

DINING DETOURS / Sandwiches, Islandwide

BY JOAN REMINICK

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Sandwiches deserve as much respect as any other dish — maybe more. Creating a great sandwich entails finding the proper bread and treating it correctly, filling it with just the right amount (or, perhaps, a little too much) of meats and/or vegetables, heightening the flavors with carefully considered condiments and serving the whole shebang with a collegial side dish. Here are some places that get it all right.

Nassau

Diane's Bakery and Cafe, 23 Bryant Ave., Roslyn, 516-621-2522. This cafe within Diane's Bakery (affiliated with the nearby Trattoria Diane and Cafe Diane in Woodbury) serves some of the Island's top panini. Although the place no longer offers dinner, you can make a lunch of such grill-pressed sandwiches as Gorgonzola with prosciutto and pears, or chicken with arugula, tomato and asiago cheese. And there's always the simple prosciutto, mozzarella, basil and tomato combo.

La Bottega, 147 Nassau Blvd., Garden City South, 516-486-0935. The list of panini is both extensive and well executed. Even though the "Savona" panino — grilled chicken breast with fresh mozzarella, tomatillo sauce and tomato — adds up to a good sandwich, it's eclipsed by the firecracker "Ascoli," slow-roasted chunks of suckling pig, fresh mozzarella, broccoli rabe and spicy red peppers on a rustic round bread.

Pastrami King, 196 Merrick Rd., Merrick, 516-377-1100. It would be a *shondah* if Pastrami King served anything less than a stellar pastrami sandwich. In fact, it is generous, succulent and entirely satisfying — as are the corned beef and tongue sandwiches. (Ask them to heat up the tongue.) Other fine deli sandwiches can be had at **Kensington Deli**, 27A Middle Neck



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Panini (grilled and pressed sandwiches) like these are specialties at La Bottega in Garden City South.

Rd., Great Neck, 516-487-2410, **Woodro Koshers Deli**, 1342 Peninsula Blvd., Hewlett, 516-791-4034, **Regal Delicatessen**, 1110 Old Country Rd., Plainview; 516-938-3588 and all locations of **Ben's Deli** (go to bens.deli.net).

Suffolk

Farm Country Kitchen, 513 W. Main St., Riverhead, 631-369-6311. In a charming little house set back from the main road, chef-owner Tom Carson defines his distinctive panini as small sandwiches on grilled bread. His menu changes daily and might feature breaded chicken with broccoli rabe and sun-dried tomato pesto on grilled rosemary bread or marinated flank steak with melted fontina on garlic brick-oven bread with tomato salsa. It all depends on Carson's whim and what he finds at the market.

Love Lane Kitchen, 240 Love Lane, Mattituck, 631-298-8989. Chef co-owner Mike Avella puts great care into sandwiches he fashions. A standout is the grilled hanger steak sandwich with arugula and red onion on a focaccia roll. Or try the grilled pressed Cuban sandwich made with house-roasted pork, ham, Swiss, dill pickle, yellow mustard and garlic butter. A simple, ingenious choice is the "Parma," a summery sandwich of prosciutto di Parma, arugula, roasted pepper and fresh mozzarella.

Tullulah's Gourmet, 12 Fourth Ave., Bay Shore, 631-206-2988. In a sliver of a space on a Bay Shore side street, chef-owner Steven offers an eclectic lunch menu starring imaginative sandwiches made with first-rate ingredients. Try the "cowboy" steak or the sweet-and-spicy sausage with arugula. Just be sure to call well ahead; this is decidedly not fast food.

Zan's Kosher Delicatessen, 135 Alexander Ave., Lake Grove, 631-979-8770, is a good place for deli sandwiches.

Nassau-Suffolk

Legal Sea Foods, 160 Walt Whitman Rd. (Walt Whitman Mall), Huntington Station, 631-271-9777, and 630 Old Country Road (Roosevelt Field), Garden City, 516-248-4600. Legal makes a fine lobster roll from freshly shucked lobster and celery mayonnaise (although a picky diner can ask them to "hold the celery") served on a brioche bun.