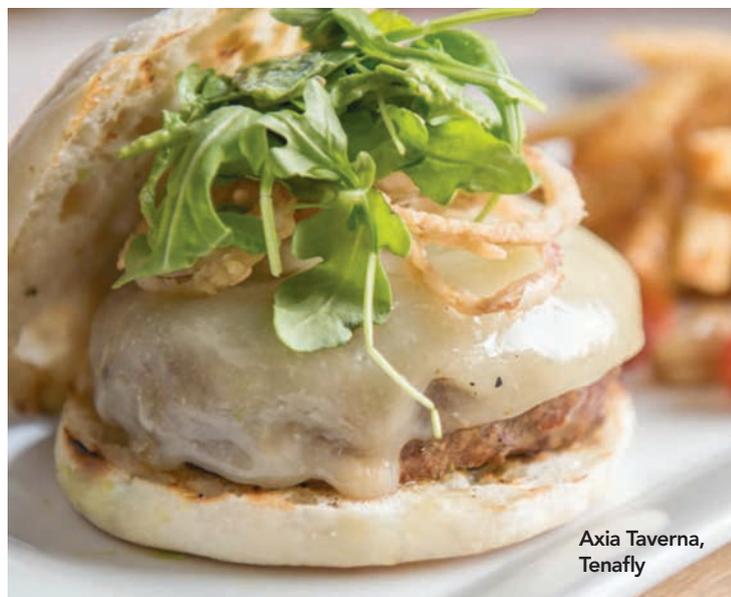
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Mexican Soundoff

Englewood's Mi Amor Cantina dishes out crowd-pleasing south-of-the-border favorites, festive vibes and lively music.

When the craving for Mexican flavors strikes, Bergen County doesn't make the decision easy. Between long-standing favorites, buzzy newcomers and enough taco options to fill a group-chat debate, my girlfriend and I found ourselves delightfully overwhelmed. After some back-and-forth (and a little hunger-induced impatience), we decided to try something new and landed at Mi Amor Cantina in Englewood—proof that the city's vibrant dining scene always keeps things exciting.

Mi Amor fits neatly into that landscape. It's located just off Palisade Avenue, the main downtown corridor, in a lively building that suggests that dinner should feel like a night out. From the moment you walk in, the place announces itself with lively décor, bustling energy and blaring music that's more fun than frustrating. This is not a whisper-over-candles restaurant; it's a clink-your-glass, laugh-a-little-louder spot.

Speaking of clinking glasses, Mi Amor specializes in cocktails and 21+ drinks, and it's equipped with dozens of big-screen TVs for the sports-viewing crowd. My girlfriend and I started the night sipping classic margaritas (a must-try) while our eyes darted from a basketball game on one screen to hockey and mixed martial arts on others. We also kept continuous watch on another dining couple, whose focus before anything else was recording their fancy drinks and entrées for social media.

We were too hungry to worry about making our friends on Instagram and Snapchat envious; we wanted to eat the food. After devouring complimentary chips and salsa, we continued the crunch-and-dip theme for our first appetizer, mango habanero guacamole. The guac struck a pleasant balance between sweet and heat—bright mango flavor up front (chunks of fresh fruit), followed by a gentle habanero kick that let us know it was there without hijacking our taste buds. Scooped up with crisp tortilla chips, it set the tone for the evening: familiar



MI AMOR CANTINA
16 Armory St., Englewood,
201.541.8061; miamorcantinanj.com

Mexican flavors done well, with just enough flair to keep things interesting.

We ordered chicken tacos on classic corn tortillas as a second appetizer, and they were equally satisfying. The grilled chicken chunks were juicy, well seasoned, simply dressed and thoughtfully assembled. Nothing fussy, nothing overworked—just tacos doing exactly what tacos should do. For a couple splitting an order of three tacos, the only issue was deciding how to split the dish. (I ultimately had two of the three tacos.)

Steak was on my mind for an entrée, but I ultimately went with grilled salmon, something I don't ordinarily get at a Mexican restaurant. Mi Amor made sure I didn't regret the decision. The fish was nicely cooked, flaky and flavorful. It also paired well with my choice of sides, rice and sweet maduros.

My girlfriend, meanwhile, did get steak—in the form of fajitas. Though the dish didn't arrive on a sizzling, cast-iron plate the way many chain restaurants serve fajitas, the food was still piping hot, aromatic and delicious. The strips of steaks were well seasoned and hearty, and paired with peppers and onions that played their roles well. It wasn't an attempt to reinvent fajitas, just a tasty reminder of why they became popular in the first place.

Dessert came in the form of Dulce Love, a shared finale that was truly indulgent. This treat was a combination of three separate desserts: crisp churros, decadent cheesecake and rich tres leches. Sweet, rich and clearly designed to be split (unless you're feeling particularly committed), it was the right ending note to a meal that understood its mission. Oh, it's capped with a playful Mexican sombrero as well!

Mi Amor Cantina isn't trying to be the quietest, trendiest or most experimental restaurant in Englewood—and that's precisely its charm. It's loud, lively, comforting and satisfying, the kind of place you go when you want good food, good vibes and a scene that's alive and kicking.

—Darius Amos

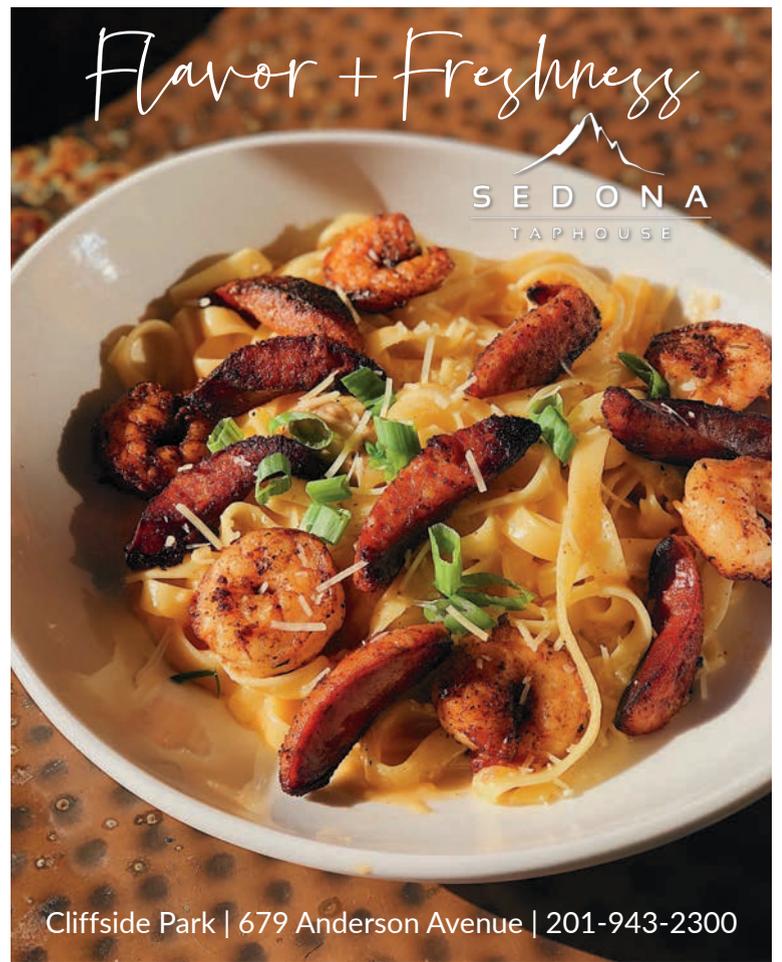
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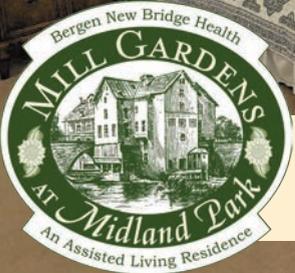
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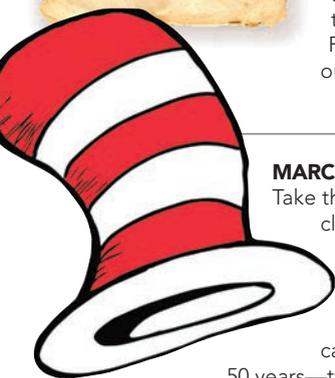
Be There

From theatrical shows and festive parades to quiet moments in nature, there's something for everyone this month.



MARCH 5-11

Don't let the name fool you: Heidi Schreck's Tony Award-nominated **WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME** is anything but elementary. The comedic play traces the relationship between four generations of women and the U.S. Constitution, and you can see it live at Ramapo College's Adler Theater in Mahwah. Showtimes are at 8 p.m. except March 8, when the show begins at 2 p.m. For more information, check out ramapo.edu.



MARCH 15

Take the children to see Dr. Seuss's classic **THE CAT IN THE HAT**, which comes to life at the Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood. Watch the story that has captivated readers for over 50 years—two bored kids, one rainy day and one crazy cat—as you've never see it before. Two shows are available: 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. For tickets and more, head over to bergenpac.org.



MARCH 15

Celebrate the luck of the Irish at the annual **BERGEN COUNTY ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE**, which steps off in Bergenfield! The parade, led by grand marshal and New Milford Chief of Police Brian Clancy, is celebrating 44 years in 2026. Watch pipe bands, Irish dancers, musical acts and community groups march through the streets. The fun starts at 2 p.m. For more information, check out bergencountyirish.org.

MARCH 18

Head over to Hackensack River County Park in Hackensack and take part in a **BIRDING FIELD TRIP**, hosted by Bergen County Audubon. Stroll through the park and watch spring birds, insects and wildlife after a long, cold winter. Beginners are welcome and encouraged—experienced birders will be on hand to help out. The walk starts at 10 a.m. For more information, see bergencountyaudubon.org or contact Don Torino at 201.230.4983 or greataak4@gmail.com.



MARCH 18

Have a student in your life? Feeling that all-important senior year of high school creeping up on you? **THE BERGEN COUNTY COLLEGE FAIR** is here to help, and it's coming to Ramapo College in Mahwah. Representatives from over 200 colleges and universities will be present and ready to take questions, offer advice and help you gather resources to make sure you have all the information you need to make the right choice. The fair starts at 5:30 p.m. For more information, check out collegefairguide.com.



MARCH 21

Lace up your sneakers for a great cause in Northvale, where you can take part in the **RUN FOR TOMORROW 5K AND 1-MILE FUN RUN**. This run takes place on a relatively flat road course and honors Noel O'Malley, the owner of Northvale's gastropub Biddy O'Malley's, who died in 2023. The Run For Tomorrow honors his memory and raises money for cancer research. Activities start at 9 a.m. For registration and more, see runsignup.com.

*Editor's note: All events are subject to cancellations or changes. Attendees are encouraged to confirm times and dates with event organizers.

MARCH 22

For a night of unforgettable music, head over to the Puffin Cultural Forum in Teaneck and see a performance by **HIROYA TSUKAMOTO**, a Japanese-born fingerstyle guitarist. Tsukamoto is recognized worldwide for his agile fingerpicking and his soulful performances. The music starts at 4 p.m. For tickets and more, see puffinculturalforum.org.

MARCH 28

It's back! **BRAGGING RIGHTS**, NYC's longest running sketch comedy competition show, returns to the Hackensack Performing Arts Center for a night of laughs, games and friendly rivalry. See two teams of comedians face off and try to get the biggest laughs from the audience. The show starts at 8 p.m. For tickets and a full lineup, check out hacpac.org.



MARCH 29

Find peace in the outdoors at the Tenafly Nature Center, which holds a **MINDFUL MORNING GUIDED WALK**. This stroll is designed to help you unwind, breathe deeply and reconnect with the world around you. Keep an eye on the weather and make sure you dress appropriately. This event begins at 9:30 a.m. For more information, head over to tenaflynaturecenter.org.



APRIL 3-11

An iconic musical of peace, love and rebellion comes to Bergen Community College's Bergenstages in Paramus. See the genre-defining **HAIR** live on stage, rock out to Galt MacDermot's score and let this story take you through the 1960s counterculture and the home front of the Vietnam War. Multiple seatings are available, including matinees. For more information, see bergen.edu.



Gatherings

Bergenites always show up to support their friends and neighbors.



1. BERGEN NEW BRIDGE MEDICAL CENTER

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center welcomed partners from Eden Healthcare and the Pilgrim Mission Church Choir in December. The choir performed holiday music and filled the halls with seasonal cheer. They also celebrated a blessing service for the hospital's future Integrative Medicine Center.

2-3. BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Bergen Community College Foundation in Paramus held its inaugural Scholarship Gala. The gala supported the foundation's mission to distribute scholarships to students pursuing higher education.

4-6. CHRISTIAN HEALTH

Christian Health held its annual Fall Round-Up at the Indian Trail Club in Franklin Lakes. Proceeds from the event benefited the 2025 Annual Fund, which supports the Wyckoff organization's capital enhancements, expansion of mental health services and technology advancements to optimize care delivery.

7. GREATER BERGEN REALTORS

Greater Bergen Realtors honored its 2025 Local and State Realtor of the Year, Gene Amsel. Festivities were held during the annual New Jersey Realtors Awards Ceremony at the Triple Play Realtor Convention & Trade Expo in Trenton.

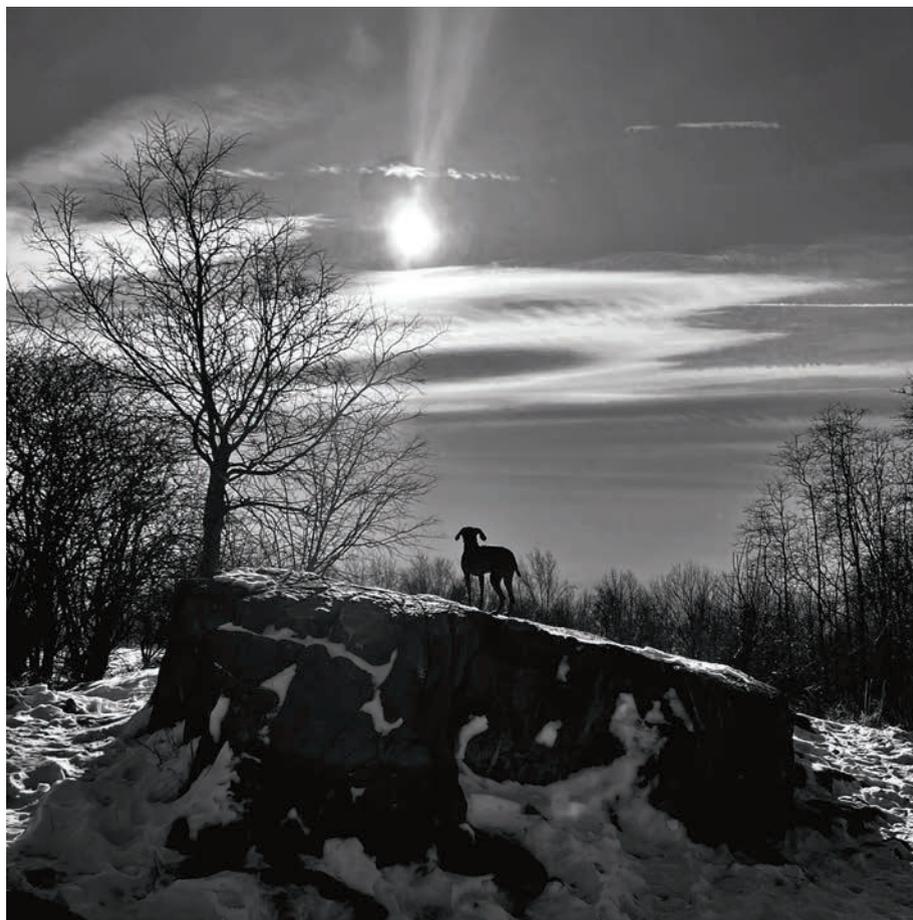
8. INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RECONSTRUCTION

The Plastic Surgery Center and Institute for Advanced Reconstruction celebrated its grand opening in Glen Rock. The facility is designed as a hospitality-inspired medical environment that integrates reconstructive and cosmetic surgery and curated wellness services.

9-10. BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF LOWER BERGEN COUNTY

Lodi-based Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County recognized the milestones of several staff members. Honorees include Sonia Verdade, 20 years of service; Juanita Ortiz, 10 years of service; and Nicole Rossi, five years of service.

A BERGEN MOMENT



“My dog Molly is pushing the limit—she’s now almost 11 years old, and we’re still going up to High Mountain summit. For us, the dead of winter is full of life and joy. Here, I love how Molly contrasts the snow, soft clouds and bright sun. It was a meditative moment. I always tell people that, if you stay alert and keep your eyes open, you see things you often overlook. My dog helps me do that.”

—James Shammass, Franklin Lakes

Send us your Bergen Moment! Email your photo and a short description to rita.guarna@wainscotmedia.com.

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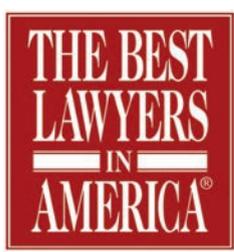
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