

BERGEN

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- not wash your fruit?
- sprinkle on the salt?

Experts weigh in

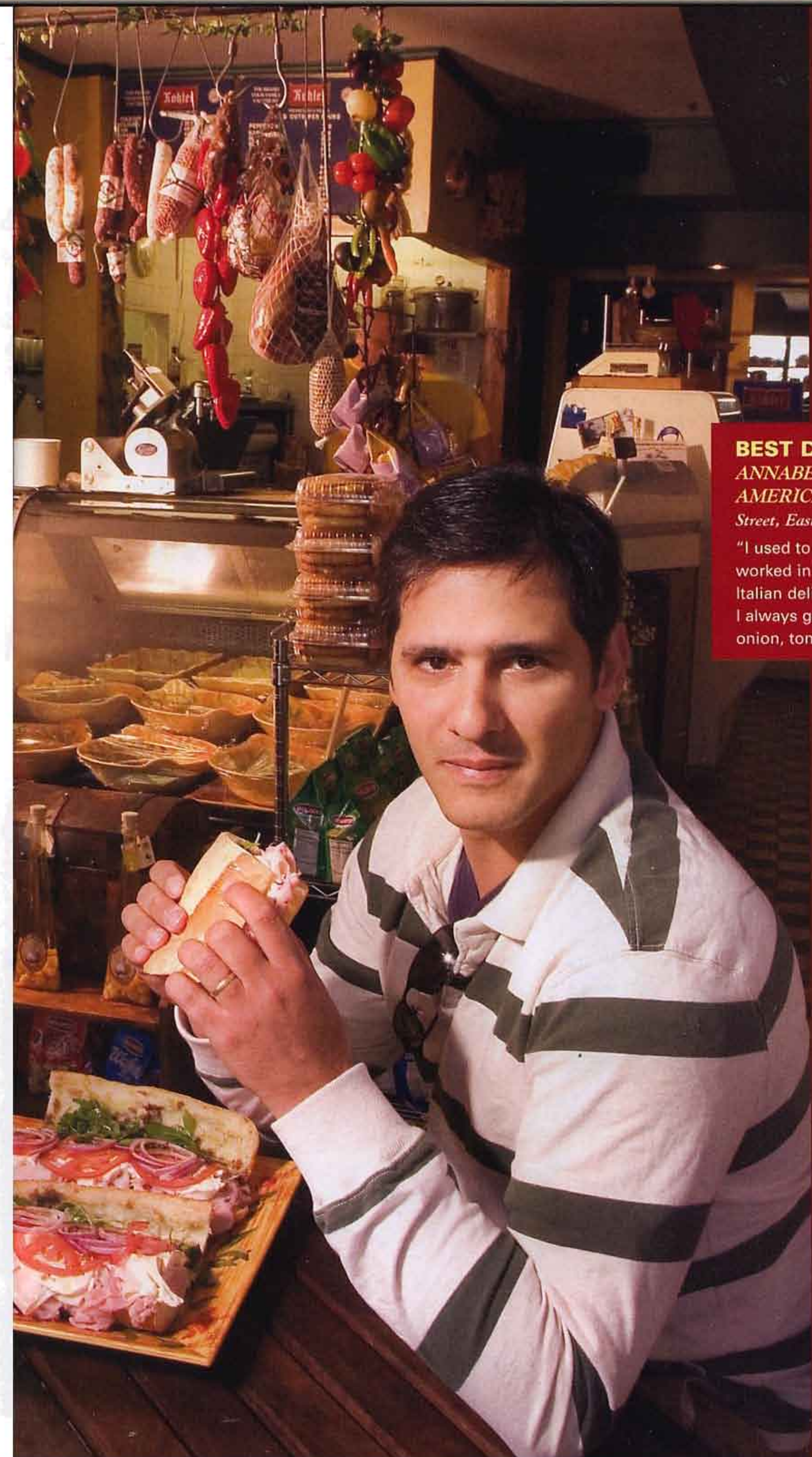
by Jeff Iorio

The best of Bergen: CHEFS' PICKS

KITCHEN MASTERS FROM 5 TOP LOCAL RESTAURANTS REVEAL WHERE THEY EAT WHEN THE TOQUE COMES OFF

Let's face it—most of us love to eat. But few of us dedicate our lives to the pursuit of culinary perfection. So when we were looking for advice on some of Bergen's best fare, we turned to those truly in the know: chefs from five esteemed area eateries. They may devote their days to tantalizing our taste buds, but they also have favorite local spots to grab a bite in their downtime. Here's what we found.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK COSTANZO



ALEX GORANT
chef, Axia Taverna,
Tenafly

BEST PIZZA: MARIO'S PIZZA, 109 West Pleasant Avenue, Maywood; 201-843-8700

"I enjoy their sausage pizza. There's always an international soccer game on, and people sit around and watch. I usually stop there on Saturdays before work."

BEST DELI SANDWICH: ANNABELLA'S ITALIAN-AMERICAN DELI, 246 Hackensack Street, East Rutherford; 201-804-0303

"I used to go there all the time when I worked in Rutherford. It's an old-school Italian deli that's run by three young guys. I always get a ham, turkey and cheese with onion, tomato, a little oil and balsamic."

BEST SUSHI: EAST JAPANESE RESTAURANT, 1405 Teaneck Road, Teaneck; 201-837-1260

"The sushi comes around on a conveyer belt. My wife works in Teaneck and she goes there all the time."

BEST MARTINI: THE RESTAURANT, 160 Prospect Avenue, Hackensack; 201-678-1100; www.the-restaurant.net

"The bartender makes a classic gin martini—two olives is usually good. They have a piano player there, and it's a nice atmosphere to sit back and enjoy."

BEST ICE CREAM: DAIRY QUEEN, 430 Market Street, Saddle Brook; 201-843-4577

"I have two kids, and whenever I catch a day off I take them there. I like to make it a special day, so I treat them to a sundae and get a nice, big cone for myself."

continued