



*At Orto in Miller Place, the fritto misto is delicate and crisp-tender; Orto's owner-chef Eric Lomando is in the thick of things. Opposite: Orto's dining room is full of rustic charm; the bounty at Andrews Family Farm in Wading River.*



lack of pretense.” In good weather, tables spill from the spacious dining room onto a deck and the front lawn. Wine lovers should know that Orto has a concise list of bottles and glasses both interesting and well-priced—or you can bring your own wine and pay no corkage fee. And while initially he worked to make his cooking “more accessible,” these days it’s full-throttle Lomando.

Bread is baked on the premises and served with a dish of fresh-and-fruity olive oil from Spoleto. The menu changes daily but almost always features a stellar fritto misto. Lomando dredges skate, shrimp, littleneck clams and calamari in a mixture of flour and ground rice (carnaroli, no less) and serves it with a thick, rich garlic aioli. A starter of blowfish tails fra diavolo is a new addition, as are chestnut gemelli with duck ragù and a risotto of mushrooms and heirloom squash.

The cooler weather has also inspired Lomando to slow-cook halibut and adorn it with a hazelnut-mushroom vinaigrette. You’ll also find red wine-braised lamb shanks with polenta, pork Milanese with roasted fingerling potatoes and Taleggio fonduta, and duck breast with wild rice and fig agrodolce. The references here are clearly from Italy, but they converge with ingredients and surroundings that are completely American.

Whether seated in Orto’s oak-beamed dining room or on its spruce-shaded lawn, it’s hard to believe that this culinary idyll is less than two miles from the nearest Applebee’s/Buffalo Wild Wings/Starbucks. But that just adds to the Brigadoon-like magic of ShoNoFo, visible only to those who know where to look.

**P**abon and Prince renovated “the floor, the ceiling and everything in between” in 2018, but the place retains its homey appeal as well as parts of the original ceiling beams, from which hang dried pork sausages, sweet and hot. In the refrigerated case are fresh pork sausages, chicken and lamb varieties for those who refrain from (or tire of) pork, and casing-less patties for sausage lovers who want to eat them like burgers.

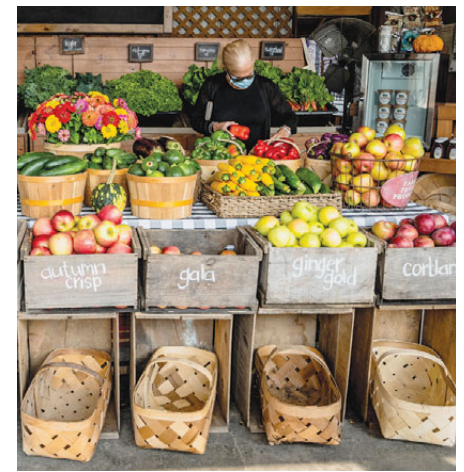
But the days are long past when an Italian shop could live on sausage alone. Del Fiore makes its own overstuffed ravioli, manicotti, stuffed shells, stuffed mushrooms and stuffed peppers as well as sauces and fresh mozzarella. The full line of Italian imports includes cheeses, canned tomatoes, olive oil, pasta and even playing cards, aprons and espresso cups.

Miller Place, which stretches south from Long Island Sound, may encompass the strip malls of Route 25A and the pine barrens and gravel

pits of central Suffolk, but the little historical center wears its 300-plus years with pride. The hamlet is named for the first permanent settler in the area, Andrew Miller, whose 1720 house is now maintained by the Miller Place–Mount Sinai Historical Society. Right across the street is Miller’s great-grandson’s house, built in 1824, and home to a succession of restaurants, including the (aptly named) Secret Road Inn and Dublin Delights since 1963. But its current incarnation as Orto is what has put Miller Place on the culinary map.

When Eric Lomando opened the place (“orto” is Italian for “vegetable garden”) in 2012, he already owned two of Long Island’s best restaurants, Kitchen A Bistro and A Trattoria, both in St. James. But he sold the latter to its chef, Stephen Gallagher, in 2013 and closed the former, after 20 years, in 2018, enabling him to focus all his talent and energy on Orto. While the St. James–Stony Brook axis is one of Long Island’s premier dining destinations, Lomando enjoys the more laid-back vibe in Miller Place where, he said, “there’s a decided





## MEANWHILE, DOWN ON THE FARM

Routes 25 and 25A are lined with farms offering local produce. Here are three great ones.

### ANDREWS FAMILY FARM

1038 Sound Ave., Wading River  
631-929-0039 | [andrewsfamilyfarm.com](http://andrewsfamilyfarm.com)  
Three generations of Andrews work the 70 acres at the intersection of Sound Avenue and Hulse Landing Road. Sage, the world's friendliest Labrador retriever (see page 78), is on the scene to play with the kids while you peruse the produce and more.

### LEWIN FARMS

812 Sound Ave., Calverton  
631-929-4327 | [lewinfarm.com](http://lewinfarm.com)  
Corn maze? Check. Pumpkin picking? Check. Roasted corn, U-pick tomatoes and apples, cut-your-own Christmas trees? It's all there at Lewin Farms, along with a farm stand the size of an airplane hangar that sells local produce and much more.

### MILOSKI'S POULTRY FARM

4418 Middle Country Rd., Calverton  
631-727-0239 | [miloskipoultryfarm.com](http://miloskipoultryfarm.com)  
Founded by Will and Molly Miloski in 1946, Miloski's is now run by their grandson, Mark Miloski, Sr., his son, Mark, Jr., and nephew, Arthur Worthington. Turkeys are the main event here, numerous enough to enable the farm to fulfill 4,000 Thanksgiving orders without taking any reservations. But the modest shop is a year-round source for superb rotisserie ducks (raised elsewhere on Long Island) and the Island's most extensive array of exotic meats, among them alligator, boar, elk, kangaroo, ostrich and rattlesnake. Cash only. ■

## THE DETAILS

### BREKKY

2 Sound Rd., Wading River  
631-886-2441 | [brekky.business.site](http://brekky.business.site)

### BROADWAY MARKET

643 Broadway, Rocky Point  
631-849-1729 | [bmropo.com](http://bmropo.com)

### CHEESE & SPICE MARKET

5768 Route 25A, Wading River  
631-886-1521 | [cheesespicemarket.com](http://cheesespicemarket.com)

### DEL FIORE ITALIAN MARKET

39 Broadway, Rocky Point  
631-744-0398  
[delfioreitalianmarket.com](http://delfioreitalianmarket.com)

### LA PLAG

131 Creek Rd., Wading River  
631-744-9200 | [laplagewadingriver.com](http://laplagewadingriver.com)

### MESQUITE TEX-MEX

2034 North Country Rd., Wading River  
631-886-2886 | [mesquitetexmex.com](http://mesquitetexmex.com)

### NORTH TAVERN

2028 North Country Rd., Wading River  
631-886-2102 | [north-tavern.business.site](http://north-tavern.business.site)

### ORTO

90 North Country Rd., Miller Place  
631-473-0014 | [restaurantorto.com](http://restaurantorto.com)  
No credit cards

### PICKLE PACKIN' PAPA

593A Route 25A, Rocky Point  
631-821-5595

### WINES BY NATURE

5768 Route 25A, Wading River  
631-886-2800 | [winesbynatureny.com](http://winesbynatureny.com)