

## Southold Social, Southold

Payard’s joyous dining room is likely to supplant North Fork Table & Inn as the signature restaurant of the region. (Perhaps it already has.) Customers were pouring in the night we dined there with friends from Satur Farms, purveyors of the best arugula on earth.

Payard, who first achieved fame as a pastry chef, was in the kitchen during our visit. He came by our table and quipped, “I rented out my house and slept upstairs in my restaurant during the pandemic—the first time in my life I ever made money.”



Beet salad and Long Island duck at Southold Social.

His food is classic, uncomplicated, and often unexpectedly embellished. The “crisp half Marrakesh chicken” was prepared with preserved lemon, olives, raisins, and harissa, not your everyday French bird. The menu lists a half-dozen pastas, also unexpected, but he explained: “Before me, this was an Italian restaurant, and the customers expect pasta. Anyway, I can cook pasta. I am from Nice.” Desserts, as one would expect, were wonderful. Do not miss his almond croissant, sold at Payard’s nearby shop, Southold General.