



## BEST OF THE BEST 2020

SEE WHAT WE'VE DISCOVERED IN OUR LOCAL DINING SCENE FOR YOU TO SAMPLE IN 2020!

This is our 16th year of highlighting what's new, interesting and noteworthy in our local dining scene—what we call the Best of the Best. We've selected almost a hundred restaurants, bars, cafes, bistros, distilleries, breweries and farms, plus local cookbooks, Instagram feeds and podcasts for your consideration.

Decide where you'll dine with friends and family—at spots recognized for Historic Hospitality, Chester County Classics, or Best Duck, Goat or Pizza. Sample Best Sour Beers and Orange Wines or Cocktail Shrubs and Juices. Whether you visit our Places to Watch, New Incarnations or Shining Stars, you'll be in awe of local chefs.

Read these pages to find your new favorites. But most important: dine local and often this year.

*Check our website for more on restaurants, food news, recipes, beer, wine and more. [CountyLinesMagazine.com](http://CountyLinesMagazine.com).*





Andiaro



Verbena BYOB



ChopHouse Grille



Refectory

## MAJOR STAR

### Andiaro

106 W. Gay St., West Chester  
484-887-0919 / [Andiaro.com](http://Andiaro.com)

**Y**es, yes, yes. Experience Andiaro. Let's count the ways this star has brightened our culinary sky. It's on all the "Best" lists—Craig LaBan's, *Philly Mag's*, James Beard semifinalist, and our own Best Of 2019. Surely you've listened to friends recount their dinner there or called to learn the long wait for a table. But persevere, for this sophisticated, "adaptive Italian" fine restaurant fills the void created by Gilmore's 2012 closing, just down Gay Street. Consider the pasta-bilities of the divine doughy confections from the kitchen—both egg and water pastas—filling the second slot, our favorite, of the Beginnings, Pastas, Protein, Desert menu. The changing, seasonal menu continues to reflect the network of local providers, including wine from Va La and Galen Glen. Check the website for the latest creations from the open kitchen so you can spin your own tales of delight.

## SHINING STAR

### Verbena BYOB

102 E. State St., Kennett Square  
484-732-7932 / [VerbenaBYOB.com](http://VerbenaBYOB.com)

**A**t Verbena BYOB, the food is as perfect on the eye as it is on the tongue. The six-course chef's tasting menu allows you to try several items from options that change with what's in season, as well as for sampling flavors you've been waiting for all your life. From a warm, rich charred apple soup that highlighted fruit notes of Brunello wine to a mille feuille dessert—layers of puff pastry filled with tea-whipped Chantilly cream and blackberries—every taste was a wonderful sensation. Other gems: tangy scallops, crispy-skinned succulent salmon with micro greens for a hint of color and boneless beef rib with beans. The simple, relaxing candlelit ambiance along with the creative combinations brought out conversation and the assertion we'd all be back. Stellar!

## BUZZWORTHY

### ChopHouse Grille

301 N. Pottstown Pk., Exton  
484-875-6700 / [ChopHouseGrille.com](http://ChopHouseGrille.com)

**H**ard to believe Exton didn't have a true steakhouse. Welcome the ChopHouse Grille, courtesy of the PJW Group (Pour House, P.J. Whelihan's), which opened last summer. People gush over the interior design—open air, high ceilings, industrial chic—the central bar and, in summer, outside bar and fire pit. The service is friendly and happy. But the serious raves are reserved for the steaks—filet mignon or Kona-crusted strip, in particular—complemented with intriguing starters, crispy Brussels sprouts, calamari or blistered shishito peppers. With about a dozen custom cocktails and 20-some by-the-glass wines, it's a perfect place for a birthday or date night.

### The Refectory

862 E. Lancaster Ave., Villanova  
610-519-5786 / [TheRefectoryGrill.com](http://TheRefectoryGrill.com)

**V**illanova University has a sophisticated-yet-casual restaurant on campus that's open to the public and located in the new Commons residence hall, across from the Performing Arts Center (opening soon) and close to Nova basketball games. Zavio Hospitality Group (Enoteca Tredici in Bryn Mawr) created an American bar and grill serving "elevated classics" ranging from sandwiches, salads, sushi and raw bar to 20-oz. ribeye steaks. A horseshoe-shaped bar, marble tabletops and wood banquettes give an upscale feel to the 150-guest dining room plus wine vault for smaller groups. Sip a Wildcat (Bluecoat gin, lemon, agave, blackberry), order your Villanova Tomato Salad and see if anyone at your table knows what refectory means.

### Rosalie

Wayne Hotel  
139 E. Lancaster Ave., Wayne  
610-687-5000 / [WayneHotel.com](http://WayneHotel.com)

**T**he iconic Wayne Hotel is getting a new onsite restaurant, replacing posh Paramour. The Fearless Restaurant Group—Moshulu, White Dog, Autograph—is working on a new dining destination to open in early 2020. Rosalie will feature Italian soul food, described by Executive Chef Merick Devine as "Italian cuisine, deeply rooted in tradition, heritage and technique, adapted to the local landscape with a gentle contemporary approach." Look for brunch, lunch and dinner

daily. Here's hoping they make the most of that great veranda!

## PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT

### Bodega by La Cabra

810 Glenbrook Ave., Bryn Mawr  
610-526-2337 / [BodegaByLaCabra.com](http://BodegaByLaCabra.com)

**W**e were sorry to see Biga Pizza close, but we're more than happy with its replacement. Bodega by La Cabra (from the Berwyn beer folks) is a no-nonsense barbecue place, with brisket "to die for"—slow-cooked, tender, blackened on the outside. The ribs are meaty and aromatic. The wings served whole, with a spicy rub very different—and better—than the conventional hot red, barbecue-sauced or deep-fried approach. And the spicy greens and baked beans laced with pork and just enough poblano to wake up your tongue, will not be forgotten. All can be washed down with a selection of La Cabra's brews.

### BOMBA Tacos & Rum

10 Liberty Blvd., Malvern  
[BombaTacos.com](http://BombaTacos.com)

**B**omba, a premium casual taco + more spot opening mid-January from the Ohio-based group behind Paladar in KOP, is about choice. Start with a flight of exotic rums: Gosling's Old Family and Don Q Gran Reserve are among the selection of over 100 varieties—more than there are islands in the Caribbean. Then build a guacamole, adding mango, candied pumpkin seeds, pickled jalapeños or about ten other ingredients to

fresh avocados. Choose your salsa—mango, grilled pineapple—and truly fresh tortilla chips. Then pick one of a dozen or so tacos, from smoked barbecue pork to blackened fish. That is, if you can resist the Cuban sandwich. So many choices.

### Sedona Taphouse

131 Bridge St. #5, Phoenixville  
484-302-5714 / [SedonaTaphouse.com](http://SedonaTaphouse.com)

**A**rriving in Phoenixville last March, the Sedona Taphouse was a nearly instant sensation. It's still buzzing with food and fun. Inside or on the deck, the chain that hardly seems like a chain serves up Southwest-inspired cuisine, specialty cocktails and, of course, beer—bottle, can or draft. Start with Desert Fire Jalapeños or Canyon Crab Flatbread. Continue with burgers, sliders, salads or Devil's Pass pasta. Grab a beer—names are as entertaining as they are good: Scarecrow wheat, These Pretzels are Making Me Thirsty lager or Sculpin IPA. With fire pits, televisions and outdoor bar, good times are always on tap.

### GG Italian

1110 Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills  
610-358-2676 / [GGItalian.com](http://GGItalian.com)

**Y**ou don't need to be an out-of-towner staying at the Comfort Inn and Suites in Glen Mills to enjoy the new sleek black, white and red GG Italian restaurant. On the north side of the hotel, enter at the awning bearing its name. Authentic Italian dishes abound. For smaller bites, try pizzas and salads. For bigger appetites, start with scrippelle soup—crepes, shaved Parmesan and chicken



BOMBA Tacos & Rum



Sedona Taphouse



broth—and continue on to veal Oscar with jumbo lump crab, asparagus, Parmesan risotto. End with honey ricotta cheesecake or cappuccino tiramisu. Make reservations for Friday or Saturday nights—food fans have already found it.

## PLACES TO WATCH

### The Blue Elephant

152 E. High St., Pottstown

484-949-9084 / [BlueElephantBar.com](http://BlueElephantBar.com)

Take in the glorious setting in a former Pottstown bank building: vaults, brass, 30-foot quartz bar, soaring ceilings, huge fountain, with chairs and velvet curtains of imperial blue—the latest from Win Signature Restaurants (Teikoku, Azie). In this setting, Executive Chefs Juan and Felipe Calixto serve an eclectic Asian fusion menu—Italian-Thai with Japanese and French influences. From the Thai side, drunken noodles and green curry lobster linguine. From Japan, choose from five different sushis and tempuras, including kanikazi, shrimp tempura with salmon, asparagus, and eel sauce. Quite a range, but it works.

### Bua Loy Cuisine

300 W. Lancaster Ave., Devon

610-341-8162 / [BuaLoyCuisine.com](http://BuaLoyCuisine.com)

Bua Loy means “floating lotus” and represents Chef Bualoy’s emigration from Laos to America, seeking a better future for her family. We hope she’s found it. Based on the cuisine of Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, the food is authentic and good. The aroma is soft and unmistakable: Lao-tian sausage, a host of satays and curries, dumplings, sticky and crispy rice, glass noodles, coconut milk, lemongrass, pad Thai, pho .... Don’t be put off by the strip mall location. Inside, it’s cozy, quiet and intimate. Listen closely. You’ll think you hear the Mekong River.

### Café de Thai

420 W. Cypress St., Kennett Square

610-924-2828 / [CafeDeThai.us](http://CafeDeThai.us)

There’s now a good Thai restaurant in Kennett Square. Chef Jaruwanee Primo, who trained at the Wandee Culinary Art School in Bangkok—plus 17 years at restaurants in Lake Tahoe, LA, San Bernadino and Pittsburgh—visited Longwood Gardens and fell in love. Last March, she opened Café de Thai, focusing on the cuisine she grew up with, married to our local foods. Try Kennett Pad Thai or Fish Longwood. These are but flourishes to an authentic cuisine and extensive menu including pho, noodles, curries and ramens, leaning heavily on basil, mushrooms, scallions, ginger and coconut, and complemented with duck, chicken and seafood. The tastes, sublime.

### Mama Wong

268 Eagleview Blvd., Exton

484-713-8888 / [BestMamaWong.com](http://BestMamaWong.com)

Located in a shopping center and focusing on Szechuan cuisine, this restaurant, alas, has no Mama Wong. Meet instead Chef Hongbin Luo, formerly of Han Dynasty, and co-owner Song Li, biotech businessman and force behind the venture, who built Mama Wong to remind his Exton-based employees of home. And they do remember! Striving for genuine and authentic, the cuisine is overall hot, with some concessions to Americans’ palates, but the many dumplings, dan dan noodles, dry pepper chicken wings, cumin lamb chop, smoked duck, flounder and striped bass are all declared by diners to be “amazing” and “fantastic.” Craig Laban agrees, awarding two bells.

## BREAD & CHEESE

### Brandywine Valley Bread

3941 Lincoln Hwy., Downingtown

484-698-8172 / [BrandywineValleyBread.com](http://BrandywineValleyBread.com)

While man may not be able to live by bread alone, life without bread may not be worth living. So say fans of this simple pleasure. For those, a trip to Fran McLaughlin’s Brandywine Valley Bread brick-and-mortar store is a must. Having recently celebrated the one-year anniversary of the store, the baker-in-chief still makes the rounds to area farmers markets bringing samples of his naturally leavened goodness (no packaged yeast required). Pullman loaves of ancient grains, spelt and sourdough, classic baguettes, everything bagels, rosemary olive focaccia. Even morning buns, vegan croissants and cherry walnut cookies. It’s why “sold out” notices go up on Facebook.

### Di Bruno Bros.

Snafford Shopping Center

Lancaster Ave., Wayne / [DiBruno.com](http://DiBruno.com)

Cheese glorious cheese and more are coming to the Kitchen Kapers spot in the Snafford Shopping Center, near the Lancaster County Farmer’s Market. Gourmet food market Di Bruno Bros., long a favorite at Ardmore’s Farmer’s Market and harking back to 1939 at South Philly’s Italian Market, is bringing their fresh pasta and bread, antipasti bar and prepared foods to Wayne. And so much more—coffee, caviar, chocolate, cookies, condiments and, of course, cheese. With options from award-winning to stinky and funky cheese plus the planned liquor license, Di Bruno’s will satisfy your cheese pairing dreams.

## NEW INCARNATIONS

### 118 North

118 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne

610-971-2628 / [118NorthWayne.com](http://118NorthWayne.com)

The big news is that Wayne’s restaurant, bar and music club has partnered with the folks from Ardmore Music Hall, and more importantly, Ripplewood Whiskey and Craft. The Ripp, as it’s

called, earned three bells from Craig LaBan, with special raves for the double patty burger with fried Lebanon bologna that caught our attention last year. You’ll find similar cleverly updated pub fare from Chef Biff Gottehrer, including a North Burger with American cheese, brie, onion jam and special sauce, plus lamb burgers and pork burgers. The menu is full of tempting comfort food—brisket dip, fried cheese curds, sublime garlic Parker House rolls, and another favorite, the Brookie (brownie/cookie combo).

### Nui Nui Kitchen

301 Bridge St., Phoenixville

484-302-5141 / [NuiNuiKitchen.com](http://NuiNuiKitchen.com)

Chef Nui Kullanna has redone Thai L’Elephant—and raised her ambitions—with the help of husband, Chef Francis Pascal of Birchrunville Store Café. The elegant new restaurant gets nothing but raves. Featuring Asian cuisine, fused with French inspiration, the menu features Thai classics—Tom yum soup, pad Thai, drunken noodles. The curries are simply sublime. Even more special are General Tso’s Chilean seabass or hoisin pork rigatoni. The beautifully presented food is matched by the splendid service. Nui Nui is perfectly lovely.

### Rye BYOB

112 W. State St., Media

610-565-5554 / [LotusFarmToTable.com](http://LotusFarmToTable.com)

Foodies are salivating in anticipation of upcoming Rye BYOB by former Lotus Farm to Table Chef Ryan Sulikowski and his wife, Brianne. With new American smaller plates to be tasted, savored and shared, the food sets the stage for the restaurant’s design: a comfortable, never stuffy, environment and whimsical plating on dishes of varied shapes and colors to highlight sweet, salty, temperature and texture. Special Sunday night dinners—reminiscent of the

owners’ childhood family meals—bring staff, purveyors and the public together for wonderful food, relaxed service and great conversation. Can’t wait? Taste-test and provide feedback at three Tyler Arboretum Chef’s Tastings by reservation in January and February.

## NEW HORIZONS

### Avalon Bistro & Bar

818 W. Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr

610-520-9700 / [AvalonBistroBM.com](http://AvalonBistroBM.com)

The Main Line is embracing this latest offering from Chef John Brandt-Lee. We suggest you surprise the table and order the Avalon Burger: fine meat, caramelized onion, bacon and cheddar cheese on a brioche bun. Served rare, it’s perfect. So were bacon-wrapped dates and an egg roll appetizer of short rib, onion and horseradish. For other entrees, try the Judy Foodie Pasta Special with shredded short ribs, mushrooms, caramelized onion and pappardelle, or lamb Bolognese, with ricotta and gemelli. We remembered the latter fondly from a Christmas past, at parent Bar Avalon in West Chester, which many enthusiastically recalled as the best Christmas party meal ever.

### Brick & Brew Gastropub

400 E. King St., Malvern

484-320-8688 / [BrickNBrewPub.com](http://BrickNBrewPub.com)

This Delco fave (Media, Havertown) arrived in Chester County in a big way this past summer. Brick & Brew transformed an old office building on Malvern’s King Street into a huge hip 5,000-square-foot space (150 inside/70 patio) with steel beams, architectural salvage, a green wall, exposed brick and ... brews. Twice the size of the other locations, the Malvern spot is different in décor but retains the same elevated gastropub menu, with variety in the weekly specials



Avalon Bistro & Bar



Sterling Pig Public House

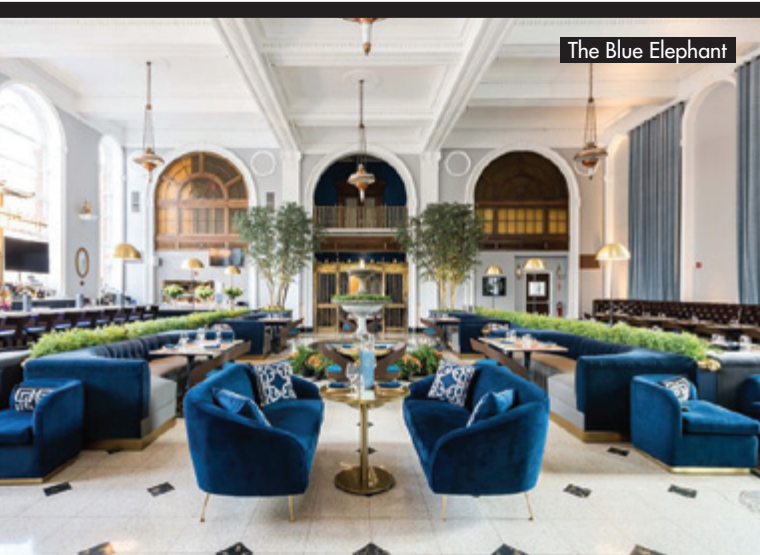
(for burgers, wings, flatbreads, soups). Enjoy fried pickles, burgers, pulled pork, brisket and wild boar sliders, plus 14 taps and creative cocktails. All Instagram-worthy. Big news: now taking reservations!

### Sterling Pig Public House

113 W. Market St., West Chester

484-999-8026 / [SterlingPig.com](http://SterlingPig.com)

Looking for The Snuffler? You’ll find the IPA at the Sterling Pig Public House in West Chester. One of the most popular beers from Sterling Pig Brewery in Media, The Snuffler—as well as Le Cochon Noir, Shoa Pilsner and others—plus dishes like tender well-seasoned brisket with four sauces, buttery cornbread, baked beans and buttermilk spicy chicken sandwich have been in their newest home on Market Street since February 2019. With industrial chic exposed ceiling ducts and brick wall, the pub can host you, about 99 friends and “pigs” for all at long tables and the bar ... without driving to Media.



The Blue Elephant



Brandywine Valley Bread



### Stove & Tap

245 Lancaster Ave., Malvern  
215-393-8277 / [StoveAndTap.com](#)

Both Frazer and West Chester are getting branches of this popular, throwback American Landsdale dining spot from the Justin Weathers/Joe Monnich team behind Exton's Al Pastor and Ardmore's The Bercy. The Frazer location (in former Carrabba's; West Chester location later in 2020, in former Landmark Americana) delayed opening after being hit by a tar truck. It'll be more smokehouse/grill than American/Brit gastropub of the original. Look for chef-driven menus of comfort food—brisket, burgers, pot pie—accompanied by a strong drinks menu with American beers and wines, plus craft cocktails like Suburbia (with Lillet) and Cricket Club (Pimms #1). Enjoy patio seating for 50 with two fire pits and a signature taxidermied bear, à la Landsdale.

### White Dog Cafe

981 Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills  
484-842-1757 / [WhiteDog.com](#)

With the spring 2020 opening of a Glen Mills location, there's a fourth pup in the White Dog Cafe family. At the Shoppes at Brinton Lake, it joins other Fearless Restaurants known for great food and neighborhood feel. White Dog lovers look forward to farm fresh menu favorites, the same eye toward sustainability and community spirit, and playful signature art by James McClellan who painted dog portraits for the Philly, Wayne and Haverford restaurants. If there are spots left, commission your pooch's portrait to join the new cafe's celebrity canine gallery while helping support two dog-related nonprofits.

### GOOD NEWS

#### Byrsa Bistro

127 E. State St., Kennett Square  
610-444-5050 / [ByrsaLegacy.com](#)

All you Mediterranean food lovers, there's another reason for a celebratory dinner. Byrsa Bistro now has two locations—the charmer by the picturesque train station in Glen Mills and an attractive new storefront location on State Street in Kennett Square, the town where they began. Dip into your old favorites from their previous menu—Byrsa's chicken tagine or paella. Raise a glass of wine or beer from Sterling Pig Brewery with Kennett mushrooms flatbread. Open for Happy Hour Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; dinner every night but Tuesday.

### Portabello's

108 E. State St., Kennett Square  
610-925-4984 / [PortabellosOfKennettSquare.com](#)

The name's the same but Portabello's new space on East State Street is four times as large and there's a liquor license (bye, BYOB), so prepare for porcini-infused whiskey in your Manhattan. As you'd expect from the name, the menu remains fungi-centric, even listing mushroom sources—To-Jo's, Philips, Lafferty, plus more—in changing, seasonal dishes described as “American food with international flair.” Try Portabello fries, exotic mushroom crepe, mushroom fondue, roasted mushroom soup, pappardelle Forestiere, Stroganoff with crimini. Sip a seasonal cocktail (Naughty Autumn with pumpkin coffee rum) or specialty cocktails (Pomegranate Blood Orange Old Fashioned), or choose beer, cider or something from the wine list. And enjoy the music!

### BEER TO GO SPOT

#### Pinocchio's Restaurant & Beer Garden To Go

131 E. Baltimore Ave., Media  
610-566-7767 / [PinPizza.com](#)

Sipping craft beer at a brewery is a peak experience, but sometimes you want a selection to enjoy in the comfort of your home. That's when

to head for Pinocchio's, Delco's first bottle shop with 25 rotating beers on tap and 1,000 specialty beers—with everything from local choices to a bevy of Belgians. So bring your growler, get a custom crowler (your choice on tap in a can), or mix and match a six-pack to satisfy the gang. New choices arrive everyday, and this busy shop has turnover to ensure the beers you buy are fresh.

### COLD BEER

#### Kennett Winterfest

Kennett Square

610-444-8188 / [KennettWinterfest.com](#)

Despite the British preference for warm beer, here we love our beer cold. And some of the coldest can be found at Kennett Square's Winterfest, an annual outdoor celebration of beer, coming on leap day, February 29, 2020. This younger winter complement to October's Brewfest (8 years vs. 22), lets beer fans sample from 60-some craft breweries—local, national and emerging, plus ciders and meads. Using your little plastic tasting mug, you can sample to your hearth's content, drinking widely from breweries coast to coast or focusing on your faves—like porters. Tickets on sales now. Enjoy the beer bliss!

### ST. PADDY'S DAY CELEBRATION

#### Molly Maguire's Irish Restaurant & Pub

197 Bridge St., Phoenixville

610-933-9550 / [MollyMaguiresPhoenixville.com](#)

Among the great choices for celebrating St. Patrick's Day, being Irish or hanging with friends, Molly Maguire's should top your list. Owned by two folks from Ireland—Declan Mannion from Galway and Conor Cummins from Cork—this place starts celebrating when it opens for breakfast serving a limited traditional

Irish menu (scrambled eggs, Irish rashers, white pudding, sausage, baked beans and toast). Three floors (if it's warm enough for the rooftop deck) plus a tented beer garden host Irish music, Irish dancing and spirited shenanigans. Plenty of Irish grub—boxty to shepherd's pie. Join in and be Irish for a day.

### WILD / SOUR BEERS

#### La Cabra Brewing

642 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn

610-240-7908 / [LaCabraBrewing.com](#)

Not everyone is a fan of sour beers. Many palates haven't developed a taste for those tart, funky, intense flavors—even among wine lovers. But when yet another hopped-up IPA fails to tickle your taste buds, it's time for the bright refreshing edge of sours. We suggest a brewer who makes some of the best—Dan Popernack at La Cabra Brewing. Touting sours' authenticity (often brewed with yeast in the brewery's air), long shelf life and food-friendliness, he turned out sours in his Aleatory series that made neighboring Nectar restaurant's beer list. At press time you could sip Cereze Kriek (sour cherry), Albaricoque (sour apricot) in bottles. Puckeringly yummy.

### ORANGE WINE

#### Va La Winery

8820 Gap Newport Pk., Avondale

610-268-2702 / [VaLaVineyards.com](#)

Yes, orange wine. In view of rows of grapevines, find a captivating stone and wood barn turned wine-tasting room for Va La Vineyards. It's the perfect backdrop for sipping local orange wines—whites that have fermented in their skins to produce liquids from pale gold to pumpkin. Taste Va La's honey-colored La Prima Donna, a white blend, with homemade focaccia from the winemaker's grandmother's recipe. Or aromatic Zafferano—the color of deep butterscotch or saffron, as its name indicates. Beautiful on the table and on your palate.

### REASON TO DRINK PA WINE

#### Penns Woods Winery

124 Beaver Valley Rd., Chadds Ford

610-459-0808 / [PennsWoodsWinery.com](#)

October was PA Wine Month, but we think you should give local wine a year-round chance. And Penns Wood Winery offers two

compelling reasons to give them a try. First their wine club, which started with 50 members, now tops 550 and has a waiting list. Plus cool events like a members-only five-course harvest dinner in the vineyard, catered by John Serock. Second, no less than glittery Jean-Georges restaurant atop the Comcast Center pours Penns Woods' Chabourcin Reserve by the glass. Not for nothing: James Suckling awarded 96 points to the 2013 and 2015 Ameritage Reserve. Okay, three reasons.

### CREATIVE WINE PAIRING

#### Vintner's Table

135 Bridge St., Phoenixville

484-408-6147 / [Vintners-Table.com](#)

Thanks to the Folino Estate Winery, from Berks County, Phoenixville has a tasting room reminiscent of a Tuscan enoteca. And thanks to the creativity of Mrs. Folino and staff, it held innovative pairings with different wines for events throughout its first year on Bridge Street. At wooden tables near the fireplace, patrons sampled Thanksgiving pies and Halloween candies. (As they said, why should kids have all the fun?) Mother's Day weekend featured a sweet tasting with cupcakes from Philly's Bredenbeck's Bakery. Summer brought cannoli, then gelato imported from Italy with wine including dolce bianco and sparkling red. Check their website for 2020 tasting events.

### WINE EVENT

#### Brandywine River Museum of Art

1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford

610-388-2700 / [Brandywine.org](#)

Looking for a date to share with your Irish red and white setter? Or perhaps golden retriever pooch? The Brandywine River Museum has events for you in the museum courtyard, debuted in 2019 to be repeated in 2020, for two- and four-footed friends. Wags and Wine features local wines, live music, menu created by Chef Mike Kline of the Millstone Café and entertainment. Barks and Brews boasts the same features—exchanging craft beers for wine—plus pups in Oktoberfest costumes. Sitters watch your setters while you tour indoor art exhibits. Next dates TBD.

### CREATIVE COCKTAILS

#### Black Powder Tavern

1164 Valley Forge Rd., Wayne  
610-293-9333 / [BlackPowderTavern.com](#)



La Cabra Brewing



Va La Winery



Black Powder Tavern



Stove & Tap



White Dog Cafe



Portabello's



**B**lack Powder Tavern has been one of our top go-to places for after-work drinks, with great apps, strong craft beer and wine selections. But the specialty and seasonal cocktails add another dimension. For fall, bar manager Thomas Deems spent three months developing 10 new cocktails—with help from Yelpers—with spices, seasonal ingredients and fun names. Fall featured Pumpkin Time Again (Pearl Vodka, Kahlua, pumpkin spice creamer, ground clove) and Pie Eagles Pie (Crown Apple, Crown Vanilla, ginger ale). Winter brings Peppermint and Chocolate Covered Cherry Martinis, plus Campfire (Sling Glenmorangie, maple syrup, Aztec chocolate bitters) and more. Find your favorite.

## COCKTAIL LAB

### Tavola Restaurant

400 W. Sproul Rd., Springfield  
610-543-2100 / [Tavolas.com](http://Tavolas.com)

**M**uch more fun than high school chem lab, Tavola's monthly Cocktail Lab leaves everyone smiling. On the first Tuesday of most months, reserve your space to learn how to craft the featured cocktail. Enjoy light nibbles, a spirits tasting to prepare for the interactive cocktail lab. Your teacher is an expert mixologist who will guide your experiment. November featured an Apple Jack with Jack Daniel's Tennessee honey, while December focused on a seasonal eggnog and rum inspired drink. No labs in January or February, but check social media for what's next on the syllabus.

## SMALL BATCH DISTILLERY

### Manatawny Still Works

320 Circle of Progress Dr., Ste 104., Pottstown  
484-624-8271 / [ManatawnyStillWorks.com](http://ManatawnyStillWorks.com)

**C**rafting spirits should be fun, and the folks at Manatawny Distilling find ways to keep it new, interesting and excellent. This small batch distillery brought home a batch of awards from the American Craft Distilling Institute in four categories, including Best Of category trophies for PA Whiskey and Honey Whiskey. Other years they've released Maple Whiskey (yum) and Apple Brandy made with apples from Frecon Orchards, just six miles away. Last year their Coffee Whiskey was a surprise repeat (made possible by the government shutdown) and heralded a new 'port-folio' of spirits—rum, gin and whiskey finished in port casks, adding extra layers of flavor.

## FROZEN DRINKS

### Más Mexicali Cantina

102 E. Market St., West Chester  
610-918-6280 / [MasMexicali.com](http://MasMexicali.com)

**I**t might not be Cinco de Mayo but any day is a fiesta at Más Mexicali Cantina. Indoors or on the rooftop deck any hour is Happy Hour with hand-shaken margaritas: the classic favorite, black raspberry, El Diablo with muddled serrano peppers or Pepino with muddled cucumber. Even better, let it all go with a frozen margarita: blood orange, strawberry or the icy version of their signature. All with award-winning tequila, freshly squeezed lime juice and accompanied by tacos, fajitas, burritos and DJ music to make your tastebuds sing and your feet dance.

## RECYCLING PROGRAM

### Brandywine Branch Distillers

350 Warwick Rd., Elverson  
610-901-3668 / [RevivalistSpirits.com](http://RevivalistSpirits.com)

**W**e all need to do our part to save the planet, but there are extra points for creativity. As part of their grain-to-glass mission, Brandywine Branch Distilling takes extra steps to minimize their environmental impact. In addition to recycling cooling water from the distilling process, their spent grains get donated to local farmers, including Danny Messner of Bethany Farm, just five miles away in Glenmoore. Messner takes thousands of gallons of spent grain back to his farm to feed to his cattle. He reports that the cows might "get a little bit of a buzz" from it, but no complaints.

## SHRUBS

### Tait Farm Foods

179 Tait Rd., Centre Hall, PA  
814-466-3411 / [TaitFarmFoods.com](http://TaitFarmFoods.com)

**Y**ou may have heard about cocktail shrubs or drinking vinegars, a newly popular tart/sweet cocktail and mocktail ingredient dating back to Colonial times. This fruit-vinegar-sugar combo comes in a concentrated syrup to add to club soda or spirits, sparkling wine and beer. How to explore this refreshing elixir that's also good for salads or marinades? You can DIY or try one of 16 shrubs from Tait Farm, credited with launching the modern shrub revolution. Located outside State College, they've been making shrubs since 1987, and offer varieties, from beet to wild blueberry. Available at local specialty food stores and online.

## AL FRESCO DINING

### Downtown West Chester

Gay St., West Chester  
610-738-3350 / [West-Chester.com](http://West-Chester.com)

**W**hat's more appealing on a summer evening than dining by moonlight? Dining and drinking under twinkling stars or twinkle lights in West Chester



Tavola Restaurant



Great American Pub



Spence Cafe



Al Fresco Dining in West Chester

at its new Al Fresco dining launch. With good reviews of local chefs and abundant fresh food at last September's debut, 2020 evenings are on the menu. Under consideration: four special evenings—two on the west side of town and two on the east—likely first Thursdays of June, July, August and September, with participating restaurants, strolling entertainment and sidewalk vendors. Watch for details as West Chester joins Media and Kennett Square with dining in the streets.

## HISTORIC HOSPITALITY

### General Warren

9 Old Lancaster Rd., Malvern  
610-296-3637 / [GeneralWarren.com](http://GeneralWarren.com)

**C**elebrating 275 years of hospitality at the same location, offering memorable meals and lodging, the General Warren must be doing something right. (Inne is gone from the name, but not from the mission.) While the coat-and-tie, reservations-only times are gone, the classic American cuisine—beef Wellington, table-side bananas Foster—can still be found in the dining room. Now more casual options are available in the Warren Tavern (small plates, sharables, lighter fare, Happy Hour) and charming Spring House Terrace space (an al fresco space, plus a year-round level). Stay tuned for details about the upcoming 275th anniversary plans—specialty brewed beers, private labeled wines, food paring dinners and more. Congrats!

## BBQ DISHES

### Great American Pub

148 Bridge St., Phoenixville  
610-917-3333 / [TheGreatAmericanPub.com](http://TheGreatAmericanPub.com)

**F**irst, regulars rave about the service. Friendly, timely, with a "real family feeling." A kind of everyone-knows-your-name place. Second, they'll gush over the location in the old Columbia Hotel, a grand old mansion reminiscent of New Orleans, with a fabulous courtyard outside. It quickly became the go-to place in Phoenixville, whether for lunch, dinner, late-night or brunch on weekends. Finally, they cite the food in general and the barbecue in particular, especially the smoked brisket, either as a sandwich, taco or open-face platter along with the pork, chicken or a slab of ribs. The vegan menu—particularly the impossible burger—also whets appetites and brings folks back for more.

## BRITISH BRUNCH

### The Whip Tavern

1383 N. Chatham Rd., West Marlborough  
610-383-0600 / [TheWhipTavern.com](http://TheWhipTavern.com)

**A**fter a scenic Chester County ride that evokes images of James Herriott country, pop into an authentic pub (riding boots optional). Tuck into your favorites—the rustic Whip Tavern serves the Brits' best menu options for brunch. Start with a Scotch egg, Welsh rarebit or lamb sausage rolls accompanied by a pint. Trade a bite of tradition, a Breakfast Bubble and Squeak—potato cakes with cabbage topped with bacon and fried egg—for a morsel of a friend's gravy-covered bacon cheddar scones. Feeling a bit rebellious? Order the southern American shrimp and grits. Finish with sticky toffee pudding. Cheers!

## HOMELY BRUNCH

### Roots Cafe

133 E. Gay St., West Chester  
610-455-0100 / [RootsCafeWC.com](http://RootsCafeWC.com)

**T**ake a seat at a wooden table at Roots near the old marble fireplace façade lined with candles. Delight in comfortable charm. A drink arrives in a mason jar. Brunch of delicious lox Benedict or a burger with arugula and goat cheese is presented by friendly staff who engage with you in conversation about menu options, local cheese makers and the paintings on the wall. With Roots as a new extension of his studio, John Hannafin's paintings—scenes of West Chester buildings with whimsical angles and warm lighting—perfectly capture the spirit of the homey café.

## BURGER VARIATIONS

### Righteous Tap House

1548 Shadyside Rd., West Chester  
484-593-0850 / [RighteousTapHouse.com](http://RighteousTapHouse.com)

**I**f the Sistine Chapel were in Pennsylvania, Michelangelo would have ended his week at the Righteous Tap House, where art with irreverent humor is on the house. Next to the portrait of a monk with a mug, stained glass with divine advice and a twist on Michelangelo's ceiling masterpiece, customers order from "a heavenly selection" of "devilishly good" food and beer. They rave about the Inquisition Burgers with bacon jam, fried egg and other condiments, and wings (fit for an angel). Have a Corona or a craft, domestic or imported beer. Two patios, live music, tucked among the trees just outside West Chester.

## BYOB

### Spence Cafe

131 N. High St., West Chester  
610-918-1272 / [Spence.cafe](http://Spence.cafe)



Spence has had a few incarnations since 1996, but its current location on North High and status as a BYOB help it enjoy a growing fan base. As always, the New American offerings, with an emphasis on highest quality and local sources, are superb, balancing strong seafood options (halibut, seafood lasagna) with full-bodied meat (short ribs, pork chops, filet). Comfortable fine dining means you can grab any bottle of wine or select a special bottle for that special occasion. You'll see anniversary celebrations alongside the pre-theater crowd and couples returning week after week—it's that kind of place. Plus easy parking out back.

## BEST CAKES

### The Master's Baker

319 West Gay St., West Chester  
610-436-9888 / [TheMastersBaker.com](#)

What began as a friend's birthday cake became a thriving business. The Master's Baker celebrates 50 years in 2020. Start with a flavor: extraordinary chocolate, hazelnut praline, orange velvet or pink champagne—"a party on a cake stand." Choose a filling, perhaps a layer of Belgian ganache, Oreo mousse, raspberry jam or mocha butter cream. Add the pièce de résistance. TMB's icing on the cake is edible art—frosting and adornment of icing rosettes, edible violets or flowers painted in butter cream for weddings, a castle for princess birthdays or your imagination's fancy to make any day a red-letter day.

## BEST CAT CAFÉ

### The Black Cat Cafe

42 Berkeley Rd., Devon  
610-688-1930 / [TheBlackCatCafe.org](#)

Try dining for a cause at the Main Line's only nonprofit cat café, where the proceeds support PALS (Pet Adoptions and Lifecare Society). Yummy and very affordable (\$6.50 for 2 eggs, home fries and toast) breakfast and lunch in a charming cottage atmosphere with happy volunteers as staff. Try melty, gooey cheese panini, vegan options and the specialty three bean chili. Adoptable cats are available in the gift store. Isn't that so much better than a doggie bag?

## BEST LOCAL CHEESE

### Doe Run Cheese

The Farm at Doe Run, 324 Hicks Rd., Coatesville  
610-384-1900 / [On Facebook](#)

One of the prettiest and most sustainability-conscious farms in Chester County is home to sheep, goats, cows, people—and cheese. Doe Run Cheese, in fact. Hummingbird, St. Malachi, Seven Sisters and Blow Horn, to name just a few, are some of the creamiest, boldest, butteriest, earthiest ... well, best, you'll discover anywhere. Find them where you find foodies: upscale markets, restaurants and local wineries. Whether you're pairing, nibbling, baking or grilling, you'll discover the reasons Doe Run receives so many ribbons year after year from the American Cheese Society, Pennsylvania Farm Show, the World Cheese Awards and others.

## BEST LOCAL TV CHEF

### Kristina Wisneski

Amis Trattoria  
138 W. Lancaster Ave., Devon  
610-590-4782 / [AmisTrattoria.com](#)

You don't have to be an insider on the reality television cooking show "Chopped" to taste the flavors served up by Chef Kristina Wisneski. Catching her culinary talents is as easy as going to Amis Trattoria in Devon. Wisneski won an episode of the TV contest with three courses: steamed wontons, roasted pheasant and mousse—each with its own adventurous ingredients, including water chestnuts, green tomatoes, tepache liqueur and moon drop grapes. Now she's delighting Main Liners at dinner with pear and arugula salad, swordfish, sage and orange-stuffed chicken and vegan sweet potato lasagna. Everyone's a happy winner at Happy Hour with avocado bruschetta, pizzas and meatballs.

## BEST CHESTER COUNTY CLASSIC

### The Kimberton Inn

2105 Kimberton Rd., Kimberton  
610-933-8148 / [KimbertonInn.com](#)

Couples visit for anniversaries, others go for special occasions, and still others for the many receptions, banquets and events. All enjoy a bit of history in the 1796 building with its quintessential Chester County ambiance. Open Table diners voted it one of the most romantic restaurants in PA in 2019—maybe it's the five fireplaces and many private rooms. After its 25+-year chef left, former sous chef and new head Chef Tom Wolter (Le Bec Fin, Ritz Carleton) has kept the stellar ratings. The menu is evolving—more small plates, sharables, rotating entrees—but the classics remain with salmon, pork chops, liver and onions and "The Best Salad" still getting raves.

## BEST CHILI

### Saloon 151

151 W. Gay St., West Chester  
610-701-8489 / [Saloon151.com](#)

When you're hankering for fries, wings or a quesadilla, maybe with a bowl of award-winning chili (West Chester Rotary 2019 winner), along with a burger, brisket or roast pork sandwich, head for a saloon that's oozing with the hearty, rugged goodness of the Old West—that's Saloon 151. Order one of the whiskeys on the special menu—there are countless bottles and brands behind the bar. Or a beer. Settle in. There are 20 TV screens set to the sports channels. Owner Frank Herron set out to fill a "hole in the market." He filled it with a good one.

## BEST COFFEE DRINK

### Philter

111 W. State St., Kennett Square  
610-444-7687 / [PhilterCoffee.com](#)

Sun streams through the front windows. Patrons' smiles and conversation—of millennials, boomers and everyone between—are as warm and vibrant as the art on the walls. What's cooler than cool at Philter are the seasonal espresso milkshakes. The smooth blend of espresso and vanilla ice cream, served in metal mixing cups to be ecologically friendly as well as fun, is superb. Enjoy one with a freshly made egg and salmon sandwich, mushroom soup or a boutique chocolate bar. If you're a tad sad when winter weather sets in, order a mocha latte and sit in the sunny window. Bliss.

## BEST CORN ON THE COB

### Pete's Produce Farm

1225 E. Street Rd., West Chester  
610-399-3711 / [PetesProduceFarm.com](#)

A friend from Texas said the best reason to cross the Mississippi was to eat Pennsylvania's sweet corn on the cob. Surely, he was referring to Pete's Produce Farm. Steamed, boiled or grilled, then buttered and salted, nothing makes a great summer picnic or meal on the deck like peak season corn. Hands at Pete's pick ears seasonally at 7 a.m. each morning. Varieties include Glacial White or Bicolor, Seminole Gold, Kate and Rosie (who knew?). A treat raw, right off the stalk or cooked and cut from the cob combined with Pete's heirloom tomatoes. How sweet it is!

## BEST COUNTRY ELEGANCE

### Catherine's Restaurant

1701 W. Doe Run Rd., Unionville  
610-347-2227 / [CatherinesRestaurant.com](#)

If you're looking for a touch of country elegance, look no farther than Catherine's. The old Unionville home among trees and flowers—in window boxes, bursting from the patio gardens and on tables—is casual and classy. Enjoy unparalleled mushroom soup with crab and eggs Benedict with local Canadian bacon under a patio umbrella, in season, where a rustic blue table and lanterns conjure up Provence. Inside among antique country furniture, glowing candlelight and white tablecloths, enjoy a meal of goat cheese salad, blackened tuna or pork tenderloin. Linger over coffee or head back out to horse country, thoroughly contented.

## BEST CSA

### Rushton Farm

Willistown Conservation Trust  
911 Delchester Rd., Newtown Square  
610-353-2562 / [WCTrust.org](#)

Rushton Farm's CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is almost too good. For 24 weeks, May to October, fresh, seasonal, pesticide- and chemical-free vegetables and fruits are available to fee-paying members. At your farm pick-up, walk the fields, chat with the farmer, pick herbs and flowers. Or just grab your share—your membership portion of what's grown that week—and go. Clean, chop and create meals with your bounty. Oh, and enjoy. From arugula to zucchini, with celeriac, kohlrabi, okra and more in between. Extras go to West Chester's Food Cupboard. Plus fun tastings and a harvest celebration. The bad news is they're such a great CSA, there's a waiting list for membership.

## BEST DINER

### Miss Oxford Diner

233 S 3rd St., Oxford  
610-932-2653 / [MissOxfordDiner.com](#)

Pull up by the neon sign and Old Glory. The entrance clock says one thing but the time is 1955. Welcome to Miss Oxford Diner, where Tuesday is chicken pot pie night and Thursday means meat loaf and mashed potatoes. Built in 1953, the silver diner is now a classic as are its cheeseburgers, fries in plastic baskets, root beers and vintage vinyl 45s, Coca-Cola ads and Cor-

vette photos lining the shelf. How it got its name is a matter of legend. Pam, the friendly owner, says she was never Miss Oxford, just sometimes Miss-Taken. Go—it's the living end.

## BEST DINNER WITH A VIEW

### Kitty Knight House

14028 Augustine Herman Hwy., Georgetown, MD  
410-648-5200 / [KittyKnight.com](#)

Kitty Knight, niece of a member of the House of Representatives, savior of Georgetown, Maryland, in 1812, saved what became known as the Kitty Knight House from British torches. Kitty bought the place after the war and protected much of Georgetown and its residents from disaster. Today, viewing the Chesapeake scenery, sun setting over water, we imagine her there. From the sunset deck or dining room, overlooking a stately marina and watercraft, beyond the manicured lawn and garden, taking in the Eastern Shore landscape, we'll raise a glass and enjoy the hospitality and inviting menu balancing favorites from land and sea—seared duck to crab cakes. And enjoy the view!

## BEST APPLE CIDER DONUTS

### Highland Orchards

1000 Marshallton-Thorndale Rd., West Chester.  
610-269-3494 / [HighlandOrchards.net](#)

One bite and you're hooked forever. Take Highland Orchards' fall hayride among the colorful leaves and pumpkins, see the cider press and finish with the tastiest part of fall: apple cider donuts. Highland Orchards picks apples from their trees, turns them into cider with their press on premises and makes the hot cinnamon sugar-covered donuts in the on-site kitchen. The best news is that their apple cider donuts are made fresh almost every day year round ... so you can enjoy them on Memorial Day, Christmas Eve and even next Saturday if you like.

## BEST NEW DONUTS

### Factory Donuts

845 N. Jackson St., Media  
610-627-2224 / [FactoryDonuts.com](#)

Welcome to Factory Donuts, where some of the fun is watching. Place your order, then watch dough flow into the fryer and emerge onto a plate as a donut. From there, it's decorated to your specifications. The hardest part is choosing—a signature chocolate coconut dream,

cookies and cream, maple bacon explosion—or your custom combination. The best part is eating—warm, light cake inside and slightly crispy outside, glazed, gooey chocolate-frosted, drizzled with peanut butter or covered in nuts, sprinkles and more. Started in Philly when owner Heather's friends couldn't get enough; open since July 2019 in Media. Now we can't get enough.

## BEST DUCK

### Margaret Kuo's

175 Lancaster Ave, Wayne  
610-688-7200 / [MargaretKuos.com](#)

For those who love duck—and what's not to love—"Wednesday is for Duck" at Margaret Kuo's in Wayne. Order the Peking duck, smoked duck (at special prices), or perhaps the Mandarin braised duck or sautéed duck. And, while you're there, plan a return—say on Thursday—for the beef, chicken, pork, lamb, rabbit, shrimp, lobster, squid or fish. It's all excellent. Visit Kuo's in Wayne, Media, Malvern (the Mandarin) or take-out at the Lancaster County Farmer's Market in Wayne. The restaurants have won awards, including three bells from Craig Laban, the award of excellence from Zagat's, and from Philadelphia Magazine four times.

## BEST EAGLES VIEWING

### P.J. Whelihan's Pub & Restaurant

1347 Wilmington Pk., West Chester  
610-235-4200 / [PJsPub.com](#)

Also: *Downingtown, Malvern, Newtown Square*  
Where to watch Carson Wentz and company? P.J. Whelihan's has lots of screens—over 40 in Malvern, more in West Chester, Downingtown, Oaks and Newtown Square. Check out the huge central bar, with plenty of local beers—Levante, Victory, Yards—and the other favorites like Guinness, Labatt's and Sam Adams. Plenty of apps, too—about a dozen varieties of wings, assorted styles of fries, five kinds of nachos. Too many to limit yourself to one. But save room for dessert, like Cookie Crunch Brownie Bomb or Salted Caramel Crunch Cookie. PJW Group has a sports bar near you. And maybe—just maybe—you'll watch the Eagles win.

## BEST FAMILY PLACE

### Christopher's

335 E. King St., Malvern. 484-568-4127  
108 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. 610-687-6558  
[ChristophersANeighborhoodPlace.com](#)

Chris and Molly Todd wanted a very family-friendly restaurant. For the very young, order mac & cheese, a hot dog or ravioli. For the more precocious, there are more than a dozen appetizers and pizza too, with the pesto, prosciutto, chicken souvlaki or practically any other topping. Maybe mussels, if your kids are really adventurous. As long as they don't throw food at one another, the kiddos can party while you head over to the bar. The wine, beer and other spirits will put you in a more, well, patient mood. After all, you're a member of the family, too.

## BEST FIELD TO FORK

### SIW Vegetables

*Hill Girt Farm*  
4317 S. Creek Rd., Chadds Ford  
610-388-2700 / [Brandywine.org/Conservancy](http://Brandywine.org/Conservancy)

When virtually every restaurant claims to be farm-to-table, it's time for a new level. That's the field-to-fork dinners best enjoyed at the Haskell family's 17th-century barn at Hill Girt Farm, of SIW Vegetables, from July to early October. Wear jeans and boots to the rustic-chic, multi-course, seasonal family-style dinners cooked by guest chefs from Chester County to Philly—from Terrain, Stove & Tap, Banks Seafood, Pasta Labs. Experience where your food came from as you savor fig-stuffed spit-roasted pig and peach and blueberry buckle with corn crème Anglaise. Menus posted on the website for the Wednesday dinners. Around \$75 to help sustain local farming. Plan for this summer.

## BEST COUNTRY FRENCH DINNER

### La Maison

1470 Old Ridge Rd., Pottstown  
484-680-2631 / [MartinsKitchen.com](http://MartinsKitchen.com)

Be transported to the French countryside at one of 24 seats in the first-floor dining room in Martin Gagne's 300-year-old home, now La Maison. Multi-course, authentic French meals are served family style in an atmosphere described as eating with friends. Chef Gagne's storied resume—*Food & Wine's* 1990s Top Culinarian to Watch, relaunch of the Inn at St. Peter's Village—inspires meals at this auberge. Fans wax poetic about whole chicken braised in wine with locally foraged morels, black trumpets, pearl onions; rabbit braised in white Burgundy; cassoulet with confits of goose, duck and pork. Make reservations well in advance, await the e-mailed menu and bring cash.

## BEST FUNGI FUN

### Kennett Mushroom Festival

101 S. Union St., Kennett Square  
610-925-3373 / [MushroomFestival.org](http://MushroomFestival.org)

How much fun is a festival devoted to fungi? With a community parade, dancing in the streets, fun runs, cook-offs, fried mushroom eating contests, cute-as-a-button (button mushroom) baby photo contest, and plenty of ways to taste and learn about mushrooms, what's not to love? Join 100,000 fungi fans and celebrate the Mushroom Capital of the World (and PA's top cash crop) at its 35th annual festival, September 12th and 13th. Souvenir options include festival t-shirts, cookbooks, artworks and the freshest mushrooms you'll ever taste. Michael Pollan and Andrew Weill can't be wrong about fantastic fungi.

## BEST GAME DAY GRUB

### Appetites on Main

286 Main St., Exton  
610-594-2030 / [AppetitesOnMain.com](http://AppetitesOnMain.com)

What do you crave on game day? Wings of all flavors and heats. Crispy fries with bacon and cheese. Potato skins with cheese, sausage or pepperoni. Pretzel dogs, cheesesteak rolls, tacos, fried pickles. The list goes on and on. Apps on Main also has several dozen brews, seltzers and ciders, not to mention wines, martinis and other cocktails. In the warm months, you can have a sandwich on the patio with your pup. But, every month, there are TV screens all over. What would game day be without a week's worth of calories, at least to tempt you?

## BEST GOAT DISH

### Miss Winnie's

211 E. Market St., West Chester  
484-266-0508 / [MissWinnies.com](http://MissWinnies.com)

Miss Winnie's is a family affair, dedicated to Winnifred Johnston, who emigrated from Jamaica. Today her jerk seasoning is kept alive by Head Chef Bert Johnston and their son Nick. Together they capture the fire and aroma of their island roots with their spicy jerk seasoning (though their curry seasoning is divine as well). The meals are simple. Burgers, chicken, wings, pork, plantains, rice and beans pulse with rhythm of reggae. But go for goat (Fridays and Saturdays). Try the Curry Goat Platter with slow cooked seasoned goat served with cabbage, plantains and

rice. And cool down with plantain tarts or guava cake. Lick your fingers. Miss Winnie's rocks.

## BEST HAPPY HOUR

### Limoncello

9 N. Walnut St., West Chester. 610-436-6230  
499 E. Uwchlan Ave., Chester Springs  
610-524-3112 / [LimoncelloRestaurant.com](http://LimoncelloRestaurant.com)

While the \$12.95 lunch buffet continues to draw for its variety and value, Happy Hour at Limoncello's two locations is another great reason to visit on weekdays from 4 to 6:30. Seasonal and specialty drinks (salted caramel black Russian, pineapple mojito, blood orange cosmo), martinis (with limoncello) and pizzas (so many varieties and gluten-free, too) are popular, along with other tempting options at Happy Hour prices. When you're looking to brighten the end of a winter weekday, or dreaming of summer afternoons on the well-appointed West Chester patio, this is the place for a quintessential celebration of the end of the workday.

## BEST HOMEY MEALS

### House Restaurant

110-114 S. Jackson St., Media  
610-566-2505 / [EatAtHouse.com](http://EatAtHouse.com)

Under the prettiest green gables and between evergreen trimmed windows, enter the door to House, a charming restaurant on Jackson Street in Media. In a comfortable, unpretentious space, take a corner table by windows on two walls to watch the snow fall or people chat as they stroll along the sidewalk. Dip grilled cheese into a beautifully presented creamy tomato soup. Try vegetarian celery soup decorated with paprika or a salad of greens, nuts and fruit. Whether you're hankering for eggs at breakfast, specialty lunch-time paninis or suppertime stew, House is your home away from home for comfort food.

## BEST HOSTESS GIFT

### Éclat Chocolate

24 S. High St., West Chester  
610-692-5206 / [EclatChocolate.com](http://EclatChocolate.com)

You've just been invited to a special dinner party and need a gift for the hosts that's as memorable as the evening they've prepared for you. Éclat Chocolate has a solution that shines. A signature assortment. Caramels. A wine lover's box that includes Mollydooker Shiraz truffles and more. The beer lover's box with truffles

infused with local Victory Brewing Company's Hop Devil and others. Looking almost too good to eat, the chocolates come in a pretty gift box. They're so irresistible, you might need to order one for yourself.

## BEST HYPER-HEALTHY FOOD

### A&M Factory

360 Lancaster Ave., Malvern  
484-318-7537 / [TheAMFactory.com](http://TheAMFactory.com)

Real food. Real good. That's the promise from Malvern's new all-day café, serving hyper-healthy breakfast and lunch sustainably. The kitchen is grain-free, gluten-free, peanut-free, cashew-free, GMO-free and dairy-free (except for some goat cheese, which makes sense). The produce is organic and the meats are pasture-raised. And despite those constraints, the menu includes plenty of tempting options: açai smoothie bowls, cauliflower cheesesteak, grain-free bagels, chicken and homemade waffles, lemon square smoothies. All served in a bright, sleek space that makes you want to live clean as well as eat clean and healthy.

## BEST INDIAN CUISINE

### Rasa Indian Cuisine

Village at Painters Crossing Shopping Center  
1201 Wilmington Pk., Chadds Ford  
484-800-8109 / [RasaUS.com](http://RasaUS.com)

Dell and Sudha Joshi brought tastes of their original homes—Dell's southern Hyderabad and Sudha's northern Delhi—to Chadds Ford with Rasa Indian Cuisine. The result: a delicious lunch buffet—long tables laden with offerings savory, spicy and sweet, from masala chai to kheer. Bites of samosa and pakoda evoked memories of the subcontinent's best street food. Entrees of paneer, dal and butter chicken were fit for heads of state—in fact, the restaurant's Chef Zamin has fed two U.S. Presidents. With walls the warm orange of turmeric spice and aromas of ginger and fresh naan, Rasa lives up to its name, meaning “flavor.”

## BEST ITALIAN MAINSTAY

### Il Granaio Italian Restaurant & Bar

711 Concord Rd., Glen Mills. 610-459-8469  
184 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 484-924-8423  
[IlgranaioPA.com](http://IlgranaioPA.com)

Handmade spinach ravioli stuffed with crab and red bell peppers, with shrimp, sun-

dried tomatoes, sweet peas in brandy cream sauce—just one of many reasons loyal fans return to the Glen Mills and Phoenixville locations (Antica in Chadds Ford is also affiliated). One fan said he could eat there every week and not get tired. Fresh local ingredients and house-made pastas get raves (spinach gnocchi, agnolotti porcini, fettuccini aragosto), as do pork and fish specials. Add polished service, BYOB option with no corkage fee (there's also a bar), plus the complimentary homemade limoncello shot at the end and you have a collection of popular dining destinations.

## BEST TASTE OF NORTHERN ITALY

### La Verona

114 E. State St., Kennett Square  
610-444-2244 / [LaVeronaPA.com](http://LaVeronaPA.com)

Savor a bit of northern Italy with a memorable meal at La Verona. Choose a table in the friendly bar, near the dining room's fireplace or by the windows to watch State Street (or patio dining in season) as you enjoy fine dining with impeccable service at this consistently excellent spot. A limoncello martini, Peroni on tap or affordable wine selection complements a wide array of choices from pizza (love the white Vernona) to authentic Italian classics. Favorites include the calamari and pasta dishes—shout outs for the spinach and mushroom and the lobster ravioli—and veal marsala. Owners Sam and Jack Mavraj's motto is “Let us spoil you.” And they do.

## BEST JUICE

### Aneu Kitchen + Juicery

1556 E. Lancaster Ave., Paoli. 610-251-9600  
1225 Montrose Ave., Bryn Mawr. 610-525-1711  
[AneuCatering.com](http://AneuCatering.com)

Owner Meredith Coyle has been involved in the local food biz for decades. Her current interest in clean eating—making comfort food that's healthy food—has caught our attention, along with *Philly Mag's*, when they gave a shout out for her fresh juice—suggesting a lemon, ginger, turmeric, black pepper, grape-seed oil concoction for their “Best Of” in 2019. We toast Aneu Day shots—lemon, spinach, kale, parsley, cucumber, celery, green apple—that perked up November's Notable Kitchen Tour & Chef's Tasting fundraiser for the Philly Orchestra. Wowza! Find your own fave.

## BEST BUSINESS LUNCH

### Pietro's Prime

125 W. Market St., West Chester  
484-760-6100 / [PietrosPrime.com](http://PietrosPrime.com)

Pietro's is a Zagat-rated steakhouse—also a Best of Philly pick—in downtown West Chester with a history. Pietro Giunta was early to West Chester. His great granddaughter Marisa opened the steakhouse about 12 years ago, continuing the family legacy. It was an immediate success. The cuts of beef—strip, fillet, rib-eye—are superior and tender. Charred black, yet blood red (or pink, as you prefer) inside. It's made to your order and cooked perfectly. Enjoy a business lunch, perhaps an ice-cold martini, with appetizer of shrimp, crab, oysters or calamari. Take your time. With some fortitude, perhaps you'll revive Don Draper's two-martini—or was it three?—lunch.

## BEST MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

### Opa Taverna

40 E. Gay St., West Chester  
610-696-4100 / [OpaTavernaPhilly.com](http://OpaTavernaPhilly.com)

Sit down to homemade hummus sprinkled with chopped parsley, gyros and gracious souvlaki platters with an unsurpassed housemade Greek tsatziki sauce at Opa Taverna. Open since last April by owners of the former Opa Opa (about a block up Gay Street), its wicker lamps that cast warm light, stone wall and cozy corner sofa-seating for a group create an inviting space. Locals and out-of-towners are talking about the good food, large portions and pleasant staff. Currently a BYOB, the restaurant has applied for a liquor license, so check to see if you should bring your own ouzo or favorite Mediterranean wine.

## MOST PANCAKE WEEK-WORTHY

### Avenue Kitchen

*Glen Eagle Square*  
509 Wilmington-West Chester Pk., Glen Mills  
484-800-8070 / [AveKitchen.com](http://AveKitchen.com)

Whether you're celebrating National Pancake Week in February or National Pancake Day in September, there's a stack at Avenue Kitchen that could turn a picky eater into a breakfast lover. In a chic tan and white space with pretty paper sculptures suspended from the warehouse-high ceilings, opt for simple pancakes powdered with sugar and garnished with a strawberry, or go for chocolate chip, banana



or peanut butter drenched in maple syrup. Go outside the box on Pancake Day and luxuriate in brioche French toast or Avenue's thick chocolate waffle topped with award-winning crème brûlée sauce, crackly caramelized sugar, bananas and strawberries.

## BEST PIZZA

### Toninos Pizza & Pasta Company

235 Lancaster Ave., Malvern  
610-240-9566 / [ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com](#)

Whole pie or by the slice. Neopolitan or Sicilian. Square or round. Thin crust or thick. A 14-, 18- or 30-inch pie (Lorenzo's & Sons is a mere 28 inches). You can get any pizza you want at Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co. Yes, there's also a full menu of entrees at this family-run BYOB with plenty of regulars on a Friday night, but the pizza here is special. Choose a gourmet pizza (spinach, broccoli, vegetarian, seafood), build your own, or pick an Old World, Salad Pie, Chicken alla Vodka or Everything pizza. We love the Grandma Pizza, a square pie that's been called "a life changer." Taste for yourself.

## BEST PIZZA AT THE MALL

### Pizzeria Vetri

King of Prussia Mall  
640 W. DeKalb Pk., King of Prussia  
267-422-4201 / [PizzeriaVetri.com](#)

Yes, there's still great food at the mall (we miss Mistral, though). For Pizzaria Vetri—of the famed Vetri Food Group—the story is simple: simple food made exactly the right way, using the best and freshest ingredients, served in a space where all are welcome. Even at the KOP mall. For the best pizza, it's all about the crust, and Vetri's fermented, whole-grain crust gets the 700-degree treatment producing its distinctive leopard spots and crave-worthy crispness. Menu options include the seasonal Harvest and Wild Boar, but the classics are ... classic. Try the margherita or crudo (prosciutto crudo, bufala mozzarella, parmigiano). Plus wine, beer and cocktails.

## BEST ROMANTIC DINING

### Duling Kurtz House & Country Inn

146 S. Whitford Rd., Exton  
610-524-1830 / [DulingKurtz.com](#)

A perfect choice for an anniversary dinner or a getaway weekend, Duling Kurtz mixes gracious hospitality with Old World charm. The

menu includes such classic special occasion dishes as escargot, foie gras, rack of lamb, duck, filet mignon and crème brûlée. Its eight period dining rooms and 13 guest rooms and suites let you customize your special celebration. Overnight packages—including a four-course dinner and continental breakfast—fit the bill. Have champagne in your room and plan a hot air balloon ride to make even more memories.

## BEST SCRATCH COOKING

### Ron's Original Bar & Grille

74 E. Uwchlan Ave., Exton  
610-594-9900 / [RonsOriginal.com](#)

Welcome to Ron's Original Bar and Grille where you'll find food that's good and good for you. Go for the popular vegetarian lasagna. Or try a favorite: one of Ron's Ovals—think oblong pizza, regular or gluten free, without the sauce but piled with toppings like ham and cheese, cheesesteak, vegetarian Italian, Cha Cha Chicken or Red, White and Bleu (cheese). Appetizers, salad dressings and soups are made from scratch—say goodbye to MSG and artificial sweeteners. Enjoy meats without hormones or antibiotics. All great with beer, wine or cocktails in a relaxed atmosphere where you're treated like family.

## BEST INLAND SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

### Ludwig's Grill & Oyster Bar

2904 Conestoga Rd., Glenmoore  
610-458-5336 / [LudwigsOysterBar.com](#)

Some folks limit ordering seafood to restaurants with a sight-line to water. But if seafood is delivered to the kitchen seven days a week from a quality purveyor, you can tuck into seafood delights any time. For almost 30 years, Ludwig's Grill and Oyster Bar has been serving up seafood classics and more, including their Wednesday and Thursday Buck-a-Shuck specials, featuring oysters from both coasts and Canada. Choose from tuna tacos, lobster bisque, Philadelphia-style snapper soup, U Peel shrimp. There's shrimp and scallop etoufee to fish and chips (albeit with wild Icelandic cod) and organic Norwegian salmon.

## BEST SIDES

### Epicurean Garage

570 Simpson Dr., Chester Springs  
610-615-5189 / [EpicureanGarage.com](#)

We do love the bowls, burgers and built-to-order entrees at Epicurean Garage. But it's the sides that add that extra something to your meals. Try Garage fries with toppings of dirty brown gravy or the popular yummy poutine. Or seven kinds of wings, from original jerk spice, Carolina BBQ to Tandoori. Something healthy like Brussels sprouts with bacon, grilled asparagus, roasted root veggies or hericot verts. For comfort sides choose mashed potatoes, mac 'n' cheese or cheddar grits. And there are more options. Just the place for when you want to make a meal just from those tasty side dishes.

## BEST SOUTHERN FLAIR

### The Gables

423 Baltimore Pk., Chadds Ford  
610-388-7700 / [TheGablesAtChaddsford.com](#)

There's Southern flair along with the hospitality at The Gables in Chadds Ford, in the southern part of Brandywine Valley. The influence comes from owner Ann Kolenick's Carolina roots and is enhanced by new executive Chef Darryl Butts, who describes the menu as upscale Southern with a European twist. Chef Butts is putting new twists on favorites, like signature shrimp and grits. Sample biscuits and gravy, pimento cheese dips, bourbon pecan pie—edible evidence of the region. Enjoy the welcoming vibe from the seasonal beer garden, stone patio, cozy bar and rustic yet elegant dining rooms in a place where the owner hopes diners "feel like guests in [her] home."

## BEST SOUTHERN SCRATCH COOKING

### The Social

117 E. Gay St., West Chester  
610-738-3948 / [TheSocialWC.com](#)

Pass the brick sidewalk and outdoor tables, and step through the doorway on Gay Street into a little bit of Louisiana. The Social's polished dark wood bar and floors along with lights of wrought iron reminiscent of New Orleans' French Quarter provide just the right setting for Chef Dan Funk's Cajun-inspired scratch cooking and spirits. Go for gumbo or chili. Belly up to the bar and grab a Prohibition Era cocktail (how about a Whiskey Smash?) or craft beer and Cajun pierogies. Order up Nola fries—seasoned and mixed with crab—big enough to feed a slew of friends as you enjoy the Southern vibe.

## BEST TACOS

### Estrella Tacos y Mas

202 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown  
484-237-2423 / [EstrellaTacoBar.com](#)

Whether you're at a stool at the bar or a bench at a long table, you'll find bright colors and flavors of Southwest-inspired tacos as well as a good time at Estrella Tacos y Mas. A native Texan and a native Downingtonian teamed up to bring tasty signature tacos, comfort food, cocktails, craft beers and a community vibe to Lancaster Avenue two years ago. Breakfast, lunch or supper, you'll find something tempting wrapped in a tortilla or taco shell: Texas-style brisket, spicy shrimp, fried avocado, jalapen sausage, eggs and a variety of cheeses and sauces.

## BEST TAKEOUT DINNER

### Carlino's Specialty Foods

128 Market St., West Chester  
610-649-4046 / [CarlinosMarket.com](#)

No time to cook? Follow happy customers to Carlino's Italian market. On the left, pick up crostini and divine house-made olivata. On the right, choose artichoke dip and delectable cheeses. Toward the center, select a family-sized Caesar or fresh arugula, fennel and tomato salad with pine nut vinaigrette. Mountains of entrees and sides are steps away. Will it be Mana's Lasagna, lobster ravioli or chicken piccata with string bean amandine? Back at the front, the bakery's bread and pastries beckon. Get pizzelles and a cup of coffee for your commute home before laying out the spread on your table. Buon appetito!

## BEST TATER TOTS

### Liberty Union Bar & Grill

325 Simpson Dr., Chester Springs. 484-359-4061  
519 Kimberton Rd., Phoenixville. 484-927-4244  
[LibertyUnionBar.com](#)

If the best things in life are free, then the best tater tots are also free, right? Get free tots for every table at Liberty Union's two locations—toasty, irresistible tots with a side of spicy ranch sauce. Or order loaded tots—cheese sauce, crumbled bacon, scallions and that same side of spicy ranch. But why not choose another tasty app on the menu—Philly cheesesteak eggrolls are a fave, or something lighter like Pacific Rim lettuce wraps? These lively spots for satisfying pub grub add an extra menu twist by featuring one of the 50 states each week, offering a themed sandwich, entrée and cocktail.

## BEST TAVERN

### Four Dogs Tavern

1300 W. Strasburg Rd., West Chester  
610-692-4367 / [TheFourDogsTavern.com](#)

In what was the stable of the 1793 Marshallton Inn nestled in the historic district of Marshallton (that's no typo; check the website on number of Ls for each), is as charming and inviting a tavern as you'll find. Four Dog's Tavern's patio is the site of memorable brunches, complete with portable Bloody Mary bar. Cooler months draw crowds to the fireplace for Happy Hours and sliders du jour, crab nachos and more surprises from talented Chef David Cox. From scrambled egg sushi, twists on muffulettas, and skate wing with avocado, radicchio, cucumber and lime emulsion, the American brasserie menu tempts. Comfort food elevated.

## BEST VEGAN FOOD

### Phoenixville VegFest

Reeves Park, 401 Main St., Phoenixville  
[PhoenixvilleVegFest.com](#)

Plant-based eaters have an expanding selection of dining options, but for a veritable smorgasbord of veg fun, try Phoenixville's Veg-fest, a vegan food and street festival with live music and vendors. While Phoenixville touts its many vegan food options—from Gangster Vegan Organics to the less obvious Great American Pub—this August festival offers a chance to veg out, but in the most positive way. Mark your calendar now.

## BEST WILD GAME DINNER

### Terrain Cafe

914 Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills. 610-459-2400  
138 Lancaster Ave., Devon. 610-59-4671  
[ShopTerrain.com](#)

In 2018, Terrain had its first and in 2019, its second. Held in October, Wild Game dinner, as Terrain calls it, is a celebration of the harvest. Although not exactly too "wild"—they featured lamb tartare, rabbit ragu, and buffalo strip—the fare is nevertheless gourmet delicious, served with wines from Wayvine in Nottingham. The meal was prepared by Styers' head events Chef Robert Toland, and the meats supplied by D'Artagnan Meat Supply, based in Union, New Jersey. A grand tradition in the making. We look forward to 2020. ♦

## BEST LOCAL COOKBOOK

### Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook

2140 Kimberton Rd., Kimberton  
610-935-1444 / [KimbertonWholeFoods.com](#)  
And other area locations

We salute the *Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook: A Family History with Recipes*. Written by the store's co-owner Pat Brett, her son Colin and local writer Courtney Diener-Stokes, the cookbook delivers 60 recipes developed over 32 years and interwoven with family history and stories about local growers and makers. Seasonally inspired recipes range from Summer Rice Salad with Blueberries and Basil to Carrot Ginger Quinoa Soup. (More recipes, including Mac 'n' Cheese with Pecans and Pears, in *County Lines'* October 2019 Brandywine Table column online.) The commitment to local extends to printing—Hickory Grove Publishing is in Lancaster County. Copies at local independent bookstores and Kimberton Whole Foods Stores, not on Amazon.

## BEST LOCAL INSTAGRAM FEED

### FoodInJars

Philly blogger, cookbook author, new mom of twins—Marisa McClellan's multi-faceted life fills her FoodInJars Instagram feed (plus a cookbook of the same name). Posts of artful shots of figs, mixed with rows of filled Ball jars and tales of a tired mother. Get inspired to can, preserve and make a few things from scratch by photos of peach habanero hot sauce, nectarine jam and pinto beans cooked in an InstaPot. See the kitchen where the magic happens, complete with turquoise stove and counters that she shared with her 26.5K followers.

## BEST LOCAL PODCAST

### Local Mouthful

Need a new half-hour foodie podcast? Join co-hosts Joy Manning (Edible Philly) and Marisa McClellan (Food In Jars) as they cover the food life in Philadelphia and beyond for obsessed home cooks everywhere. This five-star podcast has bushels of fans that come from far beyond our region. Segments are titled Food News, What's for Dinner, How'd You Make That and What We're Loving and are delivered in a warm, companionable tone. Learn about washing your avocados, chicken confit, making biscuits, cookbook dinners, sippable soups and more. Over 300 episodes and still cookin'.