

James Lane

— Dining —

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Chef Alex Guarnaschelli

Cook It Up: Bold Moves For Family Foods

By Jessica Mackin-Cipro

Hamptons resident and Food Network star Alex Guarnaschelli has a new cookbook coming out, "Cook It Up: Bold Moves for Family Foods: A Cookbook," with her daughter Ava on September 5. Guarnaschelli is also involved in Flavors of the Open at the US Open tennis tournament on August 24.

Tell us a little about your background as a chef and how you got started.

I am a native New Yorker who grew up with two parents who were great cooks. I started working in France for a number of years and then returned to New York restaurants to work for Daniel Boulud. The rest is history.

Your latest cookbook "Cook It Up: Bold Moves for Family Foods" was written with your daughter Ava Clark. Tell us about this experience.

It's so interesting working with a 16-year-old. Ava is unencumbered by decades of restaurant work and approaches food with a fresh palate and keen eye for great ingredients. She gathers information from so many different sources: videos, social media snippets, and even magazines. I stand

there with my old cookbooks and the two of us somehow meet in the middle with all our different ideas!

Has Ava been at your side in the kitchen since a young age?

It actually hasn't been like that. Ava has watched me cook; there have been nights when we've eaten a slice of pizza standing over the sink. Her interest in cooking has evolved naturally and gradually without pressure. It's really hard for a kid not to focus on whatever their parent does for a living. She cooks by my side now when she feels like it. Sometimes she doesn't. It's an ebb and flow.

As a teenager now, how has TikTok inspired Ava's cooking?

Ava gets a lot of clever, short recipes from TikTok for sure. She also finds people whose cooking she admires and makes recipes from their repertoire. Right now, she is exploring Korean cooking mostly through Chef Hooni Kim. She loves fermented foods. Spices. She also loves Marcella Hazan's Italian recipes.

There is a big focus on the importance of family in this



Alex Guarnaschelli and her daughter Ava. Courtesy photo

book. You also include family favorites like your mom's blueberry pie. Can you talk a little about how she inspired your love of food?

Because my mother was a cookbook editor, she decided the best way to edit the books was to cook her way through them? The net result was that my childhood became a case study in a particular cuisine for a moment in time. My mom was almost like a method actor when it came to cookbooks. She had to experience the whole thing for herself. As a result, so did I!

Your dog Leon even inspired

a recipe? Tell us more about this.

While we were testing all of the recipes for the book, our sweet dog, Leon, was in the kitchen watching. Ultimately, we felt like he needed a treat for just him. The food stylist for the photographer started working on a peanut butter biscuit and after numerous tests and an empty plate of biscuits, we knew it had to be included in the book!

Can you tell us a little about the upcoming Flavors of the Open at the US Open?

It's a great way to get exposed to all the

different food venues at The Open. The tennis is obviously at the heart of the event but the food completes the picture. I'm excited to share the food from my restaurant FARE and stand with many other fantastic chefs at this event. Join us!

What are your go-to recipes for entertaining on the East End?

I'm always a big fan of the classics. Shrimp scampi with a simple rice pilaf. Roasted chicken with potatoes and carrots. Ribs with corn on the cob. I also often do a completely vegetarian meal. I always stick to Americana for the best results.

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The Biography Of A Chocolate Cake

By Bridget LeRoy

Would you travel to the end of the world for the best chocolate cake ever? You may have to.

The Tavern on the Green chocolate truffle cake, which spent decades on the menu at the world-famous restaurant in Central Park, was gobbled by celebrities and royals alike, and praised in food columns around the globe. I thought it had disappeared off the map when the eatery changed hands, but it's now being served at one notable spot — Bennett Shellfish on South Debusy Road in Montauk.

Not surprisingly, this seemed like a good story to me. My father, Warner LeRoy, was the restaurateur who owned Tavern on the Green from the mid-70s until his death in 2001. The chocolate truffle cake was a constant during dad's years there — and as soon as I heard that it still existed, I needed to find out the how and why.

I was greeted at Bennett Shellfish by the cheerful Kimberly Esperian, whose mom, Lola Snow, was a well-loved Montauk bastion. Esperian runs the cozy shop, with barely room for four or five customers at a time. It seemed incongruous to find the Tavern chocolate cake here, which was made by the hundreds with thousands of slices served weekly. And yet, thanks to Esperian and award-winning pastry chef Bill Bertha, there it was; chocolate curls thickly covering the top, dabs of decorative whipped cream — the whole damn thing, just as I remembered it.

"I was working at Gurney's in the mid-'80s, and one of the chefs from the Tavern came to Gurney's," said Bertha. "I don't know exactly what position he had in the restaurant there, but he did work as a pastry chef, and he said, 'Oh Bill, I've got this great cake.' I'd never seen a chocolate mousse cake like this before. I tried it. And I was like, 'oh my God,'" he said with a laugh.

Bertha's background before the first taste was mostly with American and German confections. "This was egg yolks, sugar,

and whipped cream, and nice chocolate. It was so good. It was so French."

Bertha and Esperian had worked with the Gurney's kitchen for a number of years, and sold cakes wholesale, including the Tavern chocolate cake, all over the Island, in around 300 locations. "Me and Kimmy, when we were working at Gurney's, we started the Beach Bakery and these things were flying out the door." Esperian agreed: "They were wildly popular."

In the early '90s, Bertha heard that Bon Appétit magazine wanted the chocolate cake recipe. By then, the French chef who had come to Montauk with the recipe had moved on, leaving the legacy in Bertha's hands. "I didn't want to give it away," he said. "I kept it; it was always one of the bigger sellers. And I kept it on the Gurney's menu too. I called it Death by Chocolate. You needed a glass of milk or a nice cup of coffee to wash it down. That cake put me on the map," he said.

When Gurney's went a different route, Bertha and Esperian moved to Bennett Shellfish (Esperian is married to Clint Bennett), and picked up where they left off, but on a much smaller scale.

"I make mini versions of the cake, it's very popular," Bertha said, although he admitted that the cakes are not easy to make or store. "You've got to make sure that your cream is a little soft when you fold it in, because the cocoa powder sucks everything up. Then you need to keep it in the freezer until you're ready to slice and serve. But it's worth it."

"You just need a little sliver," added Esperian. "You really can't eat much of that cake. It's very decadent." I was given my own full-sized cake to take home and enjoy.

Ever since the restaurant passed into the hands of others, I have avoided it — both visiting and even discussing it. It's just too awkward and distressing, like watching strangers move into your childhood home. I've visited the street sign on the corner of 67th Street, which was renamed Warner



LeRoy Place, but have barely cast a glance toward the restaurant which no longer bears my dad's flair for the flamboyant.

So I didn't really know what to expect when I popped a bit of this luscious dessert in my mouth. Would I cry like a baby?

I brought my cake home from Bennett Shellfish. I waited patiently for it to defrost (okay, not so patiently). I sliced off a piece and plopped it on a dish. It felt somehow ceremonial, so rather than eat in my normal fashion (hovering over the kitchen counter) I took my plate to the dining table, cleared a spot by moving things that had no earthly business being on a dining table, and sat down.

That first bite.

The creamy, the bitter, the sweet, the pure chocolate-iness of it. It had an instant "madeleine de Proust" effect. Suddenly I was in the Crystal Room at Tavern in its heyday. The carpet, the chandeliers, the birthday balloons, the fresh flowers, the chink-chink of glittering glassware warmed by the humanity of thousands of fingers, the sounds of Louis Armstrong

piped through the speakers, interspersed with tidbits of eager chatter.

But it was more than that. It was the taste of belonging, of family, of the feeling of inclusivity that Tavern always tried to impart to its guests.

Kelly Alexander, writing about Tavern on the Green for NPR in 2009 had this to say: "I ate at Le Cirque both when I was known as a food writer and when I was anonymous; the experiences were quite different.

"Tavern on the Green was never like that. It had a longstanding reputation as a tourist trap, but rather than be embarrassed by that designation, it flaunted it. Rather than a private reservations line, the restaurant had six full-time telephone operators to field the approximately 4000 weekly calls. That was to make sure that, yes, just anyone could get in. It was New York for the rest of us, and New York for non-New Yorkers.

"I ate at Tavern on the Green when I was known as a food writer and when I was anonymous, and it was exactly the same.

"The restaurant seemed to believe it was too big, too famous, and too much fun to leave anyone out."

I wanted to dive deeper into the history of this cake. I reached out to Bill Yosses, the former head pastry chef at Tavern who went on to be executive pastry chef at the White House under George W. and Laura Bush, and then for the Obama family. He now works with Dan Barber at the esteemed Blue Hill at Stone Barns farm and restaurant in Tarrytown.

Yosses recalled making the chocolate cake when he was in the kitchen at Tavern, and he agreed that it was labor-intensive. "The ingredients that were used were high quality," he said. "We were buying Valrhona chocolate. I mean, it wasn't like Hershey or something that was commercial grade. It was really artisanal chocolate. And we made hundreds of them." He estimated that Tavern, at its busiest times, would serve between 70,000 and 80,000 guests a month. "And a lot of them ordered that cake," he added.

He also remembered catering a birthday party at The Dakota, at my father and stepmother's apartment, and making the chocolate truffle cake at that party for guests like Pierre Franey, Craig Claiborne, Lauren Bacall, and Joan Rivers. "I made a huge version of it," he said. "Lots of tiers, like a wedding cake. I put pastel colored

chocolate polka dots on the outside of the cake. Unfortunately, we didn't have iPhones then, or I would have a photo, but I'll never forget that night or that apartment."

Before we signed off, Yosses suddenly thought of the chef who may have been responsible for the cake — "I wonder if that recipe was Dieter's. Dieter Schorner, you remember him?"

I kind of did, and looked him up. Schorner died in 2020, and his obituary in The Washington Post had this to say: "He worked at upscale New York establishments including Le Chantilly, L'Etoile, and Tavern on the Green. In 1986, when Tavern's flamboyant owner Warner LeRoy opened the opulent Potomac restaurant in Washington, he brought Mr. Schorner with him.

"The extravagantly chandeliered Potomac operated for only a year, but it made a splashy mark on Washington's restaurant scene. Washington Post restaurant critic Phyllis C. Richman called it the city's 'biggest, glitziest and most expensive restaurant ever.' When it shuttered in 1987 . . . she lamented the loss of Mr. Schorner's sweets."

To get the full story and to bring it home — in a very real way — I asked my stepmom, Kay LeRoy, who was always involved in the menus and even more specifically the desserts, what she remembered about the chocolate truffle cake at Tavern.

"You're talking to someone who could eat chocolate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner," she said with a laugh. "That cake was incredible because of the ingredients. That Valrhona chocolate, artisanal chocolate, would come to the restaurant in this enormous slab. No one was doing that back then, at least not on that scale," she added.

Bill Yosses waxed philosophical about chocolate cake. "There's so many varieties and so many places, it has become the iconic dessert," he said. "And the secret is that the ones that always stay in people's minds are, to me, the lightest ones. They're not heavy layers of chocolate. They're a light genoise, usually what we would call a whipped ganache, which is a very light filling. And in the case of Tavern, those curls, which are really just all air. It looks great, but it's all air."

The Tavern on the Green chocolate truffle cake can be purchased at Bennett Shellfish.



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The Bird

Reimagined & Redesigned

Montauk's beloved Bird on the Roof has reopened this summer season as The Bird. The restaurant features a redesign by Brooklyn-based design firm Home Studios. Now including dinner as well as a cocktail and wine bar, the menu has been reworked by Chef Marcos Martinez Perez with a beverage program created by Sophia Depasquale.

Overseen by the team behind Daunt's Albatross — its sister establishment across the street — The Bird is located in the heart of Montauk, offering a short walk to the beach as well as restaurants, bars, and shops.

The reopening has been led by third-generation proprietor of the Albatross, Leo Daunt, along with his sister Zoe. Born and raised in Montauk, Leo wanted to return to when both the restaurant and hotel were under joint ownership, when his grandfather first bought the Albatross in 1977. Last year Leo took over operations of Bird on the Roof making slight tweaks, before finally unveiling his full concept this year. The new iteration of the restaurant reflects an ongoing evolution of each property — remaining familiar to

regular patrons while offering updates on familiar staples.

Chef Perez's menu reflects the updated look of the interiors. New favorites include the soft scramble toast topped with burrata, avocado, and basil oil and the fish tacos. The dinner menu features items like tempura trumpet mushrooms with gochujang sauce or the green curry with tofu, roasted baby zucchini, and brussel sprouts.

"The team and I are really excited to expand upon our work in the kitchen last year," said Chef Marcos. "By being open for dinner for the first time, we're able to show different techniques and flavor profiles." Prior to joining the team, Chef Perez worked in East End spots such as the Gigshack, Rosie's, and Carissa's.

The concept for the bar program drew inspiration from the family-owned histories of Daunt's Albatross and Bird on the Roof. Sophia Depasquale, formerly of South Edison, developed a menu of specialty cocktails that took a classic such as a Hugo and punched it up into The Bird's Hallie Parker, inspired by the movie "The Parent Trap," which includes a blend of gin, prosecco, St. Germain, strawberry,

and lemon. The menu has a little something for everyone, from wine to mezcal negronis.

"We want a seat at the bar to feel like a seat at your friend's — a place you can kick back, enjoy a drink, and laugh until you only have enough air left to say, 'I'll have another please,'" said Depasquale.

With the redesign, Home Studio's intent was to celebrate the legacy of the 40-year-old Montauk establishment. The aim of the space is to capture the spirit of old Montauk, providing a welcoming home-away-from-home for both visitors and locals to gather at any hour and any season, since it will be open year round.

The restaurant offers a relaxed yet elevated atmosphere that transitions from casual breakfasts to celebratory dinners and after dinner drinks. The muted color palette is a continuation of what Home Studio's design team used throughout Daunt's redesign and includes shades that mimic the Montauk cliffs and surrounding coastal environment — a spectrum of whites, warm grays, browns, faded yellows, rusts, and ocean blues.

Photo by Tara Donne



Photo by Brian W. Ferry



Photo courtesy Navy Beach

Navy Beach

Located on a 200-foot stretch of private beach on the idyllic Fort Pond Bay, Navy Beach offers beachfront outdoor dining as well as indoor dining. Yachting clientele will be happy to hear that the beachfront restaurant's popular "Torpedo" service is back this season offering a launch running weekends through Labor Day.

Navy Beach has rolled out some new menu items this season including some vegetarian friendly dishes such as a cu-

cumber salad and a Buddha bowl, as well as a new teriyaki salmon, long line swordfish, and mushroom pappardelle. Navy Beach continues to support the Navy SEAL Foundation with its 11th annual dine + donate program, with \$1 added to each dining check. Guests are also able to donate additional funds to the organization. Since beginning to fundraise for the organization in 2013, the restaurant has raised over \$180,000 for the Navy SEAL Foundation.



Photo courtesy Duryea's

Duryea's Montauk

Duryea's Montauk offers a charming, rustic, and nautical atmosphere on the large waterfront deck with incredible sunsets. Menu offerings range from signature items such as grilled or steamed lobster, lobster roll, Duryea's Lobster Cobb salad and locally caught fish to creative items such as whole grilled octopus with olives and green romesco, mussels mariniere, and skirt steak simply grilled and seasoned.

The raw bar selection is wide, highlighting local shellfish such as Montauk Pearl oysters, Peconic Gold oysters, Little Neck clams and chilled lobster with additional shellfish delicacies such as King Crab and Snow Crab Claw. Seafood platters are a table pleaser serving from one to four people in a dramatic tabletop tower. Many items on the menu are served family style and a kids' section keeps the little ones happy with choices such as cheeseburger, grilled cheese, and chicken fingers and fries. A wine and beer menu is available with champagne, rosé, red, and white selections.

Gurney's x Patrón El Cielo

This summer, Gurney's Montauk Resort & Seawater Spa partners with Patrón Tequila for the launch of its newest innovation, Patrón El Cielo. Guests and locals alike will have the opportunity to try the world's first, four-times distilled and naturally sweet prestige tequila for themselves at the Patrón El Cielo lounge situated on the resort's East Deck. The elevated cocktail lounge experience offers stunning ocean views and include signature drinks. The lounge will be open for service on weekends through Labor Day.



Photo courtesy Gurney's

Inlet Seafood



"Respect the Ocean. Harvest the Bounty. Feed the People." That's the motto at Inlet Seafood restaurant in Montauk. The eatery, which is owned by six fishing families in Montauk, showcases a carefully curated cocktail menu, a newly designed sushi bar, and there has been an overall refresh to the space. The restaurant serves patrons with local, sustainable fish that they catch themselves year round.

The Montauk Beach House & Article



Photo courtesy The Montauk Beach House

The Montauk Beach House is celebrating 70 years by paying homage to its former tenant, The Ronjo Resort Motel, by transforming the space into a seventies oasis with help from online modern furniture brand, Article. To mark the partnership and celebrate '70s all summer long, The Montauk Beach House has renamed its bar and grill The Ronjo Bar & Grill. The bar is re-designed into a tiki-inspired space reminiscent of the original design, equipped with a dedicated '70s inspired cocktail menu featuring Mai Thais and Painkillers.

Mannya

Specialty Cocktail Service

Mannya, a specialty cocktail service, is the culmination of over a decade of passion and dedication to the art of cocktails. The name “Mannya” derives from the well known Greek/Latin word “mania,” which in Albanian is used as an expression “mani,” and usually refers to a person who possesses a deep passion for their craft. Mannya’s mission is to be able to bring the latest of the world’s cocktail scene to any event.

Founder Rina Loshaj is from Kosovo, situated in the Balkan Peninsula, and is of Albanian descent.

While growing up in the picturesque town of Peja, nestled in the foothills of the Albanian Alps, Loshaj acquired a wealth of knowledge and a deep passion for nature. She utilizes this extensive knowledge to craft an exceptional range of syrups, bitters, cordials, and tinctures, inspired from a lifetime of experience with the rarest herbs, trees, and vegetables indigenous to Rugova Mountains.

After relocating to New York City in 2014, Loshaj began working as a bartender,

which sparked her fascination with the art of cocktail-making. She resolved to pursue this passion and express herself through it. Although she considers herself to be a New Yorker at heart, in 2018, she ventured to Miami to explore the city’s cocktail bar scene and worked at several of South Beach’s top restaurants for two years.

Loshaj chose to return and assist various bars and restaurants in developing their cocktail menus and advising them on bar construction while spending summers in the Hamptons. Despite having conceived the Mannya concept in 2021, Loshaj, who is a stickler for perfection, opted to postpone its launch until she was confident in its readiness.

Having the help and support of her brother Gino and her friends and team members, the very talented mixologists Keitha Clarkson and James Dickerson, in the spring of 2023 the brand Mannya was officially launched.

The service can provide cocktails at events within the tri-state area, including the Hamptons. Follow at @mannyacocktails or visit mannyabarservices.com.



Photo by Lot 21 / Alena Kostromina

Fire Artistry At North Fork Table & Inn



On Friday, July 14, Michelin Starred Chef John Fraser and team combined the elements of fire with culinary and artistry with an immersive experience at North Fork Table & Inn. The dinner was accompanied by mesmerizing live fire painting by renowned Long Island artist Franco Cuttica.

Léon 1909

A Gem On Shelter Island

Léon 1909 debuted on Shelter Island in August 2022 and has received much fanfare since opening its doors — patrons have applauded its quality ingredients, innovative dishes, and the stunning simplicity of its décor.

Unfussy, countryside European fare is what you’ll find dining at the restaurant, which is owned by Valerie Mnuchin and named after her grandfather, who had a love for romantic coastal adventures. Heading to Shelter Island one can usually find adventure, from the time you board the ferry.

The restaurant utilizes a wood-burning hearth open kitchen, a focal point of the space. Showcasing peak-of-season regional ingredients from land and sea, you’ll find show-stopping dishes like the tuna tartare or grilled squid to start. The

grilled flatbread is not your common flatbread, elevated with smashed fava, carrot, mustard greens, pistachio, and nigella.

For the mains, the fluke with coal roasted eggplant, gigante beans, Aleppo, and spring onions is a wonderful, light option. On the pasta side, the paccheri is prepared with chopped clams, roasted tomato, white wine, and thyme, offering hearty goodness.

The wine list is rooted in Old World regions and you’ll find a range of beverages including beer, signature cocktails, and non-alcoholic options.

Covered by a pergola, the expansive outdoor patio space offers a wonderful dining option on a cool summer night. Léon offers a place for a relaxed meal with family and friends and/or romantic coastal adventures.



Photo by Dora Young

Buttero

Dopo Restaurant Group Opens Italian Steakhouse In East Hampton

Earlier this season, the Dopo Restaurant Group opened Buttero, an Italian steakhouse in the heart of East Hampton, in the previous home of Dopo La Spiaggia.

Buttero, which means cowboy in Italian, features a fresh array of seafoods and pastas along with an extended prime meat selection. Menu items include pastas like the fettuccini with prawns, porcini mushrooms, and black truffle. The hand selected USDA prime dry-aged steaks and selected cuts of chops and ribs include a 38 oz porterhouse for two and a 14 oz Berkshire pork chop with onions and spicy cherry peppers.

The building, which was designed by Nor-

man Jaffe, creates a familiar atmosphere with its oversized fireplace and cozy banquettes. The 85-seat dining room inside adjoins a beautiful oasis, the private garden that holds an additional 60 seats surrounded by trees and flowers. At one of the restaurant’s two bars, enjoy one of the many smart martinis or signature craft cocktails.

The Dopo Restaurant Group, along with executive chef Fabio Gutierrez, believes in a simple formula: create a space that always has excellent food, a great atmosphere, and amazing service. The group was born out of friendship, and with its restaurants has been offering authentic Italian cuisine to the Hamptons for over 15 years.



Accomplished chef and co-owner Maurizio Marfoggia, along with his wife Holly, partnered with Maria and Larry Baum to first bring their passion of Italy to Sag Harbor. With its popularity, one restaurant became two, two became three, and three became

four. In addition to Buttero, today the group operates Dopo La Spiaggia in Sag Harbor, Dopo il Ponte in Bridgehampton, and Dopo Argento in Southampton.

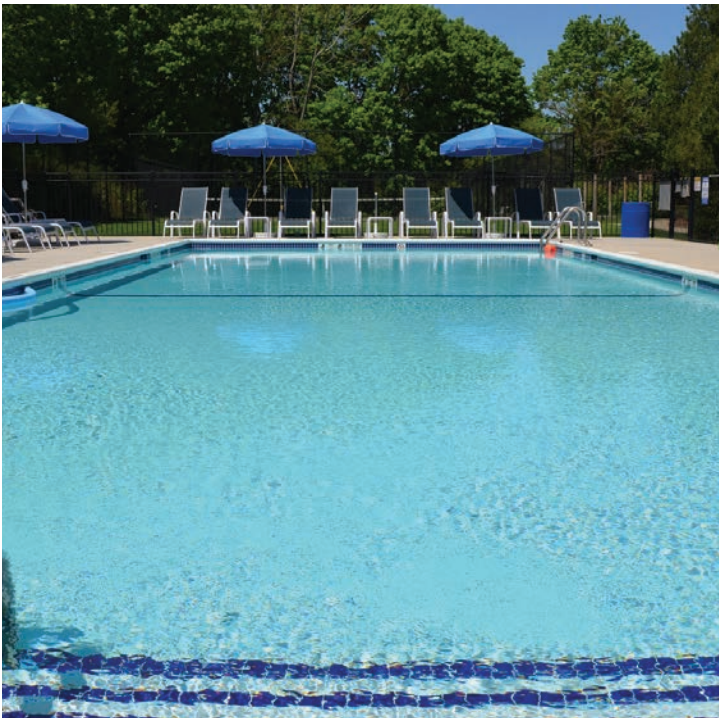
“When you come to a Dopo-run restau-

rant, we want our clients to feel at home and to experience excellence without the attitude. We want to live up to our reputation as the top group of Italian restaurants that customers come to again and again,” said co-owner Larry Baum.



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