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Savoring Sayville

THE HAMLET IS QUICKLY BECOMING A DESTINATION FOR FOOD LOVERS **B2**



CALL OF THE WILD An LI restaurant serves up exotic game newsday.com/feedme



YVONNE ALBINOWSKI

Rummin' Down a Dream with rum, dragonfruit, lime juice and rosewater mist, and the Joelle Old Fashioned with bourbon, honey, cherry bitters and orange bitters at Cafe Joelle.

Sayville BOOM

The charming hamlet has lots of great eateries, with even more to come

BY CORIN HIRSCH

corin.hirsch@newsday.com

Buzz may technically be invisible, but you can still watch it in real time as it jumps from place to place — from Huntington to Patchogue, Patchogue to Bay Shore — as a spark that pulls creative people, chefs and urban émigrés in its wake.

Where are the embers landing in 2021? In that hamlet by the bay with

deep seafaring roots, the place where a million oysters were shucked and where Main Street is so cute you almost want to pinch its cheeks.

"If you drive by quickly, Sayville seems small, but is packed with so many great things. It's a hidden South Shore gem," said Eileen Tyznar, president of the Greater Sayville Chamber of Commerce, who moved to the hamlet decades ago and still gushes about its people, small businesses and street parties, though the latter are not quite

back to where they used to be before COVID-19. "We're holding our breath to see when we can have the bigger events we are known for."

Sayville's streets are lined with saltboxes, Victorians and more breezy porches than you could ever sit on in one lifetime. Despite its Mayberry looks, though, the hamlet harbors its share of quirk: a crystal shop, a walkable labyrinth (in Rotary Park), a newly opened plant-based deli called Clementine's and a natural wine store called

Down The Rabbit Hole, the latter two extremely rare on Long Island. There's a hidden winery, Loughlin Vineyard, and the Long Island Maritime Museum, a sprawling place where you can learn about every shipwreck that's ever happened off of Long Island.

Woven amid Sayville's charms is a tide of things to eat and drink, from lobster-topped pizza on the patio of La Tavola to mezcal cocktails at The Shed (just outside of downtown) to baked clams and bonhomie at Cafe Joelle, a



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Above, Main Street Diner, and below, one of its dishes: Greek huevos rancheros with two eggs over easy, pita, chickpea salsa, avocado and feta cheese.



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Oak-milk swirl soft serve with vegan rainbow sprinkles at Clementine's Plant Based Deli and Bakery.

locals hangout where tables can be hard to come by at prime time.

There's plenty of "coming soon" vibes all over town (for a bar and

ON THE COVER From left: drinks at Cafe Joelle; vegan crab cakes at Clementine's Plant Based Deli and Bakery; checkerboard cake at Main Street Diner; smoked brisket sandwich at Sayville Athletic Club; shakshuka at Main Street Diner; and an array of hot sauces offered at Sayville N Spice.

grill, a juice bar, a coffee shop) as well as newish faces on the block: an herb shop selling fudge, called Nettle & Rose, in West Sayville; Clementine's, where you can land plant-based fried "chicken" over waffles; a longtime pharmacy-turned-spice shop, Sayville N Spice, where you can choose from dozens of hot sauces. And Sayville is a formidable place to track down a burger: No fewer than seven places, including the 18-month-old Sayville Athletic Club, boast superlative versions.

This seeming renaissance-in-full-flourish has not come without hustle,

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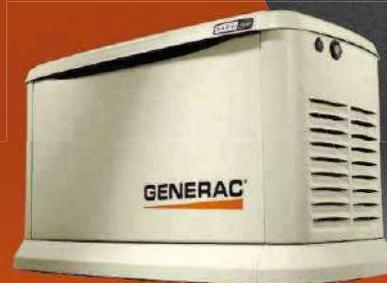
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Sayville's a **foodie** destination

SAYVILLE from B2

though: Last summer, in a scramble to save its downtown businesses, the community raised \$28,000 via ticket sales and donations during drive-in movies at the Islip Grange, money the Chamber used to help buoy businesses during the darkest days of COVID.

"We'd ask, 'What do you need? Do you need PPE? Or a month's rent?'" recalled Tyznar. "It is our job to help [business owners] in good times and bad. COVID did not wipe us out, but we're still rebuilding."

For Chloe Jones, who opened Clementine's with her mother, Cira Jones, earlier this year, there was no other place she wanted to run the business she'd worked toward for years. "This is where we're from, and we know the people. It's an area that's rich in community," said Jones. She's aware that plant-based cuisine can seem alien or expensive, and works to keep dishes such as egg-plant meatballs and banh mi in a reasonable price range. "I wanted to make food that anyone could like, not just the vegan community, and provide good food that's not crazy expensive."

Here are a few of the new faces in Sayville, and a few words on those set to debut in coming months.

CLEMENTINE'S PLANT BASED DELI AND BAKERY (4836 Sunrise Hwy., Sayville) Chloe Jones didn't expressly set out to open a vegan deli, but over the years she spent perfecting plant-based recipes — sparked after she was pregnant with her first child — friends kept telling Jones she should. "I'd make multiple cakes a week, and I would fail a lot but keep going and working on recipes." The long-honed result is an oeuvre of luscious cupcakes, muffins and pies, plus savory dishes such as vegan crab cakes (made from chickpeas, artichokes and Old Bay) and fried "chicken" (really, seitan) over waffles.

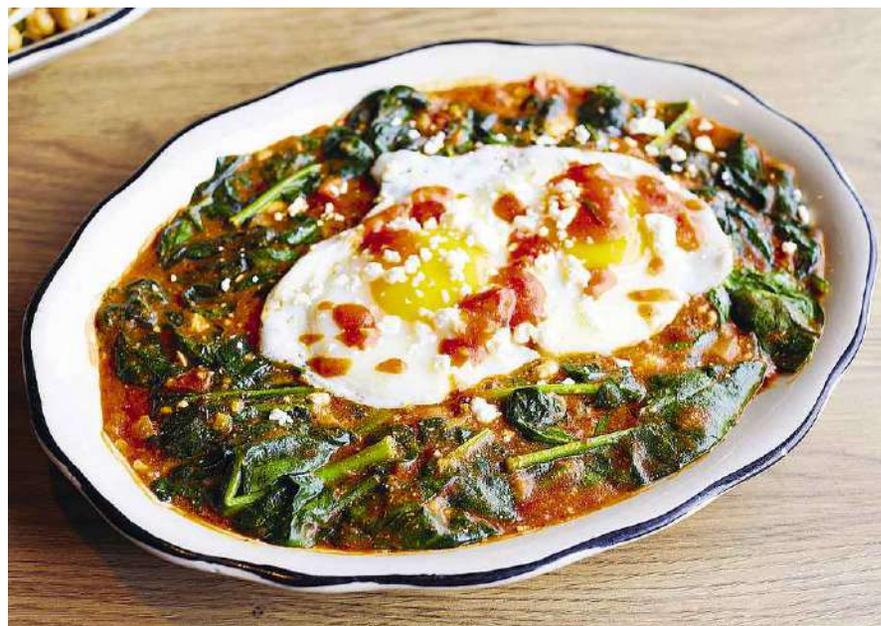
Each week's menu, posted on social media, is slightly different, from roasted jackfruit grinders to enchiladas. A grab-and-go case is stocked with jackfruit mac-and-cheese, butternut squash lasagna, and other dishes, while a soft-serve machine doles out oat-milk ice cream. There are three tables for eating in-house. Most larger plates and sandwiches are between \$10 and \$13, and the deli opens at 11 a.m. Friday to Sunday with expanded hours coming soon.

More info: 631-664-1270, veggingoutatclementimes.com

NETTLE & ROSE (77 Main St., West Sayville) This adorable West Sayville shop owned by Bay Rose is akin to a tiny apothecary, and behind its pale pink facade are herb-infused oils, creams and hydrosols for everything from building immunity to catching more ZZZs. Wedged in amid the tinctures and topicals are edible and drinkable things, too, such as cinchona elixir (for making soda), herb-infused sparkling water and a glass case loaded with fudge, caramel and spherical bites such as Berry Goodness, orbs of pressed cashews, coconut, blueberries, cherries, elderberry, raspberry and pea protein. Open Friday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

More info: 631-589-3580 nettleandrose.com

MAIN STREET DINER (229 W. Main St., Sayville) Phil Collins filters through the speakers, vintage etched glass separates brown leather booths, and retro wallpaper backs the counter — the homey setting for lingering breakfasts of Nutella pancakes or cheese omelets. Only, the new owners of this longtime diner don't stop at classics, or dial anything in. Inside this recent renovation for the former Sea Crest Diner, there's also shakshuka, the eggs-and-tomatoes skillet of North African origin, plus a Greek spin on huevos rancheros with fried eggs, warm



Shakshuka, an eggs-and-tomato dish with North African origins, at Main Street Diner.

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The smoked brisket sandwich served with coleslaw, pickles and house barbecue sauce at Sayville Athletic Club.

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pita wedges, and chickpea salsa. Admire a checkerboard cake from the pastry case, and manager Gus Panagatos might spontaneously box up a slice for you "just to try, and maybe you'll get some next time." Panagatos said that since opening last summer — the diner had opened briefly before COVID — times have been "very challenging," but takeout and outdoor seating keeps things rolling, and the kitchen's commitment to putting a unique spin on diner fare will never wane. Open daily 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
More info: 631-567-5376, themainstreetdiner.com

SAYVILLE ATHLETIC CLUB (209 Railroad Ave., Sayville) It's going on 18 months since Sayville Athletic Club opened in the fall of 2019, but since COVID time is lost time, this considered spin on a sports bar is still pretty new to Sayville. A homey place with lots of memorabilia on the walls (including mounted deer heads), the drinks list is fundamentally excellent and so is the food, which runs to wings, burgers and other pub standards. On Sundays, this is the place to find ribs and brisket (including brisket-filled tacos and brisket nachos) from Dustin and



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The spice wall at Sayville N Spice, which was renovated from a former pharmacy and still retains some of the elements of the former business.



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Vegan apple tarts at Clementine's Plant Based Deli and Bakery.

Jennifer Ross of MEAT Bbq. Open noon to 11 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday, and 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Monday. **More info:** 631-319-1700. Instagram: @sayvilleathleticclub

SAYVILLE N SPICE (2 Main St., Sayville) This yearlong renovation of the century-old former Thornhill's Pharmacy into a spice shop was undertaken with TLC by Lauri and Matthew

LaPiana. She's a court stenographer, he's an architect, and together they preserved the building's essence, turning old pallets into a center island and reclaimed wood and old herb crates into shelving. "It got intense," said Matthew LaPiana of the transformation; he still has some of the old pharmacy records in his care. The airy, modern space exudes plenty of vintage vibes as you browse hundreds of spices and hot sauces, from garam masala and barbecue rubs to hot sauces laced with searing-hot ghost peppers. Spices are ordered at a dramatic curved counter, echoing the pharmacy counters of yore. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

More info: 631-589-0005, sayvillespice.com

Coming soon

Sayville is set to gain at least five new food businesses in coming months: On the east end of town, a stunning new bar, **Sayville Bait &**

Tackle, will move into the former home of the Halfpenny Pub, and will be run by an amalgam of owners of Bay Shore businesses The Linwood (Drew Dvorkin), Local Burger and TJ Finley's (Mike McElwee, Zach Di-girolomo). "We'll feature nautical salvage décor," said Dvorkin, as well as a 50-foot bar, regional beer and a sipping rum menu, plus food that runs to lobster rolls, sandwiches, burgers and specials.

On the east end of town, owner Ron Montgomery will open the **Six Juice Bar**, with fresh juices and healthy bites, in the same plaza as the Sayville Sandwich Shop. The owner of Cafe Joelle on Main Street, James Caporuscio (who also happens to be a champion poker player), is busy working on **The Greenery**, a fast-casual, bowls-and-salad focused eatery in the space where American Cheese used to be. And Tyznar said that both a coffee shop and brunch spot are on deck for West Sayville and Sayville, respectively, for later this year.