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March 2008

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## family life

By Stephanie Lyons Schultz

# Ridgefield

## A Quaint, Family-Oriented 300-Year-Old Town

### Balducci's

Once a humble corner vegetable stand in Brooklyn and later a landmark store in Greenwich Village, this world-famous epicurean palace brings its gastronomic delights to Ridgefield. From chocolate to salmon; from the fresh meats, produce and deli to the bakery, gourmet cheeses, wine and restaurant-quality prepared meals, Balducci's is a sure-fire palate pleaser. 21 Governor St. 203-431-4400. [www.balduccis.com](http://www.balduccis.com).

### Deborah Ann's Sweet Shoppe

This place rivals Willy Wonka's as a candy and chocolate "fantasy" store where homemade chocolates, bulk candy, ice cream (summer only) and other gifts abound, made with only the finest ingredients. Satisfying a sweet tooth here is a no-brainer. Whether you are looking for indulgent truffles, creamy caramels or unique sponge candy – or classic jaw breakers, Jelly Belly jelly beans or a candy necklace, stop on in! They've also got Webkinz, great T-shirts, and other fun, specialty items to peruse. 381 Main St. 203-438-0065. [www.deborahanns.com](http://www.deborahanns.com).

### The Orange Elephant

A store to delight kids and grown-ups, the whimsy of the adorable orange pachyderm is overshadowed only by the incredible, hand-picked selection of books, games and educational toys. You'll be find yourself making excuses to buy people gifts. With storytimes, in-store events and birthday parties available, you and the little ones won't ever want to leave. 383 Main St. 203-431-7733. [www.orangeelephantbooks.com](http://www.orangeelephantbooks.com).

### The Cortina Shop

This children's clothing and gift shop is a statement in taste and quality. Find personalized baby gifts such as hand-painted plates and blankets. Sterling silver collectibles, stuffed animals by Blabla, Pancake Bears or Jellicats line the shelves surrounding rack after rack of the finest in kid-wear. Find the height of fashionable duds here from Hartstrings, Kissy Kissy, Robeez and more. 449 Main St. 203-438-3466. [www.cortinababy.com](http://www.cortinababy.com).

### The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Considered to be a non-collecting museum, this contemporary space reflects the works of emerging and mid-career artists. Curators select innovative and diverse exhibitions, which rotate regularly. Education programs for children and adults include workshops, family art adventures and a docent program. 258 Main St. 203-438-4519. [www.aldrichart.org](http://www.aldrichart.org).

### Mannen

This combination Chinese and Japanese restaurant is quality all the way. Sit on one side in a cozy booth or oversized armchair by the fire, or on the other side in traditional Japanese style with contemporary sunken seating. A full-service sushi bar is also available. Warm, professional service rounds out a spectacular meal. Family-friendly and reasonably priced, the extensive menu has something for everyone. Girolametti Court, 11 Danbury Rd., (Route 35). 203-438-8727. [www.mannenrestaurant.com](http://www.mannenrestaurant.com).

### hazel & sid

Meander into this unique shop and plan to spend some time perusing everything from vintage jewelry, antique furniture, eclectic clothing items and home accents. You'll find lots of one-of-a-kind and funky items – everything from a magenta velvet and crystal four-arm table lamp to handcrafted note cards to a fabulous inlay dining table. Come often to take advantage of spirited owner Andrea Anderson's treasures, which she hand-selects frequently. 423 Main St. 203-431-7747. [www.hazelandsid.com](http://www.hazelandsid.com).

