

EXCLUSIVE ESSAY BY  
RICHARD RUSSO

PORTLAND'S  
PREMIER  
MANSION

BONUS! 2008 MAINE  
BOATING GUIDE

# Down East

May 2008

The Magazine of Maine

## Where to Eat Now

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# where to eat now

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We all know that Maine is a big state, 33,215 square miles big to be exact. And we all appreciate the range of great food available. The challenge is actually finding it without blowing your wallet on a quest to eat your way across the state. So how do you discover Maine's hidden culinary hotspots? Our solution: go straight to the source. We queried dozens of Maine's acknowledged food experts – the chefs, market owners, specialty food purveyors, food writers, and other culinary icons – with a simple question: Where are you yourself eating now? We received a cornucopia of surprising recommendations, from Fore Street's Sam Hayward's favorite post-hike watering hole to Primo's Melissa Kelly's preferred Pakistani joint. Herewith, a 2008 Maine dining guide, vetted by the people who know food best.

## XYZ

80 Seawall Rd., Southwest Harbor, 207-244-5221.

Caliente cuisine hasn't necessarily been our state's strong point, but the folks behind XYZ have managed to change that reputation in an unlikely location: Southwest Harbor on Mount Desert Island. "It is far from Americanized Mexican,"

declares Caiola's Abby Harmon. "Everything is made from scratch. I guess you can describe it as rustic countryside Mexican cuisine. The Chille Rellenos Con Queso are crispy on the outside and creamy on the inside, because it is baked rather than deep fried so you can actually taste all the ingredients, the chilies

especially. Our friends who lived in Mexico and travel all over the states loved this place. They said it was the most authentic Mexican eatery they have experienced, and we agree."

**Margarita Maine-ia:** Wash down some of the house-made chorizo in the queso fundido with a classic

margarita. "They use fresh-squeezed lime juice instead of sour mix in their margaritas and you can tell," says Harmon. "The drinks had a nice, clean, fresh taste to them."