

The dogwood trees are blooming and winter's chill has left the air. This spring explore the many restaurants and cafes of the Mid-Atlantic states, where sandy beaches and the extraordinary Chesapeake Bay make coastal living a way of life.

Virginia

Todd Jurich's Bistro Norfolk

Todd Jurich has followed his culinary curiosity around the globe—from France to Thailand—and, much to the delight of the locals, each time brought his well-earned knowledge back to Virginia's Tidewater. Jurich has been a fixture on the area's restaurant scene for more than 27 years, first in Virginia Beach and now in downtown Norfolk, at Todd Jurich's Bistro. He makes the most of the region's fantastic food products (case in point: their famous oyster stew), and

his menu accommodates classic dishes (roast chicken with mashed potatoes, steak tartare) as well as funky new Asian-influenced ones (spring rolls with apple-daikon salad, seared tuna with ponzu and wasabi-flavored sushi rice). The wood-paneled dining room is elegant but comfortable. Snag one of the cozy booths or, for something less formal, a place at the convivial bar. The stellar wine list includes more than 20 wines by the glass (some from Virginia) and more than 50 half-bottles. Can't decide between the Vosne-Romanée and the Williams Selyem pint noir? Drink one with dinner and stash the other for another night—everything on the list is available to go.

150 W. Main St.; 757-622-3210; dinner for two \$80; Nearest marina: Waterside Marina.

Bizzotto's Gallery-Caffe Onancock

For a sleepy creekside town on Virginia's bucolic eastern shore, Onancock is surprisingly urbane. Case in point: Bizzotto's Gallery-Caffe, where Argentine owner Miguel Bizzotto serves simple and delicious Italian-influenced fare and features the work of several local artists, including himself. Sample veal picatta with fresh fettuccini while appraising Bizzotto's beautifully crafted leather handbags, then savor a chocolate soufflé or the vanilla-gelato affogato while admiring pottery, watercolors, and ceramics by his various friends. Residents are fiercely proud of the town's past—John Smith noted the site in 1608, and a community has thrived here since 1680—but eagerly embrace life's present-day pleasures.

41 Market St.; 757-787-3103; dinner for two \$60; Nearest marina Onancock Wharf.

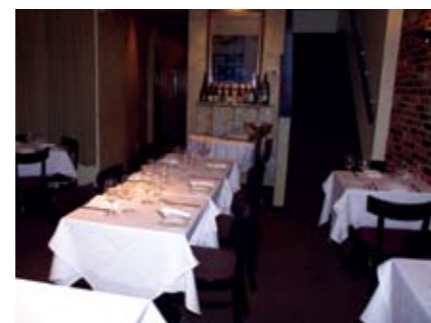


Todd Jurich's Bistro. Norfolk, Virginia

Maryland

Corks Baltimore

Chef Jerry Pellegrino is a passionate man. His restaurant, Corks, doesn't just have a wine list—it has an all-American wine list with maps and a glossary and more than 200 bottles, the vast number of them from tiny artisanal producers (and what's more, it's fun to read—a rare thing for wine-speak). Chef Pellegrino doesn't just create new dishes—he starts with wine as his departure point, then experiments with seasonal ingredients to explore how flavors combine on the



Corks. Baltimore, Maryland

palate, not ceasing the tinkering until he's hit on something electrifying and unique. And he doesn't just want you to have a nice meal—he wants you to share his enthusiasm. Try an orange-and-basil-marinated pork chop with roasted rutabaga and roasted red grapes, paired with a Baileyana syrah; or pan-roasted

halibut with soft polenta and corn salad, with L'Ecole No. 41's semillon. The ten-year-old restaurant in one of Baltimore's loveliest and most historic neighborhoods is a must-do for anyone even remotely interested in wine, and everyone else you drag along with you will thank you.

1026 S. Charles St.; 410-752-3810; dinner for two \$90; nearest marinas HarborView Marina and Baltimore Inner Harbor Marine Center.

Laurrapin Grille Havre de Grace

The chef-owned Laurrapin Grille is the brainchild of Bruce Clarke and Patrick Pearce, two culinary whizzes who spent years in the kitchens of some of Baltimore's best restaurants before quitting the city for laid-back, small-town life in charming Havre de Grace. The trim, stone-faced building sits amid the town's antiques shops at the mouth of the Susquehanna River on the bay's northern edge. Guests flock to the cheery mustard and tomato-colored dining room for the festive atmosphere (which includes a busy open kitchen), but of course the real draw is the expertly prepared down-home cooking: Gulf-shrimp salad with Old Bay mayonnaise; local-crab gazpacho; capicola-and-mozzarella sandwich fried in a parmesan-flecked batter.

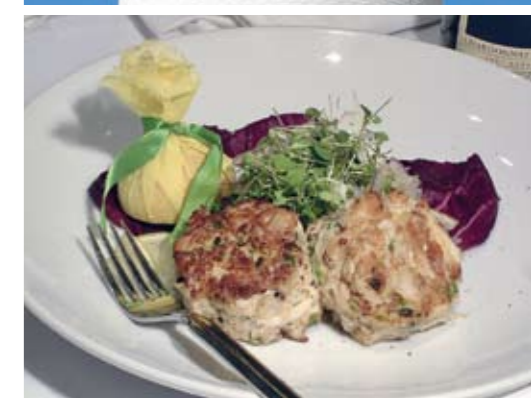
209 N. Washington St.; 410-939-3663; dinner for two \$50; Nearest marina Tidewater Havre de Grace Marina.

New Jersey

410 Bank Street Cape May

Popular with diners near and far for more than two decades, 410 Bank Street is one of Cape May's best-loved restaurants. The 19th-century structure fits right in among the town's pretty, Victorian-era houses, but inside the vibe turns tropical. A series of intimate dining rooms and a vine-wrapped verandah surround the lush garden, and Chef Henry Sing Cheng's food takes its cues from the Caribbean and French-Creole New Orleans. Seared sea scallops are paired with a housemade remoulade; the rich, hearty gumbo (lobster, andouille) is made with authentic filé. There's even a smoke house on the premises for firing up meats with apple wood and mesquite. For dessert try the whiskey-spiked bread pudding, or head down the block to the Washington Street mall for an ice cream cone and a postprandial stroll.

410 Bank St.; 609-884-2127; dinner for two \$120; Nearest marinas South Jersey Marina or Canyon Club Resort Marina. [ml](#)



Cape May, New Jersey