

**Gardening  
2007:** Urban  
Roots, hellstrip  
fixes & more.

# Top 27 Restaurants

+ 7 chef/foodie profiles, the story of Texas hotspots, charming tea houses, sustainable eating, classic diners, food trends & more.

**ARTS:**

Carolee Schneemann at CEPA, *Spamalot* at Shea's & an Ellington tribute.

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from Ristorante  
Lombardo, one  
of our Top 27  
restaurants.

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april 2007

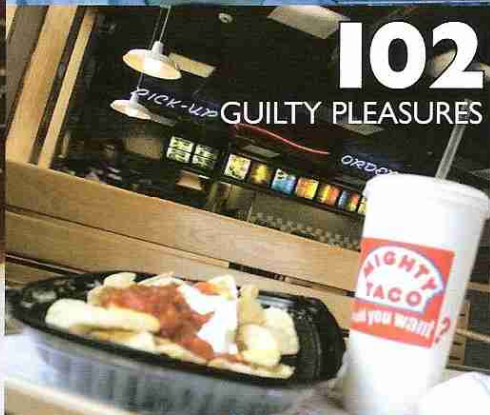
vol.41  
no.3



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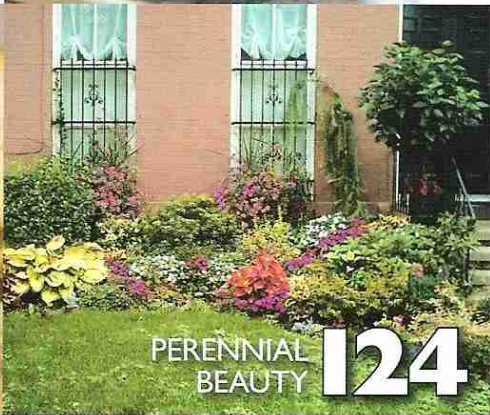
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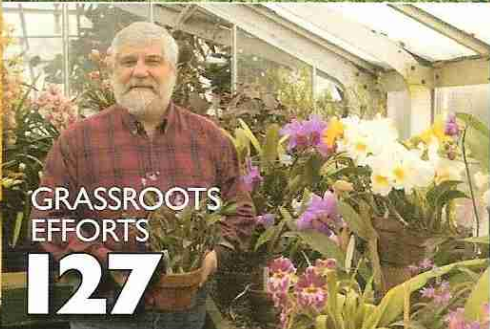
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**THE 27 BEST RESTAURANTS & MORE ...**

How do you choose the area's best restaurants? First, you think about what makes a place uniquely Western New York. Then, you toss out all borders separating high and low cuisine—hot dogs and filet are both welcome here. Next, you put together a crack team of panelists, and let the arguments fly. This section offers the top places to bring out-of-towners, local favorites, profiles of local chefs and restaurateurs, history, and more. Let them eat wings ... and ribs ... and ravioli ...

*By Mark Criden, Ron Ehmke, Donna Evans-Deyermond, Joe George, Reine Hauser, Gwen Ito, Jessica Keltz, Lynn Lasota, Jeffrey Levine, Elizabeth Licata, Lauren Newkirk Maynard, Nancy J. Parisi, Sarah Quintal, Lauren Rozanski, Maria Scrivani, Joe Sweeney, Heather Violanti, and Catherine Young.*

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**TO THE GARDEN!**

It's almost garden time, and *Spree's* got you covered with tips, tweaks, profiles, and the answer to the question, "What's wrong with grass?"

*By Sara Baker Michalak, Donna Evans-Deyermond, Cynn timer Gaasch, Lisa Kane, Elizabeth Licata, and Terri Parsell Hilme y.*

# What exactly is a landscape designer?

... AND WHEN DO YOU NEED ONE?

What do landscape designers have that you don't have? They basically do the same things the average homeowner does, in the sense that they look at the area around a house and try to visualize it at its absolute best. The difference is that they probably have a better knowledge of hydrology, natural lighting, plants, and soil than you do. A landscape designer has much in common with an interior designer when it comes to creating beautiful environments, except that most of the elements of exterior design are alive, changing with the seasons and growing taller and wider as the years go by.

You could use a landscape designer if you have a few bucks (costs vary with the level of service you choose) and you want a professional either to fix things you're unhappy with, or simply to maximize the potential of your outdoor space. He or she can also prepare a plan that you implement by yourself, thereby saving the cost of installation. If you have a large piece of property and you want to have things moved (big things, like hills and trees), you'd better get a landscape designer or licensed landscape architect as a part of your crew, because you'll avoid costly placement, permitting, grading, and drainage mistakes. A good rule of thumb is, if

you need a permit, you'll probably need somebody with a license.

Your landscape designer will have seen many, many lawns just like yours—and many, many that are in worse shape than yours. He or she will analyze your space and ask questions about your lifestyle. For instance:

- What purpose will the landscape serve?
- Will you be entertaining outdoors often?
- Will your young children want large open areas, or a pool?
- If your children are grown and gone, do you enjoy growing vegetables and putting in a flower garden?

Designers will also need to know how much maintenance you enjoy doing and how long you plan to stay in your home—this will determine the type and size of plants they choose for you. They will take an inventory of your outdoor space which includes the topography, the existing trees, walkways, fences, and so on. They will also look beyond your property to see if, perhaps, your own landscaping can be used either to enhance a beautiful view or mask an unpleasant one.

Even if you think there are no redeeming qualities to your property, professionals can work with you to find how to maximize your assets. Do you spend most of your time in the great indoors? If so, they'll be happy




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Opposite: a typical backyard landscape design.

to create a vista which functions as a mere treat to the eyes. If, however, you spend much of your time outside, either entertaining or letting your children run around, they'll create something which pleases all of the senses and still incorporates lots of open areas for tag and touch football, and plants that are safe for inquisitive little fingers and mouths.

Landscape designers observe the orientation of your property to visualize how and when the sun hits each portion of the landscape, and at what angle. They examine the soil to see what kind of plants and trees will thrive, then choose varieties that are suitable for the light exposure and layout of your property. They can also help you decide on the placement of walkways and manmade lighting, and coordinate materials and fixtures.

Depending on how much money you wish to spend, the design may include a concept plan (well-thought-out opinions and suggestions as to what might best be done with a property), a master plan (which would include drawings or professional renderings of the site with placement of walkways, lighting, and plantings, as well as a list of supplies needed), or a complete plan for construction that can be used by an able do-it-yourselfer or another contractor. If you want the whole enchilada, your designer can provide site plans, construction plans, and, in some cases, the installation. If he or she does not offer installation, you can usually contract the designer to supervise and manage whomever you do hire.

It may cost a bit of money, but think about it the same way you think about decorating the interior of your home: colors, patterns, and textures must be arranged in a manner that is functional and suits your taste. Exchanging ideas and working out solutions with a pro can be fun. The end result should be an exterior that serves your needs, makes you proud, suits the level of maintenance you like to do, and continues to please for years to come. 

*Terri Parsell Hilmey is a freelance writer living in Western New York.*



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