

Restaurants We Love

FARMHOUSE AT BEDFORD POST, BEDFORD

By Liz Johnson
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The Bedford Post, a hideaway in the Bedford countryside, opened in stages over the past several years: first the casual restaurant, Barn at Bedford Post, then the more formal restaurant, Farmhouse at Bedford Post, and later, a yoga studio and an eight-room inn.

The latest phase? A new bluestone patio, lit by strings of bare Edison bulbs above, opened a few weeks ago, with a water feature on one side and a wood-fired stone oven on the other. Add to that the summer menu that new executive chef Jeremy McMillan has created — Italian inspired, with local ingredients — and you have two brand-new reasons to book a table.

Another reason to visit? The restaurant is really hitting its stride.

The Bedford Post has always been a destination. It's a stunning property, lovingly renovated in a modern farmhouse-chic style with earth tones, lots of beadboard and cottage gardens around the property that are blooming with hydrangeas this time of year. And yes, it's owned by celebrity husband-and-wife Richard Gere and Carey Lowell, along with their partner, Russell Hernandez, and chances are you will catch a glimpse of the actors while you're dining there.

The food has always been creative — and locally sourced. But McMillan — who trained at the Culinary Institute of America, helped open the Barn and the Farmhouse at Bedford Post in 2008 and worked at A Voce and A Voce Columbus in Manhattan before becoming executive chef last fall — has brought a new, casual sensibility to the menu. It's simply more approachable now, even if you order the Farmhouse's five-course tasting menu, which I highly recommend, especially at the bargain price of \$65 a person.

Over the summer, the



The new outdoor dining terrace at Bedford Post features an Italian-inspired summer menu. MATT PIZZARUSSO

menu might start with a shot-glass of corn-basil soup, followed by Mimi's breakfast radish, freshly dug from Mimi Edelman's I & Me Farm in Bedford Hills and served with a rich anchovy butter. A grilled Mission fig might come next, crunchy with a coating of crushed almonds and drizzled with a sweet reduction of balsamic vinegar.

The smoke from the wood-fired grill flavors the fig, as it does many other dishes on the Farmhouse menu. McMillan's sous chefs work the oven every night during service (they use walkie-talkies to communicate with the kitchen), and everything from Johnboy's Chicken (free-range, from John Baldo's farm in Washington County) to gigantic prawns served with chickpeas, gets

the smoke treatment, often to fantastic effect.

Pastas at Bedford Post are very special, as you might expect from a chef who worked at A Voce, known for its pastas. All are carefully handmade, and come to the table delicate and light. We tried a new one earlier this month — its first night on the menu — that my friend declared was now in her "pantheon" of great dishes: Pantotti — triangular shaped, ravioli-style pasta — were stuffed with crescenza, a light, soft cow's milk cheese and served with coins of zucchini, delicate squash blossoms and a sprinkling of bottarga, or cured fish roe. It was easily the best dish of the meal — and there were many good ones.

We also went crazy for the



Spaghetti prepared at Farmhouse at Bedford Post.

JOE LARESE/THE JOURNAL NEWS

speckled brook trout, served with an assertive olive puree, cured tomatoes and

bits of baby artichoke. And our final savory course, a grilled strip loin with porcini, treviso, and a sinfully rich balsamic reduction, brought the smoke theme home with precision: just enough to remind you the wood-fired oven is outside; not so much you wish it weren't.

There are other ways to enjoy a meal at Bedford Post: the casual Barn restaurant offers breakfast — including housemade pastries tempting you from a display behind glass on a marble counter — brunch, lunch, and dinner on Mondays and Tuesdays.

You have two options to experience the outdoor patio: Try the light patio menu available from 3 to 5:30 p.m.,

IF YOU GO

FARMHOUSE AT BEDFORD POST

954 Old Post Road, Bedford.
914-234-7800,
bedfordpostinn.com.

Dinner for two, not including tax, tip and alcohol: about \$140 or \$65 each for a five-course tasting menu.

Good to know: The roads to the Bedford Post are dark and winding. Don't forget your driving glasses and your GPS.

or make a request for dinner on the patio, provided the weather cooperates.

If it's a special occasion, you can make arrangements to stay overnight at the inn. We got a peek at the rooms, and they are luxurious — guests lounge by the inn's reflecting pool, which also has a little nook with a covered fireplace. I was told that people often ask for the dessert there. (The strawberry shortcake is out of sight, and so is the gianduja semifreddo, a cold chocolate-hazelnut mousse hidden inside a chocolate shell.)

But it really doesn't matter where you enjoy your meal. Dining at Bedford Post will feel like a getaway — a vacation, even, in the countryside. The new chef and the new patio with its brick-oven hearth just make it even more so.



Graduation is a special time for celebration and looking ahead to new opportunities. As you celebrate this milestone, remember to be safe.

If you're under 21, purchasing or drinking alcohol is against the law. Don't tarnish your bright future by illegally purchasing or consuming alcohol.

If you choose to make the right decisions today, they will follow you forever.

Make the right decision to respect yourself and the law.

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LIKE BEDFORD POST, BUT CLOSER TO HOME

12 Grapes Music & Wine

Bar: People come from far and wide to hear music at this cozy wine bar in downtown Peekskill, just a few minutes walk from the Paramount Theater. When the weather is nice the front is open to the sidewalk, filling the night air with jazz and blues. There's a simple menu with diverse flavors, including beef lettuce wraps, blue-crusted mahi mahi and orange and thyme duck breast. Terrific wine list with many offered by the glass. 12 N. Division St., Peekskill. 914-737-6624. www.12grapes.com

Travelers Rest: Hardly farmhouse chic, but a destination in its own right, especially around the holidays. Set in an 1876 former coach stop, this German-Continental restaurant has

an old-fashioned English interior with lush carpets and drapes and big fireplaces. Take your time while you dine on traditional favorites like beef Wellington, chicken cordon bleu, or chateaubriand, or go for the German specialties, like sauerbraten and wiener schnitzel. Route 100, Ossining. 914-941-7744. www.thetravelersrest.com

Thyme: Simple steak and seafood, served in a casual but sophisticated setting, much like Bedford Post's. Braised short ribs over polenta and French onion soup share the appetizer menu with a classic Caesar salad and jumbo lump crab bites. The dining room, which is decorated with stained oak, mirrors and leather, has 42 seats and overlooks an open kitchen. 3605 Crompond Road, Yorktown Heights. 914-788-8700. www.thymereastaurant.net