



Massimo Capra



Dufflet Rosenberg



Susur Lee



Gio Rana



Ernie Whitt



Aaron Barberian

# TORONTO'S MOST DELECTABLE DOZEN!



## Pasta fantastica best lasagna

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Massimo Capra

**THE WINNER:** Sotto in the Village  
425 Spadina Rd., 416-322-8818

This Forest Hill eatery's take on the classic lasagna wins Capra over instantly. "The flavours are balanced," he says. "The meat is well distributed through the layers, and the béchamel takes the acidity out of the sauce." Price: \$18.95.



## Decadent designs best gingerbread man

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Dufflet Rosenberg

**THE WINNER:** Queen of Tarts  
283 Roncesvalles Ave., 416-651-3009

Who's more festive than Santa? Don Cherry! The Queen of Tarts' awe-inspiring designs won Rosenberg over immediately. "This must have taken ages to ice," she notes. "They've really done a spectacular job." Price: \$6.



## Slice of heaven best pumpkin pie

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Keith Froggett

**THE WINNER:** Southbrook  
1150 Major Mackenzie Dr., 905-832-2548

This tastes like pumpkin! "It's not overwhelmed by spices," says Froggett. The light and moist crust was a success. All agreed: if you close your eyes, it tastes like you are biting into the holiday squash itself. Price: \$14.82.



## Pretty in pink best cupcake

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Susur Lee and son Jet

**THE WINNER:** Phipps Desserts  
1875 Leslie St., Unit 21, 416-391-5800

Jet Lee's eyes light up as he bits into one of Phipps's pink swirl-frosted cupcakes. "What do you like about it?" asks Dad Susur. "I don't know," replies Jet, taking another bite. "It just tastes really good." Price: \$2.50/each.



## Dressed for success best Caesar

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Gio Rana

**THE WINNER:** Auberge du Pommier  
4150 Yonge St., 416-222-2220

Gio Rana finds the taste of the salad "beautiful": the quail's egg, lentils and romaine hearts are complemented by a tangy, not-too-garlicky dressing. Overall, he is quite pleased. Price: \$10.



## Hot diggity dawg best hot dog

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Ernie Whitt

**THE WINNER:** Lick's  
860 York Mills Rd., 416-391-3113

Ernie Whitt polished off Lick's chili dog with aplomb and declared that he'd found a winner. From the fresh sesame bun to the generous serving of flavour-packed chili, this dog was tops. Price: \$4.29.



Linda Haynes



Patrick McMurray



Ida Pusateri



Claudio Aprile



Keith Froggett



Jason Bangerter

Over the past year, we asked T.O.'s top chefs to taste-test the most authentic, scrumptious and delectable delights in the city. Here are the winners! *by Michelle Singerman*

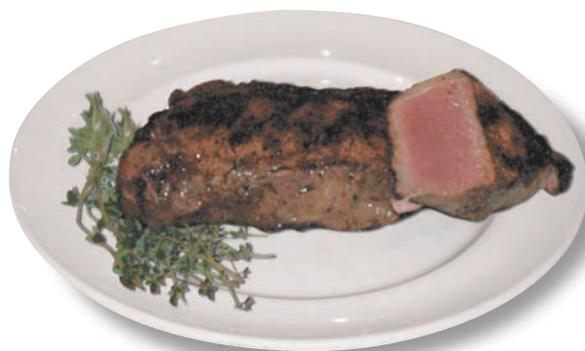


**Crème de la cocktail** best shrimp

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Patrick McMurray

**THE WINNER:** Rodney's Oyster House  
469 King St. W, 416-363-8105

"This is a perfectly good shrimp," McMurray says. He loves the crispness and is impressed by the texture, too. "It melts across the palate," he says as he dips into more of this one. Price: \$21.



**Better with age** best steak

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Aaron Barberian

**THE WINNER:** Cumbrae's  
1636 Bayview Ave., 416-485-5620

Nutty flavours, tender, juicy, well aged and nicely butchered at that. What more can steak lovers ask of their meat? The proof: Barberian says he would pull this steak from a meat locker for himself. Now that says a lot. Price: \$22.99/lb.



**Perfect slice** best pizza

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Ida Pusateri

**THE WINNER:** Camarra's Pizzeria  
2899 Dufferin St., 416-789-3221

"You can really taste the goat cheese," says Pusateri. "It blends in well with the rest of the vegetables." A thick crust that is still light and airy was praised by all. A hint of possible olive oil or wine was also a hit. Price: \$28.50



**Best pho sure** best pho

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Claudio Aprile

**THE WINNER:** Pho Hung  
200 Bloor St. W., 416-963-5080

Unlike most pho found in the city, the pieces of meat in this broth are taken from the entire chicken instead of just the breast, increasing the natural flavours, textures and contrast found throughout the dish. Price: \$7.20.



**Precious piece of pie** best fruit pie

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Linda Haynes

**THE WINNER:** Frangipane  
215 Madison Ave., 416-926-0303

"This is a chic pie," says Haynes. "The square shape makes it unique, and the layer of almond makes this an elegant dessert. I'd almost expect to see this pie sitting in the window of a patisserie in Paris." Price: \$30.



**Utopian dream** best French onion

**CELEBRITY TESTER:** Jason Bangerter

**THE WINNER:** Coquine  
2075 Yonge St., 416-322-6767

"Look at that," says Bangerter, of the baked delicacy. "That's the way you're supposed to get it." The combination of rich ingredients makes this soup a "very elegant, fine balance between sauce and broth," our expert says. Price: \$8.