

joonbug 

FIRST  COURSE

Choice Eats: Interview with Village Voice Food Critic Lauren Shockey

Fifth annual Choice Eats event features over eighty restaurants

Tuesday, March 13th, 2012 at 4:08 pm | Elisabeth Rosario



Lauren Shockey
mag.uchicago.edu

Tonight from 6:30 - 9:30pm, the Village Voice will host their fifth annual [Choice Eats](#) curated tasting event at the 69th Armory on Lexington Avenue. The long-awaited event will feature over eighty handpicked restaurants featured in *The Village Voice* and *Fork in the Road* blog, from all five boroughs. Guests can also expect complimentary craft beer pairings and wine and liquor beverages.

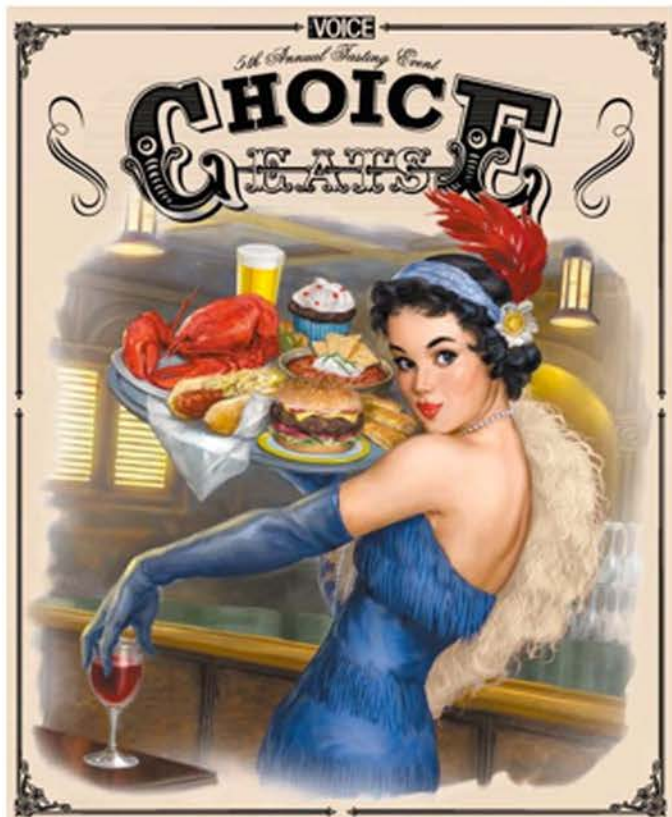
First Course blogger Elisabeth Rosario had the opportunity to chat with Village Voice food critic Lauren Shockey (@ldshockey) on what we can expect at this year's event as well as some tips on how to make the most of it!

ER: Choice Eats is on its fifth year! What are you most excited about this time and why?

LS: I love Choice Eats because it's a great opportunity to sample different dishes from around New York City at an affordable price point! Instead of hopping the subway and running all over town, you get to stuff your face with delicious food and drink all in one place!

ER: There's a pretty eclectic mix of restaurants, from the more popular like Luke's Lobster and The Meatball Shop, to other lesser-known but equally delicious choices. What are some of your favorite city secrets to look out for?

LS: I'd recommend first hitting up the places you're less familiar with. [Robert Sietsema](#) and I have combed the city and handpick restaurants for inclusion, only selecting ones that are truly delicious. So be on the lookout for those eateries you've never heard of or read about. They're often the ones that are the most surprising -- not to mention most rewarding.



ER: Which outer-borough eateries do you recommend the Manhattanites visit while they have the chance?

LS: We definitely have spots from all over the city. La Morada is located in the Bronx, and Maima's Liberian Bistro is in Queens. We also have a bunch of Brooklyn restaurants, ranging from Northeast Kingdom to Peppa's Jerk Chicken to Tanoreen. And I'm definitely excited for Brooklyn-based Ample Hills Creamery because they're bringing a bicycle to churn their ice cream -- how cool is that!?

ER: What are the food trends of 2012 that you see being represented at Choice Eats this time around?

LS: Rather than focus on what's trendy, Choice Eats really focuses on what's delicious. Trends will come and go, but yummy food is always in style! That said, we are featuring several restaurants that Robert Sietsema and I reviewed in the past year, including Bi Lokma, Gregory's 26 Corner Taverna, Littleneck, and Sottocasa.

ER: With 83 participating restaurants, is there a survival guide you can offer us foodies looking for a strategy before hitting food coma mode?

LS: Definitely wear loose-fitting clothing so your belly can expand comfortably after eating a ton. And, of course, remember to have water if you're drinking beer and wine. Safety first! Other than that, though, just have fun and make sure to chat with the chefs about their food!

Check back on Joonbug later this week to read our recap and hear about our favorite bites at Choice Eats.