

Alfresco dining in North Jersey

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BY BILL PITCHER

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STAFF WRITER

Setting a table and two chairs outside doesn't make a restaurant alfresco, but you wouldn't know it by the number of places that tout their outdoor dining spaces. There are hundreds. How many are legitimately good? Dozens perhaps?

So we set out to find the best of them — 10 restaurants not only serving memorable food but offering customers a space to dine in the elements, absorbing the late-day sun or taking in a cool summer breeze with their dinner.

A few caveats: Restaurants under consideration needed to serve dinner more than four nights a week. They had to be within The Record's coverage area, which is largely Bergen and Passaic counties. And most important, the food had to be good. Really good, as in, a two-star review wouldn't cut it.

Our selections may be surprising. The most saturated restaurant town, Ridgewood, has no restaurants on our list. None even came close. Edgewater, along the Hudson River, has one, but it doesn't have a Manhattan view.

Did we leave off your favorite? Share it with others on our food blog, Second Helpings, at northjersey.com/foodblog. E-mail: pitcher@northjersey.com

Andiamo: Don Dickstein is one of the area's most gracious hosts, and his warmth is no less genuine from the cozy seats on the wrap around back porch. Dickstein's wife, Linda, the chef, is excellent with Italian and American classics, such as a grilled rope of sausage, cioppino and prime New York strip steaks, but also enjoys turning them on their heads, such as an antipasto pizza. 23 Hardenburgh Ave., Haworth; 201-384-1551; andiamorestaurant.net.