



## wildlife

Sweetbriar Nature Center in Smithtown will be hopping with activity 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday at its **Wildlife and Butterfly Craft Festival**. On hand will be a 6-foot alligator, enormous snakes, porcupines and more. Visitors can enjoy the butterfly vivarium or music of live bands. Look for craft vendors, food and pet adoption events. \$10 per family. 631-979-6344, [sweetbriarnc.org](http://sweetbriarnc.org)



CHRIS WARE

## patchwork

"Friendship, a Common Thread," is the theme of this year's **Peconic Quilt Show** at Suffolk Community College's Riverhead campus. Guests can start in the Peconic building and enjoy a judged quilt show, exhibits, raffles and "bed turning" lectures (layered quilts on a bed are discussed and pulled back, one at a time). The show runs 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. \$10 admission (free ages 12 and younger), 631-727-8425, [eliqg.com](http://eliqg.com)



## index

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>B17</b> Ask Amy      | <b>B16</b> Horoscopes |
| <b>B14</b> Comics       | <b>B17</b> Kidsday    |
| <b>B4</b> Entertainment | <b>B6</b> Movie Times |
| <b>B8</b> Food          | <b>B19</b> Pets       |
| <b>B16</b> Games        | <b>B25</b> TV         |



Chef Brian Clermont of Brews Brothers presents his peanut butter and jelly wings with a jalapeño-Concord grape glaze.

JESSICA EARNSHAW

# lords of the wings

Chicken festival a recipe for hot stuff in Westbury

BY DAVID J. CRIBLEZ  
[david.criblez@newsday.com](mailto:david.criblez@newsday.com)

**R**ob Wittman and Matt Kourie spent three years hunting down Long Island's best chicken wings and rating them on their website, [bestwingsli.com](http://bestwingsli.com). On Sunday, the Oceanside residents will transform their passion for wings into a full-scale event, the New York Best Wings Festival, in the parking lot of the NYCB Theatre at Westbury.

### THE NEW YORK BEST WINGS FESTIVAL

**WHEN | WHERE** 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday, in the parking lot of NYCB Theatre at Westbury, 960 Brush Hollow Rd.  
**ADMISSION** \$12 (\$10 in advance); Wings are \$1 each.  
**INFO** [nybestwingsfestival.com](http://nybestwingsfestival.com)

"Wings bring people together," says Kourie, 45, an event organizer. "It's a free-spirited food that's associated with games and good times, therefore they go down easy. We love that spirit."

The festival, which is expected to draw 5,000 people, will feature 20 New York eateries showcasing their best wings in all different styles.

"Wings are a fanatical food. People have their favorites. It's something they crave," says Wittman, 47, who by day

works as vice president of a home decor company. "There are some restaurants that sell up to 30 types of wings."

### HOW IT WORKS

Festivalgoers can customize their plates by purchasing food tickets to load up on any number of wings (\$1 ticket equals one wing). A beer garden featuring 15 local craft brews will help wash down the spice with tasting souvenir cups (\$30 for unlimited 2-ounce pours — SOLD OUT) or pints from Coney Island Brewing Co. Entertainment includes live bands, inflatable rides for kids and eating competitions like the Melt Your Face Wing Contest.

### LOCAL WINGS

Westbury will become wing country when the flavors extend beyond Buffalo. Here's just a taste of the



Dan Monteforte, co-owner of Swingbelly's, gets ready to gobble a Swingz — a quarter-pound chicken wing.

JESSICA EARNSHAW

unusual styles you'll find:

**Swingz** — Swingbelly's of Long Beach serves up its quarter-pound whole wing, including the tip, that's dry rubbed, smoked over apple-hickory cherrywood and deep fried, then tossed in a smoky or Buffalo-style sauce.

"I'm more of a traditional guy," says co-owner Dan Monteforte. "Old-school flavors work for me."

**Peanut Butter & Jelly Wing** — Brews Brothers of Franklin Square concoct a wing with a jalapeño-Concord grape glaze and Indian satay peanut butter dipping sauce on the side.

"I wanted to do something different," says co-owner Brian Clermont. "I was eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and the idea popped into my head."

**Korean barbecue wing** — Croxley's Ale House of Farmingdale, Franklin Square, Smithtown and Rockville Centre presents a wing featuring a reduction of fresh lemongrass, ginger, pear juice, pineapple juice, a blend of chilies, garlic, pickling spice and ketchup, then garnished with chives, scallions, basil and sesame seeds.

"There seems to be a focus on ethnic sauces these days, and this is our twist on it," says co-owner and chef Ed Davis. "People love it because there are familiar flavors they recognize, but there's a lot of changing of the palate going on."

**BEST IN SHOW**

Each wing vendor will be judged in three categories: Best Buffalo Wing, Best Unique Flavor, Best Smoked Wing and Festival Favorite Award.

"The meat has to be tasty, not just the outside of the wing," says judge Chip "The King of Wings" Hearn, a wing restaurateur and hot-sauce distributor. "It has to look good, taste good and smell good."

Hearn, who can't be missed in his signature Hawaiian shirt and wacky hat, also will demonstrate how to make a lollipop wing.

"You use the drumstick portion of the wing and create a handle out of the bone," he explains. "Marinate it in bourbon for four hours in the fridge, wrap with bacon, grill it and eat like a lollipop."

**MEET SANTOS**

Celebrity chef and festival ambassador Chris Santos, a resident judge on the Food Network show "Chopped," will be on hand to meet fans. He will take a break from judging and serve up his own brand of gourmet wings made with his new Spanish chili-based barbecue sauce, Rattler.

"I'm a lifelong wing guy. The chicken wing is a brilliant canvas because there's just so many ways you can go," says Santos, who owns two restaurants in Manhattan. "They must be extra crispy and spicy-spicy, but with flavor."



Celebrity chef Chris Santos, resident judge on the Food Network show "Chopped," will serve his own wings.

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