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8 new RI restaurants you have to try before the end of 2021

Gail Ciampa The Providence Journal
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8 new restaurants to try in Rhode Island before 2021 ends
High-quality food and drinks stand out at these new Rhode Island restaurants.

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Passionate chefs and fearless entrepreneurs continue to open new restaurants in Providence and beyond. Several launched during the summer and more in recent weeks.

Not one was created on a whim. Several were developed after years of building a career or a business.

For example, a decade after starting their food truck business, a couple opened a breakfast and lunch cafe in Warwick Neck. Two bartenders threw open the doors on their own place after decades working for others. So too, did a sushi chef.

One opening is a reboot in a new location after pandemic challenges.

Two have water views and the winter will challenge them.

One is the second restaurant from a chef and restaurateur. And it's next to his other restaurant.

Only one has roots outside Rhode Island, but it's in a hotel owned by the former mayor of Providence.

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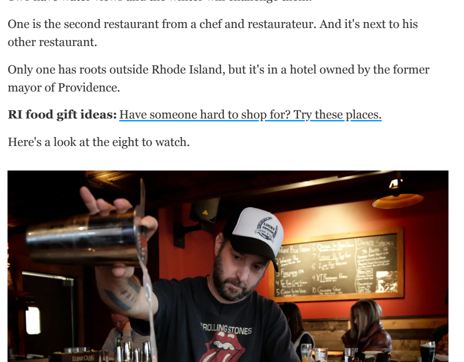
Here's a look at the eight to watch.



Owner and bartender Vito Lantz pouring "She's Like a Rainbow" at Lucky Enough, which opened just last month. It's one of many passion projects that have opened recently. *Kris Craig*

Somo Kitchen & Sushi in Providence

Nino Elgheryany can tell you the exact minute his flight to the United States landed at Boston's Logan Airport back on Dec. 12, 1999. Born in Egypt, he lived in Italy and started his culinary education in Japan. He came to Johnson & Wales University to continue his culinary education.

"It was a life-changing moment," he said.

What he ultimately sought, and has attained, is the American Dream. That makes Dec. 12 a sacred holiday to him.

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He has opened Somo Kitchen and Sushi in Providence's Jewelry District. It's his first place, after a career working at restaurants including Ten Prime Steak & Sushi in Providence and for the Legal Sea Foods chain out of Boston.

"It was my dream and I said, 'I'm going to do it!'

"I'm getting old and 10 years from now, I might be too old to work very hard," he said.

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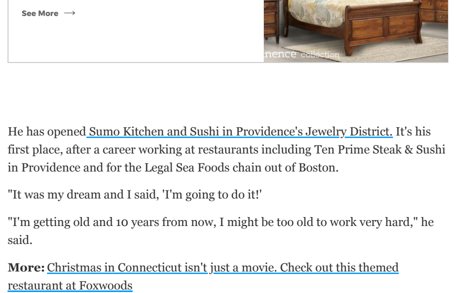

Chef/owner Nino Elgheryany at his Somo Kitchen & Sushi. *David DelPoio/The Providence Journal*

His business partner is Richard De Blasio, who comes from a restaurant family – his grandfather operated Gentile's Restaurant back in the day.

The restaurant features a large dining room, a long bar, and takeout and delivery seven days a week.

The menu is pure Chef Nino where he prepares and serves perfectly executed sushi with his special flair. In part, that means adding color to sushi rice. It doesn't affect the taste, but it makes you smile while you eat it.

Somo Kitchen & Sushi's Flower Tower with a Sake Berry Smash cocktail in the background. *David DelPoio / The Providence Journal*

He adds dragon fruit powder to his signature Richmond Street Sushi, which turns the rice pink. Inside the rice is tuna, salmon and yellowtail (Japanese amberjack fish) with cucumber.

A sushi dish of Tuna Tartare sits atop blue sushi rice, created with butterfly pea tea. The dish also has tobiko, the roe of Japanese flying fish and a drizzle of ponzu that brightens every morsel it touches.

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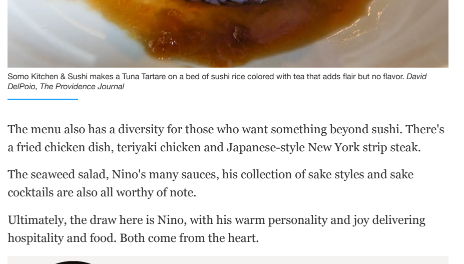
Both dishes would be exceptional with white rice, but why not create something unique? That is why chefs come to America, not to be tied to the rules that define some other cultures.

Beyond the rice, Nino's sushi restaurant offers many unique dishes. Unlike the usual bowl of edamame, his is warm and spiced.

He acknowledges his beloved state of Rhode Island with a calamari appetizer; his is made with sweet chili and spicy Szechuan peanuts.



Somo Kitchen & Sushi makes a Tuna Tartare on a bed of sushi rice colored with tea that adds flair but no flavor. *David DelPoio, The Providence Journal*

The menu also has a diversity for those who want something beyond sushi. There's a fried chicken dish, teriyaki chicken and Japanese-style New York strip steak.

The seaweed salad, Nino's many sauces, his collection of sake styles and sake cocktails are also all worthy of note.

Ultimately, the draw here is Nino, with his warm personality and joy delivering hospitality and food. Both come from the heart.

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Details: Somo Kitchen & Sushi, 373 Richmond St. Providence, (401) 383-2307, somopvd.com.

Lucky Enough in Providence offers gourmet cocktails

Back before the COVID pandemic interrupted so much, the Rhode Island chapter of the The United States Bartenders Guild would hold cocktail competitions.

Vito Lantz created some pretty exceptional drinks and took home his share of titles. He has tended bar at The Dorrance, Durk's Bar-B-Q and other establishments. He helped open Chomp in Providence. He's been a brand ambassador for Pernod Ricard and a standup comedian.

Now he brings all those talents to Lucky Enough, the drinks and eats bar he and Art Chamberland opened just last month. It is the first restaurant for Lantz and Chamberland, another industry veteran.

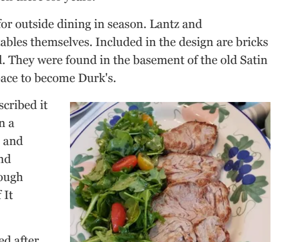
Owners and bartenders Art Chamberland, left, and Vito Lantz at their Lucky Enough Eat & Drink in Providence. *Kris Craig, The Providence Journal*

"We're just two old guys setting up their first shop," said Lantz. Together he and Chamberland have more than 50 years in the hospitality business.

The plans for Lucky Enough have been three years in the making. It's in a new building but feels like its been there for years.

It has 55 seats inside and room for outside dining in season. Lantz and Chamberland built the bar and tables themselves. Included in the design are bricks that are more than 100 years old. They were found in the basement of the old Satin Doll when they renovated the space to become Durk's.

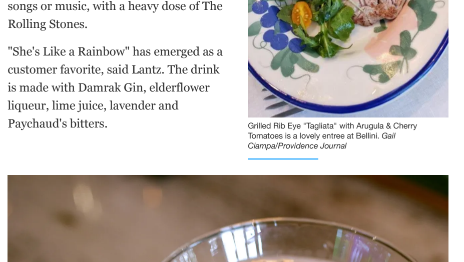
As for the atmosphere, Lantz described it as making you feel like you are in a Martin Scorsese movie. The arts and music are a big part of the bar and restaurant. The name Lucky Enough comes from a line of the song "If It Rains" by Reed Foehl.



Grilled Rib Eye "Tagliata" with Arugula & Cherry Tomatoes is a lovely entree at Bellini. *Gail Ciampa/Providence Journal*

In fact, all the cocktails are named after songs or music, with a heavy dose of The Rolling Stones.

"She's Like a Rainbow" has emerged as a customer favorite, said Lantz. The drink is made with Damrak Gin, elderflower liqueur, lime juice, lavender and Paychaud's bitters.



"She's Like a Rainbow" is the most popular drink on the menu in the first weeks of Lucky Enough in Providence. It's made with Damrak Gin, elderflower liqueur, lime juice, Peychaud's Bitters and lavender bitters. *Kris Craig, The Providence Journal*

"Can You Hear Me Major Tom?" pays homage not just to David Bowie but to the classic screwdriver and the NASA space program. It combines Grangers Organic Vodka with vanilla and Tang syrup they make at the bar.

There's an Irish old-fashioned named "If You Could Drink Dreams Like Irish Streams," from a John Lennon song.

In the kitchen, they have a young chef, Adam McGrath, who was previously sous chef at Rogue Island. He's working in an all-electric kitchen because they couldn't bring a gas line into the building.

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His menu includes sandwiches (hoagies and grinders) made with house-brined chicken and roast beef. There may be cheesesteak on the menu but it is the Chicago Hot Dog that speaks to Lantz's roots and passion.

"As a Chicago guy, I had to have one on the menu," he said. It is an all-beef dog on a steamed poppy seed bun with mustard, relish, chopped onion, tomato, sport peppers, a pickle spear and celery salt.

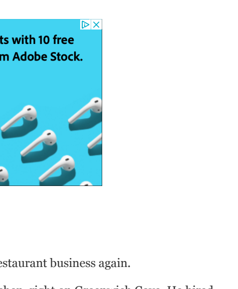
They play vinyl at Lucky Enough. Guests can choose an album and bring it up to the bar to be played. They have an HD-projector for game days.

For two "old guys," Lantz and Chamberland promise to keep a packed schedule. Hours are 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Friday and noon til 1 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. The full menu is available until 10 p.m. and a bar menu until close.

Details: Lucky Enough, 1492 Westminster St., Providence, (401) 642-2749 luckyenoughpvd.com.

Searching for elegant seafood? Water Street Kitchen in East Greenwich has you covered

Back in 2003, attorney Gary Marinosci bought the East Greenwich Marina and the restaurant at 28 Water St. He renovated the old Blue Parrot there, adding an addition upstairs, redoing the deck and bringing all systems up to code. Then he opened up Table 28, which he operated until 2010 when Hemenway's took over for a short run.



Water Street Kitchen has great marina views on Greenwich Cove. *Courtesy Photo*

For the past 10 years, it was Nautika, run seasonally by Mario and Cheryl Micheletti. When their lease was up last year, and the couple decided to retire to Florida, Marinosci talked to a few restaurateurs about taking over the space, but COVID had made many cautious.

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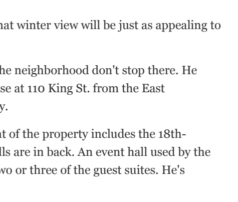
Ultimately, he decided to jump into the restaurant business again.

This summer he opened Water Street Kitchen, right on Greenwich Cove. He hired a general manager, Steve Anderson, and chef Jim Colleran, both Johnson & Wales University graduates.

It will be open all year long.

He wanted to get away from a fish and chips menu that is common at waterfront restaurants. The menu offers more elegant dishes with salmon, halibut and swordfish. The dishes are familiar but elevated, he said.

In addition to dinner six nights a week, they serve lunch on Fridays and brunch on the weekends. Chef Colleran has gone to his Louisiana roots for that brunch menu, adding grits to dishes such as French toast.



Seafood is the specialty at Water Street Kitchen, as are creative cocktails. *Courtesy Photo*

As a boater, Marinosci loves the setting. Who doesn't? Deck seating makes diners feel like they are right on the water and views from the upper level are lovely.

With two fireplaces inside, and new insulation and heating on the deck, he believes the dining options for inside and out can continue throughout the year.

As the weather gets colder and a freeze settles over the water, Marinosci thinks that winter view will be just as appealing to diners as the summer one.

The East Greenwich resident's plans for the neighborhood don't stop there. He recently purchased the old county jailhouse at 110 King St. from the East Greenwich Historical Preservation Society.

He will make it a boutique hotel. The front of the property includes the 18th-century jailkeeper's house, and the jail cells are in back. An event hall used by the Preservation Society will be turned into two or three of the guest suites. He's optimistic for an opening next year.

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Its proximity to the Water Street Kitchen means he can offer his guests dining as well as rooms.

Details: Water Street Kitchen, 28 Water St., East Greenwich, (401) 398-0202, waterstreetkitchenri.com.

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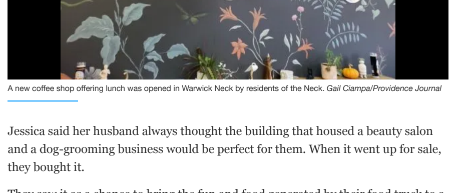
More than your average cup of joe at Presto Strange O in Warwick

Warwick Neck is lucky that Jason and Jessica Case live in the neighborhood.

The two have been running their Presto Strange O Coffee Truck since 2010 and have been regulars at food truck events, including Food Truck Friday at Roger Williams Park Zoo. Fun espresso drinks is their game.

Over the summer, they opened their cozy brick-and-mortar café on Warwick Neck Avenue, blocks from their house.



A new coffee shop offering lunch was opened in Warwick Neck by residents of the Neck. *Gail Ciampa/Providence Journal*

Jessica said her husband always thought the building that housed a beauty salon and a dog-grooming business would be perfect for them. When it went up for sale, they bought it.

They saw it as a chance to bring the fun and food generated by their food truck to a café.

They serve their excellent coffees and lattes, made with Mills Coffee Roasting Co. in Providence. They have iced specials and just-for-kicks specials like the Cannoli latte, a mocha cheesecake coffee topped with a mini cannoli. Celebrate the season with a bourbon eggnog latte or a gingerbread one. There are gingerbread people in their sweets' case.

There are breakfast pastries, including doughnuts, and sandwiches.

They had a pie menu for Thanksgiving, and Christmas should see similar dessert choices for takeout.

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What's unexpected is that they have vegetarian sandwiches and a soup of the day for lunch. As vegetarians, the Cases wanted to serve all diners.

So in addition to the Presto BLT and chicken salad sandwiches, there's also a Veggie and Chickpea Wrap and no-meat breakfast sandwiches.

They have a handful of tables and seats inside, a porch and patio in season.

Details: Presto Strange O Coffee Co., 334 Warwick Neck Ave., Warwick, (401) 524-3975, prestostrangeo.com.

More: 10 must-try restaurants: Savor Newport with restaurant week specials

Restaurant or neighborhood market? At Bonanno, it's

both

What's your — or ten — It's here for Armando Bricaño.

Days before the COVID-19 pandemic caused a shutdown of restaurant dining, he opened Bricaño Kitchen in Lorenzo Hills, a small, 40-seat, 1,500-square-foot space honoring his family's origins from Naples on mean to feel like visiting his home.

So had his just married his wife, Gabriela.

Armando Bricaño and his wife, Gabriela, at their restaurant, Bricaño Kitchen, in Lorenzo Hills. | Ashlee Rezin Garcia/Sun-Times

Barra survived opening during a pandemic with an added outdoor space that is heated and still in use.

Bricaño, too, survived hospitalization and being on a ventilator with COVID.

Now, he's thriving, expanding. He and his wife will open a second, grab-and-go bite next door, and open Bricaño Kitchen's Lincoln Park location, a restaurant, next to his first.

You can call it Bonanno for short, but understand this place isn't like anything else.

It's a market with all the ingredients on the menu, filling shelves that line the walls of the entrance. It's also a restaurant with dishes that include a delectable roll stripes sarpaccio with a fresh slice tapenade, and one with savory smoked filled with creamy blended with anchovy jelly. The portrait is a pistachio pesto.

Pistachio pesto and anchovy jelly are among the dishes at Bonanno, the new Bricaño Kitchen. | Ashlee Rezin Garcia/Sun-Times

Fresh pasta is made in-house