

BEST Of The BEST 2023



SEE WHAT YOU SHOULD SAMPLE FROM OUR LOCAL DINING SCENE IN 2023.

This year we celebrate the many new and notable additions to the local dining scene — almost 20 new restaurants, plus many expansions and even more new places to sip something special — along with our favorites in area towns. It's been a very exciting year for local dining!

We've surveyed the local star — that's Andiaro, of *New York Times* fame — plus five quintessentially Chester County choices, and places where the food practically requires sharing on Instagram (and *County Lines*' photo contest, check our social media). We're rounded up new places to enjoy craft cocktails, special coffee and the ambiance of a beer garden. And even places for bubble tea (for those who like that chewy kind of drink).

You'll see we've highlighted exceptional dining choices in local towns — from Downingtown, Kennett Square, Media, Phoenixville and more spots along the Main Line and in Delaware. West Chester has grown into such a notable dining destination that we have a separate article in this issue chronicling its evolution.

So, savor our suggestions, look through the mouth-watering photos and make your list of places to share a meal with friends and family.

We hope you'll discover your new favorites in these pages. And most important: dine local and dine often this year.

Check our website and social media for more restaurants, food news, recipes, beer and wine columns, and more. CountyLinesMagazine.com.



Andiaro



Fiore Rosso



Bardea Steak



Quoin Simmer Down

THE STAR

Andiaro

106 W. Gay St., West Chester
484-887-0919 / Andiaro.com

What can you say about Andiaro? That it's been a top restaurant since its 2018 opening? That it continues to attract press for its food and its chef, Anthony Andiaro (57.5k Instagram followers)? That the *New York Times*' recent recognition (top 50 restaurants in America) turned West Chester from a dining destination to destination dining? There's so much to say. Their weekly set dinner menus (\$75+, wine pairings, options or BYOB; and always including pasta) still highlight "the bounty of Pennsylvania produce." Book your table (online only) starting the 20th of each month for the following month's dinner, Wednesdays–Saturdays. January 20th is the next menu posting. Set a reminder!

NEW & NOTABLE

Fiore Rosso

915 Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr
484-380-2059 / FioreRossoPHL.com

The most polished addition to our restaurant scene is a steakhouse from acclaimed restaurateur Marc Vetri (Vetri Cucina, Fiorella). Fiore Rosso (red flower) transformed the Enoteca Tredici space by opening it up, removing the tree and hanging serious art — Picasso, Miro — to compete for attention with the towering meat-aging case. Options range from a Creekstone Farms 40-oz. bistecca alla fiorentina to 8-oz. Snake River Farms wagyu rib cap (\$168 to \$85). Some diners split a steak and add a pasta, signature warm salad (pancetta, egg) and focaccia from the short-ish menu, as compared with nine pages of wines and spirits. Don't expect baked potatoes and wedge salads at this splurge destination, but do order the sublime budino.

Bardea Steak

608 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-550-9600 / BardeaSteak.com

"One of America's most anticipated restaurant openings in 2022" is how *Vogue* announced the arrival of Bardea Food & Drink's sister (James Beard semifinalist), next door in Wilmington. Chef Antonio DiMeo (also a James Beard semifinalist) dubbed Bardea Steak a "Kingdom of Meat," with a lengthy menu describing five types of cattle (including Chianina) and nine cuts of beef (sold by the ounce, ask your meat sommelier), as well as kangaroo, elk, bison and ostrich options. Chef DiMeo's artistic flair, inventive techniques (koji aging) and show-stopping presentation (lychee foam, tableside prep, cocktails with sparklers) contrast with Vetri's approach at Fiore Rosso. Sample the \$90 flat iron flight from three different breeds with dishes from the menu next door for double dining delight plus great dining theater.

Quoin Restaurant

519 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-446-5600 / TheQuoinHotel.com

We love hotels with onsite bars and restaurants, so we look forward to seeing what develops at the new downtown Quoin Hotel in the former Security Trust & Safe Deposit Com-

pany Building. This Victorian Romanesque brownstone houses 24 unique rooms along with three public eating and drinking options. The 155-seat cozy restaurant, with banquettes and courtyard dining, serves up a mix of southern French/northern Italian fare, much wood fired, complemented with old-world wines. Downstairs in the former money room is the Simmer Down, with a speakeasy vibe, the place for classic cocktails. And on the penthouse level is Wilmington's first and only rooftop lounge boasting views of the Old Town Hall steeple and sunsets.

Buena Onda

220 N. Radnor Chester Rd., Radnor
484-430-4900 / BuenaOndaTacos.com

The concept for the new Buena Onda (good vibes) is beachside surf shack, though it's in a Radnor strip mall between Estia Taverna and Honeygrow. This Baja-themed sister restaurant (Rittenhouse, Fairmount) from Iron Chef Jose Garces brings plenty of specialty seafood — batter fried and grilled fresh fish and shrimp — as well as tacos, burritos and bowls filled with chicken, pork, short rib and mushrooms. The fast-casual eatery has something for everyone — beer, sangria and margaritas for adults, plus a kids' menu and churros for everyone. Pick up, delivery and franchising available.

The Pullman Restaurant

39 Morris Ave., Bryn Mawr
610-727-0777 / ThePullmanRestaurant.com

A rail car dining experience on the south side of SEPTA's Bryn Mawr station? Perfect form meets function at this new incarnation of the

former Tango location from the mother-daughter team, Roni and Jennifer Hammer. Look for a sleek, retro ambiance in the 7,000-square-foot renovated space, with mahogany, brass and crystal details. Velvet upholstery defines cozy nooks in the 145-seat restaurant with 21-seat bar. The lunch and dinner menus are mainly American food, with twists and old-school flair — foie gras, 16-oz. tomahawk steak, sturgeon caviar. Order from the Portfolio cocktails — Vespers martini, Bee's Knees and, of course, the Sldecar. Now imagine you're on the Orient Express.

Two Fourteen

214 W. State St., Media
724-904-9139 / TwoFourteenRestaurant.com

The chic, modern redo of Diego's Cantina by veterans Loic Barnieu (Sterling Pig) and Chef Mike Hackett (House) has an almost Center City vibe. Snag a booth, table, outdoor seat or stool at the bar for brunch, lunch, happy hour or dinner. Cocktails, curated by the Split Rail Tavern team, include the Media Mule, County Wide, and Sweater Weather plus 214-styled mocktails, wine and, of course, Sterling Pig brews. Brunch fans love lobster frittatas and Moroccan Benedict. The 214 wagyu burger with bourbon bacon jam, 12-oz. ribeye and crispy duck breast are other hits. A welcome addition to dining on State Street.

Bierhaul

341 Thornton Rd., Thornton
610-550-3440 / Bierhaul.com

We're happy to see an 18th-century stone landmark (hospital, post office, Pace One Restaurant) find new life as a sprawling Europe-

an-style beer garden under James Mullally and Loic Barnieu (busy guy). Open last summer, this indoor-outdoor spot hosts events, music, comedy, cornhole and more action. Don't look for typical bar food or local craft beer here. The 20-some taps lean toward European brews, and the menu spans dishes from a charcuterie board, lobster grilled cheese, bier-braised bratwurst and steamed mussels to fish and chips and creative cocktails (S'mores Old Fashioned, Smoke Show, Supreme Port Justice). Makes you yearn for warm weather.

VK Brewing Co. & Eatery

693 E. Lincoln Hwy., Exton
484-873-3199 / VKBrewing.com

The historic Ship Inn building sails on, but under the flag of VK Brewing Co. & Eatery, a veteran-owned business offering hand-crafted beer, delicious food and friendly atmosphere. The main restaurant space seats about 100, with brewing happening in the nearby former stables building. Look for classic styles, including IPAs, and many ale styles such as stouts, porters, Belgian-styles and wheat beers. Food testing (upscale pub, pizzas and more) and construction of the raw bar were completed in advance of their late November opening.

Will's and Bill's

324 Swedesford Rd., Berwyn
484-318-8538 / Wills-Bills.com

When office workers stopped lunch and happy hour visits to the former McKenzie Brewhouse near Route 202 in Berwyn, the father-son owners pivoted and created Will's and Bill's, a neighborhood hangout with a ski-lodge



The Pullman Restaurant



Two Fourteen



Bierhaul

feel (two fireplaces, taxidermy wall decor and fondue on the menu). The 200-seat restaurant/bar/brewery exudes a family-friendly atmosphere now with its tartan plaid upholstery, piano music and Sunday meal menu (chicken parm, Caesar salad, gelato, glass of wine all for \$25). A broad, yet upscale menu (duck eggrolls, truffle fries) ranges from raw bar selections to burgers to 16-oz. ribeye. Sip 12 house beers, an impressive lineup of aged whiskeys, bourbons and more, plus a selection of wine and cocktails as you try to identify the Wills and Bills in the portraits that are hanging on the walls.

Trattoria La Tavola

127 State St., Kennett Square
484-731-4176 / [TrattoriaLaTavola.Wixsite.com](#)
Add another Italian eatery to Kennett's dining scene — this one across the street from long-time favorite La Verona. Promising the culinary traditions of Italy enriched by modern flavors, with pasta and bread made onsite, Trattoria La Tavola (meaning "table set for a meal") in the former Byrsa Bistro space has been getting strong reviews. Choose antipasti, salads and pizzas along with prix fixe proteins (chicken and veal parm) and pastas (spaghetti carbonara, penne alla vodka), seafood (branzino, salmon), plus gnocchi and risotto (with local mushrooms, of course) at this BYOB. The specials get raves as does the patio dining, in season.

Twenty One Pips

24 Cricket Ave., Ardmore
610-228-2711 / [TwentyOnePips.com](#)
Satisfy your brain and your palate at this board game restaurant (21 dots or pips are on a six-sided die). Yes, games and grub. Head to Ardmore for a meal or just a coffee or cocktail and some friendly competition playing over 600 board and card games, or at two Skee-Ball lanes, Pong

and arcade games. Pick your own game or get a Gametender's recommendation and help with the rules. Food is mostly sharables and pub fare (chicken pips, flatbreads, salads), Herman's coffee, themed cocktails (Professor Plum) and a Pips-Squeak menu for kiddos. \$5 per person gets you two hours of Candyland, Trivial Pursuit or a new obsession.

Persis Indian Grill

541 Wellington Sq., Exton
484-341-8445 / [PersisExton.com](#)
Eagleview's Restaurant Row added some spice to its lineup (Al Pastor, Bluefin, Suburban) with Persis Indian Grill, part of a national franchise and first PA location. With a menu heavy on vegetarian options (more veggie apps than non-veggie!), Persis gets rave reviews from vegans and vegetarians on websites like Happy Cow. The authentic dishes go beyond curries, featuring chefs specially trained in preparing biryani in the traditional way. You'll find your favorites — samosas, curry, vindaloo, tikka masala, butter chicken, choices of naans and roti, lassis and Indian deserts. All in the former Nudy's Café space.

King's Tavern

313 W. Kings Hwy., Coatesville
484-786-8120 / [KingsTavern.net](#)
The couple behind Chadds Ford Tavern's revival have a new challenge: changing Mr. E's Tavern & Fine Food into a white-tablecloth restaurant off Kings Highway in Coatesville. Chef Phil Ferro and fiancée, Kate Hussey, oversee an extensive menu of fresh food made onsite — prime rib eggrolls, smokehouse BBQ, chicken parm, stuffed lobster tails and a 40-oz. tomahawk ribeye, for example. But it's the weekly specials that caught our eye: Martini Mondays, Buck-a-Shuck Thursdays, Sunday Funday (burgers and bourbon), along with Tomahawk Tuesdays, when for \$100, two can dine on an appetizer, salad, French beans

and that 40-oz. steak, plus dessert (as if that's possible). Watch America's Best Restaurants on YouTube for more.

Record Kitchen + Bar

206 E. Lincoln Hwy., Coatesville
484-784-5483 / [TheRecordCoatesville.com](#)
Opened in November, a second restaurant adds to Coatesville's revitalization buzz, a few blocks from Midway Arts and two miles from Kings Tavern. Located in the former office of the *Coatesville Record* and boasting a wall of framed newspaper front pages, this is the latest venture from the Mark Lane Property group, which has three other restaurants in East Falls, Philadelphia (In Riva). Serving contemporary food highlighting wood-fired pizzas, pasta and sandwiches, this spot stays on theme with menu sections (Headlining, Hot Off the Presses, Featuring) and themed drinks (Pulitzer, Page Six, Centerfold). There's beer on tap (2SP, Victory, plus national brands), plus cider, seltzer, spiked tea and wine.

MaGerk's Pub & Grille

174 Eagleview Blvd., Exton
267-946-5777 / [MaGerksPub.com](#)
We needed another sports bar, right? With lots of TVs, game-day ambiance and a full pub-grub menu? MaGerk's (named after the owner's daughters), the sixth in this Baltimore-based chain and third in PA, started with the goal of serving great cheesesteaks. And there are several on the menu, including a hoagie version (with tomato, lettuce, onion, mayo), chicken cheesesteak and the Pounder (16 oz. of ribeye steak). Expect plenty of apps (jumbo crab pretzel, even a healthy Med platter), tons of tacos, sandwiches, burgers, entrees and more. Broad beer selection, from Bud Lite to Blue Moon to Guinness, plus a few locals (Levante, 12 Stables), wine and cocktails.



MaGerk's Pub & Grille



Rivertown Taps

Rivertown Taps

226 Bridge St., Phoenixville
[RivertownTaps.com](#)
They had us at self-pour tap wall! Yes, another place for beer in Phoenixville. This family-owned business, headed by Lewis Leiterman, winner on Guy Fieri's Food Network show, "Guy's Grocery Games," opened in November across from the Colonial Theatre. The lively menu includes small plates such as cheesy birria quesadilla, truffle poutine fries, plus salads, No Fork Needed and main courses. Choose from branzino to cassoulet to farrotto (farro risotto) and Phoenixville Hot Chicken & Waffles (what Nashville wishes it was). Cocktail list features the trendy Negroni Sbagliato and one called "Needs a Name," with pickled ginger, pear and Revivalist gin. About that tap wall — it serves beer, wine, cider and kombucha, sold by the ounce with a smart card.

City Buns

34 S. High St., West Chester
484-623-2068 / [CityBuns.com](#)
We like big buns, and we cannot lie. And City Buns has ginormous cinnamon buns plus unique variations on classic flavors (lemon blueberry, pistachio sticky, Nutella s'mores, pumpkin spice latte, cookie butter & jelly — check Instagram for availability). A half dozen sets you back \$30 but sets you up with plenty of gooey goodness to share. Baked fresh daily from scratch and sourced mainly locally, the buns have been available 8 to 4 (closed Tues.) since the September 2022 opening. Chester County native and baker Vicky Lambert recommends ordering early online to get your faves.

Salty Paws

27 W. Gay St., West Chester
484-667-7122 / [SaltyPawsIceCream.com](#)
Yes, we know this is an ice cream shop for ... dogs. But it's part of the first doggie ice



City Buns



Salty Paws

De La Terre BYOB

47 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown
610-269-2431 / [DeLaTerreBYOB.com](#)
Not much more than a Facebook post and website with menu at press time, but the promise of a neighborhood bistro in the heart of historic Downingtown pairing warm charm and intimacy with French classics and inventive regional fare sounds worth waiting for. Scheduled for a December 13 opening.

La Scala's Fire

44 W. Gay St., West Chester
[LaScalasFire.com](#)
More Italian food coming to West Chester! Not sure when, but it will have a great location on the plaza with the fountain on West Gay that's been home to Sedona Taphouse. Other locations in Villanova, Philly and New Jersey.

NEW LOCATIONS / EXPANSIONS

Hank's Place

201 Birch St., Kennett Square
610-448-9988 / [HanksPlaceChaddsFord.com](#)
"Art, handcrafted food and history" continue to meet but now temporarily in Kennett Square, a few miles from the iconic Hank's Place

in Chadds Ford that was devastated by the floodwaters of tropical storm Ida in 2021. Honoring its 70-some-year history, Hank's is still the place where friendly people meet and hungry people eat, temporarily from a food truck and now in leased space during reconstruction. Reopened in October 2022, initially for breakfast and lunch, with plans to add dinner service. Locals show up for scratch comfort food from menus filled with categories like Basics, Old-Fashioned Breakfast and Hank's Classics. Stop by to support this local classic.

Byrsa West Chester

34 Street Rd., West Chester
610-701-8969 / [WestChester.ByrsaBistro.com](#)
The newest location from the folks at Byrsa Bistro, formerly on State Street in Kennett Square and currently also in the train station in Glen Mills, Byrsa West Chester offers the beloved western Mediterranean cuisine, with plenty of vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. House-made pasta specialties, handmade brick-oven pizzas and flatbreads. Order from the bar, sip their Byrsa-label wine or BYOB.



Will's And Bill's



Twenty One Pips



Record Kitchen + Bar

Mercato Ristorante & Bar

4799 West Chester Pk., Newtown Square
610-723-6589 / MercatoNewtown.com

Red sauce fans mourned the closing of Edgemont Square's sprawling institution, Trattoria Guiseppe. With a planned revival in 2021 under the name Toscana Modern Italian Steakhouse, fall 2022 saw the current reincarnation as Mercato Ristorante & Bar, from the folks behind the popular Italian spot with one of the liveliest patios in West Chester. Look for modern Italian with casual yet refined atmosphere and a menu with plenty of pasta, Italian American dishes, main courses (stuffed pork chop, brick chicken, salmon), dry-aged meats and pizzas.

White Dog Café

192 E. Welsh Pool Rd., Exton
WhiteDog.com / ChesterSprings

The latest news about the much-anticipated opening of the newest pup in the White Dog franchise — this one saving the former historic Vickers Restaurant location — is early 2023. This fifth addition to the litter is taking some time refurbishing the 1820s farmhouse and stop on the Underground Railroad. Expect the same quaint rooms, canine portraits and American fare that characterize other branches of the Fearless Restaurant group.

Ground Provisions: Market & Dining

1388 Old Wilmington Pk., West Chester
[On Facebook](#)

The former Dilworthtown Innkeeper's Kitchen space is being reinvented by the owners of Philly's vegetarian mecca and award winner, Vedge. A plant-based market-restaurant will be

part country store and wine shop, part eight-table restaurant (plus patio dining). Expect Vedge-style specialty groceries and local products, grab-and-go options and other takeout, including veggie charcuterie, pickles, olives and dips, as well as breads, much made in house. The farmhouse cuisine restaurant will serve five to six courses of rustic, elegant yet modern fare (\$75), featuring local, seasonal, organic vegetables, some from the owners' nearby micro farm, Lost Glove Garden. Natural wines, beer and cocktails.

Amada Radnor

555 E. Lancaster Ave., Radnor
GarcesEvents.com / Amada-Radnor

Double the pleasure with a second Radnor restaurant from Jose Garces, James Beard Award-winning Iron Chef. In addition to the more informal Buena Onda (see New & Noteworthy), a new Amada is planned to open in early 2023 in the former Harvest Seasonal Grille location, with room for 200 diners inside and more on two patios. Sharing the same concept as Garces' 2005 hit Amada in Philadelphia's Old City, the new spot will have an open kitchen, wood-fired ovens and classic Amada dishes (Andalusian cuisine, traditional empanadas, paella Valenciana), plus new onsite exclusive dishes. Sip 100 Spanish wines, red and white sangrias, and cocktails inspired by Spanish ingredients, seven days a week.

Santino's Tap and Table

40 E. Market St., West Chester
610-738-5491 / SantinosTapAndTable.com

Taking over longtime West Chester neighborhood bar, Rams Head, Folsom-based Santino's will bring its old-school Italian "gravy, not sauce" menu to town. New owners, the DeMarco family,

have restaurant roots in Delco dating back to father Charlie's 1987 eponymous restaurant. But it's son C.J. who brings family recipes to West Chester. The menu is stacked with Italian classic comfort food, from chicken parm eggrolls to short rib ravioli. And the Rams Head spirit lives on in The Rathskeller, a BYOF operation downstairs.

INSTAGRAMMABLE**At The Table**

11 Louella Ct., Wayne
610-964-9700 / AtTheTableBYOB.com

Envision escargot au champagne on golden brioché crowned with fresh green nasturtium leaves. Perfect venison with white duck fat snow and Brussels sprout leaves. If ever there was exquisitely beautiful, photogenic and sublimely delicious food to be found, it's at the six-course tastings of At The Table. Now six years old, the Wayne BYOB graced by husband-wife team, Chefs Alex and Tara Buzan Hardy, offers award-winning luxurious dining for your eye and palate. Ever-changing masterpieces include foie gras with orange marmalade, honeycomb and pale heart of palm, plus for dessert — chocolate pots de crème with glistening berries. Bon appetit! And don't be embarrassed to take a quick pic.

Bluefin Sushi & Asian Cuisine

555 Wellington Sq., Exton
610-458-3234 / BlueFinEagleview.com

Chef Yong Kim's creative signature sushi rolls are in a class of their own. In Eagleview's Restaurant Row, Bluefin's delicacies — some named after streets near the restaurant — set the highest bar for color, texture, presentation and

taste. The Wharton rolls' green avocado, orange salmon, pink tuna, (mango) mango and red roe are a rainbow for your eyes and sunshine for your palate. The Wellington's crunchy tempura chips, spicy tuna and more are exceptional. The shrimp sundae — created to look like the ice cream treat, topped with peanuts and cherry red roe — delights as appetizer or dessert. Take your phone camera and an appetite!

Le Cavalier

42 W. 11th St., Wilmington
302-594-3154 / LeCavalierDE.com

Chef Tyler Akin has settled into the Hotel DuPont's fabled Green Room redo and serves up food as gorgeous as the setting — OpenTable dubbed it one of the most beautiful restaurants in the U.S. and Canada. Whether it's classic steak frites, foie gras mousse with blood orange marmalade, a shrimp-topped bloody Mary at the opulent bar, or an upscale take on a Big Mac, try to get a glimpse of the stunning restaurant in the background of your food photos. La Cav's mosaic floor, light fixtures, wood paneling are highly Instagrammable. And did we mention the bar?

Turk's Head Café

111 N. Church St., West Chester
610-241-1666 / TurksHeadCoffee.com

If you're one to snap and share every great cup of coffee in every great café, you already know and love the new Turk's Head Café. Their latte art enchants both morning larks and groggy owls. Smile back at the frothy, grinning monkey face on a cup of Funky Monkey while you park yourself and your computer at a long wooden table. Ask for a tulip on your mocha to sip under a red umbrella in the outdoor nook. Whether sipping a nitro cold brew, iced mocha, steaming latte or Americano, you'll have a better morning — better tasting and looking — at Turk's Head. Post it to make it so.

**QUINTESSENTIAL
CHESTER COUNTY****Birchrunville Store Café**

1403 Hollow Rd., Birchrunville
610-827-9002 / BirchrunvilleStoreCafe.com

You'll probably need Waze to find Birchrunville, let alone Birchrunville Store Café. After driving through rolling hills, you'll find an intimate space with country furnishings, candles and corks from wine bottles — it's BYOB. Let Chef Francis Pascal set a French-Italian table that's unique in Chester County. For years, it's been local

destination dining at its finest, and reservations still require planning ahead. Feast on crispy pheasant or beef carpaccio for openers. Add fresh oysters, if you like. Choose a salad, with every element absolutely fresh. For mains, there's seafood, veal, pork, lamb and steak, all prepared to perfection. If you're nearby during the day, stop in at the ButterScotch Pastry Shop across the street. Chef Francis is married to its owner, Nui.

Bloom Southern Kitchen

123 Pottstown Pk., Chester Springs
484-359-4144 / BloomSouthernKitchen.com

Despite the huge blossoms painted on the exterior, many folks still think of the building at the crossroads of Pottstown Pike and Little Conestoga Road as the Old Eagle Tavern. After all, it's been around since the early 18th century. But several recent reincarnations lightened, brightened and updated the landmark as a prime example of adaptive reuse. The redone interior still radiates the historic feel where fried chicken (aka happiness on a plate) is served alongside gumbo, shrimp and grits, hush puppies and cornbread from the Southern-themed menu. Warm hospitality and a very strong bourbon selection (three tiers, plus premier) continue making fans. This spring, look for an expansion to the nearby Stables Kitchen and Beer Garden.

Catherine's Restaurant

1701 W. Doe Run Rd., Kennett Square
610-347-2227 / CatherinesRestaurant.com

Every season of every year, when nearby fields are alive with equestrian events and bordered by fall foliage or dusted with snow, Catherine's county charm and fabulous food, especially seafood, leave us glowing. Devour brunchtime lump crab cakes with arugula and grilled asparagus on the patio with urns of sunflowers and table ferns. Savor goat cheese ravioli with scallops in a complex pine nut crème at winter candlelight dinners. Save room for key lime pie topped with swirls and plated with fresh berries, or chocolate layer cake with Baileys. Take home Chester County's best mushroom soup with crab, rich enough for royalty, along with Chester County charm.

Four Dogs Tavern

1300 W. Strasburg Rd., West Chester
610-692-4367 / TheFourDogsTavern.com

Set in the quaint, historic town of Marshallton, outside West Chester, Four Dogs Tavern was originally the stables of the adjacent Marshalton Inn (one L). The tavern was named for a print of four foxhounds found on site, painted by 19th-century artist Louis Godefroy Jadin. The dogs live on in the sign outside. Chef David Cox,

Birchrunville Store Café



Bloom Southern Kitchen



Catherine's Restaurant



At The Table



Bluefin Sushi



Le Cavalier



West Chester native and Johnson & Wales grad, has been the owner since 2006 and serves scores of loyal fans. Expect elevated sandwiches, pasta, flatbreads, soups, salads, mains and wonderful desserts. Rustic, warm and friendly (for you and your dog) by the fireplace, at the friendly bar or outside on the tented and open patios, Four Dogs is as fine a place to enjoy Chester County’s hospitality as any around.

The Whip Tavern

1383 N. Chatham Rd., Coatesville
610-383-0600 / TheWhipTavern.com

Whether you’re in wellies, dashing in under your brolley, or still in riding gear after a sunny gallop, look no further than The Whip for an authentic English pub in Southern Chester County. Turn at the “Blow Horn” sign, park in the lot or by the bucolic field, and enter the tavern where the fire is warm and the beer is cold. Among the menu’s traditional bangers and mash, bubble and squeak, fish and chips, Scotch egg and sticky toffee pudding, find bread pudding made with local Highland Orchards cider and a cheese board featuring nearby Doe Run cheeses and Swarmbustin’ honey. Always brilliant!

IN DOWNINGTOWN

Amani’s BYOB

105 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-237-8179 / AmanisBYOB.com

For over 10 years, Chef Jonathan Amann (Johnson & Wales grad) has helmed the ambitious kitchen, while wife Jeanine, a Downingtown native, has handled the front of the house. Their creative appetizers draw heavily from the sea — calamari, escargot, oysters, octopus. Entrees will appeal to a landlocked mariner, with crab cakes, lobster crepes, shrimp and scallop ramen and Parmesan-crust ed monkfish. Landlubbers get love with short ribs, pork porterhouse and lamb ragout. The desserts — pecan pie, espresso crème brûlée — and drinks (more than BYOB) — Sazerac, key lime martini, chocolate cherry Manhattan — further demonstrate the surprisingly sophisticated cooking here. Note: Upstairs is new-ish Amani’s North with craft cocktails and small plates.

Station Taproom

207 W. Lancaster Ave.
484-593-0560 / StationTaproom.com

It takes over an hour to travel by rail from Suburban Station to Downingtown. When you get off the train, you’ll likely be mighty thirsty. Thankfully, Station Taproom awaits, right across the street, with 16 ice cold beers on tap, ranging from Root Down Berliner Weisse at 4.6% ABV to Mainstay Eurodeath, an imperial stout at 9%. And, while you’re sipping a cold one, sample from the Taproom’s soul-satisfying food menu — try Buffalo wings

and wonton nachos. Step up to brisket, birria panini, red curry or dan dan noodles. In other words, don’t be surprised if your “beer after work” becomes a full meal. The Bottle Room next door offers six-packs of your favorite.

Victory Brewing

420 Acorn Ln.
610-873-0881 / Taprooms.VictoryBeer.com

Now part of Artisanal Brewing Ventures, Victory Brewing was founded in Downingtown by Ron Barchet and Bill Covaleski in 1996 and is among the top ten craft brewers in the U.S., as well as a destination brewery for beer fans. Drink the classics — Hop Devil, Prima Pils, Golden Monkey, Storm King — or others on tap at the place where they’re made. In its onsite restaurant, tuck into a variety of shareable foods — fried pickles, popcorn shrimp — plus wings with several sauces, about ten different sandwiches, four pizzas in two sizes, and four entrees, including fish-n-chips and pork tacos. Every day except Saturday, Victory offers discount specials to complete this beer mecca.

Pomod’oro Pizza & Italian Restaurant

200 Chestnut St.
610-873-0405 / PomodoroDowningtown.com

Inside, the warmth and aromas of a traditional old-school Italian kitchen prevail. Inspired by memories of his youth, Tony Cataldo learned his passion for cooking in Sicily, watching his parents and siblings prepare pastas, risottos, stromboli and pizzas. Now he uses fine local cheeses — mozzarella, ricotta, feta, pecorino Romano — plus the best vegetables and herbs from the garden — plum tomatoes, roasted red peppers, artichoke hearts, sweet basil and Kalamata olives — combined with a range of proteins — chicken, veal, beef, clams, mussels, calamari and other seafood. More than 40 years later, Tony and wife Claudia have perfected the cuisine, served with love and wine, and oversee a bakery, too. It’s where to go for satisfying Italian goodness.

La Sponda

20 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-593-4488 / LaSponda.com

It’s a beautiful, albeit unlucky, spot on the banks of the East Branch of Brandywine River. Hurricane Ida closed the restaurant temporarily in 2021. Before that, several restaurants — not to mention a historic paper mill — opened and closed there. But the delicious food, friendly service and inviting ambience of La Sponda all portend a bright future. Start your meal by selecting from a long list of largely Italian wines. Then an appetizer, maybe polenta, grilled octopus, beef carpaccio or about ten others. Follow with veal saltimbocca, eggplant rollatini, grilled branzino or over 15 pastas. Owner Julian Mene has created a wonderful dining experience inside the historic space and on the patio with the best views in Downingtown.

Four Dogs Tavern



The Whip Tavern



La Sponda



Iron Hill Taphouse



Estrella Tacos y Mas

202 E. Lancaster Ave.
484-237-2423 / EstrellaTacoBar.com

The taco — it’s come a long way from ground beef between a stale cornmeal folder. Estrella Tacos y Mas offers what may be some of the best tacos around. Megan and C.W. Bruton quit positions as corporate restaurateurs, called on Megan’s roots in Austin and C.W.’s roots in Downingtown, moved into an old firehouse and started what’s become a destination for Tex-Mex in Chester County. The tortillas are homemade, warm and filled with smoked brisket or pork, Southern fried chicken, beer-battered fish, blackened shrimp, braised black beans, roasted cauliflower or fried avocado. Quench your thirst with a massive margarita or seasonal drink (e.g., watermelon, blackberry). And relax.

IN EXTON

Ron’s Original Bar & Grille

74 E. Uwchlan Ave.
610-594-9900 / RonsOriginal.com

Fresh ingredients. Made from scratch. Local. No preservatives, high-fructose, MSG, GMO, added hormones or antibiotics. No bad ingredients in this food! But it’s *not* a typical “health-food” restaurant and sure doesn’t taste like one. Here the flavors are very Italian, coming from over 30 years of cooking by Ron Inverso as he serves up pizzas (and specialty ovals), stromboli, piadini, pastas, soups, steaks, chicken, seafood and more. It’s a *very* large, *very* diverse menu., along with a kids’ menu and an extremely friendly bar with 20 craft beers on tap, an extensive bottle list, many wines and a host of signature cocktails. Catch live music on weekends. And remember Ron’s motto: “If I wouldn’t eat it, I won’t serve it.”

Appetites on Main

286 Main St.
610-594-2030 / AppetitesOnMain.com

Sports fans’ heaven! Not a man-cave, given the floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on Exton’s Main Street shopping thoroughfare and the female patrons. There are 18 TVs, lots of beer — 14 on tap, 60+ in bottles — immense cocktails and huge portions. Especially recommended is the Reuben sandwich, but it’s hard to pass up the Pastraminator, the Dave W, the Buffalo chicken grinder. Wings are a specialty, with a dozen sauces and rubs, plus fries topped with bacon and cheese, short rib or served NOLA style. So much finger food. Weather permitting, kids, dogs and others enjoy the 80-seat open-air patio. Worth noting: Brad Weinstein is celebrating 20 years there. We wish him 20+ more.

Iron Hill Brewery Taphouse

260 Eagleview Blvd.
484-874-2897 / IronHillBrewery.com

The Taphouse is a new concept for Iron Hill, which has about 20 other locations, mostly in the mid-At-

lantic, that have been attracting fans for over 25 years. This taphouse/production brewery/restaurant in an industrial chic 4,500-square-foot space caters to those looking for award-winning beer and hospitality. The food menu here is abbreviated compared to its sister sites, instead emphasizing shareables, salads, burgers and flatbreads. But the beer menu is big, with 26 brews on tap — Engine 47, Brambleberry, Pig Iron Porter — and many more in bottles. A portion of proceeds from Engine 47 Pilsner is donated to Lionville Fire Company. Honor the men in red. They’ll be stopping by for a cold one. Join them!

Mama Wong

268 Eagleview Blvd.
484-713-8888 / BestMamaWong.com

If there’s one thing Chester County needed a few years ago, it was an authentic, no-frills Chinese restaurant. No longer. Mama Wong filled that niche when local executive Song Li created a place for his many Chinese employees to savor the taste of home — just “a bowl of noodles, a few dumplings, a cup of soup.” Head Chef Hongbin Luo (of Han Dynasty, one of CNN’s top 50 Chinese restaurants) has brought those signature tastes and flavors to all of us. Known for hot and spicy Szechuan dishes, Mama Wong also features Cantonese and Shanghai styles. Sage advice though: pick carefully from the diverse menu. You’ll feel the heat!

Taco Maya Mexican Grill

250 Eagleview Blvd.
610-363-3081 / Taco-Maya.com

Tacos, burritos, quesadillas. The Mayan pork is other worldly. The chorizo, smoky and sweet, is muy bueno. Barbacoa ... well, you get the picture. Also, chile rellenos, nachos, taco salad, taquitos and tamales. Great guac. Delectable queso. Savory salsa. Mini burritos and quesadillas for the kids. Rated #1 by TripAdvisor, the popular Taco Maya gets rave reviews for authenticity, freshness and the friendliness of it its staff. One customer said he’d eat there again “even if I wasn’t hungry.” Owned by Erick del Angel, it’s been in business for 10 years, and is good for at least 10 more.

IN KENNETT SQUARE

Talula’s Table

102 W. State St.
610-444-8255 / TalulasTable.com

One of the best tables in Chester County, if you can wait for it, is Talula’s Farm Table. The gourmet foodstore-by-day transforms at night and continues to book the Farm Table a year in advance, with only a few openings through December 2023. Treat eight to 12 foodie friends (four to eight at the Nook Table) to seven courses of exquisite cuisine (\$125, BYOB). The current menu includes lox and latkes, figs, pate, ricotta gnudi, scallops béarnaise, crispy duck mole, truffle crepes and ginger



The Creamery



Letty's Tavern

crisp. For the impatient, shop at Talula's Market to sample baked goods, cheeses, charcuterie, pastas and a changing variety of delicious to-go foods. A landmark under the striped awning for over 15 years in historic Kennett Square.

La Verona

114 E. State St.

610-444-2244 / LaVeronaPA.com

Kennett's lights glitter at sunset. Walk along State Street past diners already under the stars and shoppers scurrying to stow packages before stopping in for drinks. Enter the pretty glass-paned doors to one of the town's favorites: La Verona. The gourmet Italian food with superb ingredients is consistently wonderful: calamari, artichokes, truffle oil, mushrooms, fresh pasta and plump red tomatoes. The bustling bar with sparkling glassware is always great for stellar pizza and antipasti classico to accompany a nice selection of wines, whiskey and cocktails, including spiced pear and limoncello martinis. Order extra tiramisu for the table — it's too good to share.

Sovana Bistro

696 Unionville Rd.

610-444-5600 / SovanaBistro.com

After a fire and a pandemic that kept us away for almost two years, like a phoenix, Sovana Bistro rose back better than ever. Friendly staff — as genuinely happy to see us as we are to see them — greet, seat and serve us, then ensure a perfect meal. In house Sovana brines the dill caperberries and bakes the bread, bagels and biscotti that arrive on the saucer with coffee. Wood-fired pizzas, cheese flights and salmon are always a hit, as are apple tarts and crème brûlée. For extra smiles, visit at holidays when staff members wear Halloween costumes and Christmas-y Santa hats.

Grain Craft Bar & Kitchen

108 W. State St.

484-886-4154 / MeetAtGrain.com

Opened in 2017 as one of several area locations, Grain makes the most of its rooftop level, with a retractable glass wall to extend the pleasure of that special spot. This casual gastropub, with a full bar and 20+ taps (half always local), is an inviting option for brunch, lunch or dinner, with live music, bingo and trivia nights. The menu is filled with appealing pub grub, from cream of mushroom soup and pork belly sliders to short rib grilled cheese and bourbon glazed salmon, with yummy brunch dishes (hot cocoa pancakes!). Stop by during the golden hour — in winter that's during the 3 to 6 p.m. Happy Hour. And feel free to buy the hardworking kitchen staff a drink (\$10).

The Creamery of Kennett Square

401 Birch St.

484-732-7040 / KennettCreamery.com

A century ago, the son of The Creamery's one-time owner, Herb Pennock, a pitcher for the New York Yankees, reputedly hung out there with Babe Ruth. Originally built as the Eastern Condensed Milk Company, then a mushroom canner, The Creamery was reimagined in 2016 and today has become a community gathering space that's also the site of countless events. Friendly, open, inviting, the cavernous wooden structure is a comfortable place to enjoy a beer, sip wine or sample a cocktail with friends. Enjoy live music on weekends and order a bucket of wings or choose from a variety of flatbreads, salads or burgers, and take in the vibe.

Letty's Tavern

201 E. State St.

610-444-5688 / [On Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lettys-tavern)

Cross the threshold into an old inn with fresh food and style: Letty's Tavern. The food is fabulous, drinks are divine and the comfortable setting is perfect for a lively evening on the town. The tavern serves up traditional pub grub favorites — fish and chips, burgers, pizza and beer — and upscale fare for foodies — halibut, vegetarian eggplant medallions, chocolate mousse cake with a hint of cherry. Cocktails, anyone? Try a zingy Paper Plane or a sweet, creamy Bee's Kiss. At Halloween, skeletons lounge by the fireplace, perhaps awaiting a visit from Letty, the ghost who lends her name to the establishment.

IN MEDIA

Ariano

114 S. Olive St.

610-892-6944 / ArianoMedia.com

Ariano is a labor of love and tribute to family. Owner Anthony Bellapigna and his father, Otino, built the restaurant themselves — from the Tuscan clay wood-fired oven to the hand-hammered copper tables. On the second floor, look up at the stunning mural on the ceiling depicting the Bellapigna family story in their hometown of Ariano Irpino. Known for their thin-crust pizzas, Ariano has expanded its menu to include Italian entrees (chicken cacciatore, pistachio-crusting salmon) and paninis, though you'll have to go to sister restaurant Fellini Café for pasta. Pair your meal with a handcrafted cocktail and end with authentic Italian gelato made onsite.

Azie

217 W. State St.

610-566-4750 / Azie-Restaurant.com

The chic, Center-City-meets-Tokyo vibe here is reflected in both the decor and the menu. Azie is known as a leader of the New Asian movement, bringing American and European influences to Southeast Asian cuisine. Order sushi, sashimi and maki rolls that are as beautiful (and photo contest-worthy) as they are delicious. Or try inventive dishes like Kobe beef carpaccio, bibimbap with red-wine braised short ribs, or bulgogi spring rolls with Peruvian sauce. Then enjoy a drink on their award-winning rooftop deck — seasonal craft cocktails, premium sakes and Asian beers — as you take in the action on State Street from above.

Brick & Brew

26 W. State St.

484-443-8441 / BrickNBrewPub.com/Media

Each of the three Brick & Brew locations (Havertown, Malvern) has a unique feel in its classic American bar food venue, and the newly renovated Media restaurant is no exception. Check out the underground distillery ambiance, enhanced by shelves full of bourbon behind the bar. There's also plenty of craft beer on tap, as well as unique cocktails and wine. The menu is full of upscale bar food made from scratch, from inventive sandwiches to, as the name suggests, brick-oven pizzas. But the real standouts are the apps, called "sociables." Share an order of short rib lollipops with friends, or try the grilled octopus salad with smoked paprika sherry vinaigrette. With a brew, of course.

Desert Rose

305 W. State St.

484-442-8012 / DesertRoseMediaPA.com

For authentic Mediterranean and Middle Eastern street food, look no further than Desert Rose, which celebrated 10 years on State Street last March. Everything here is made fresh daily, from house-baked pita to hand-scooped falafel and chicken shawarma piled high. The hummus — traditional Israeli-style with tahini and olive oil or warm with eggplant and a poached egg — will transport you from State Street to the streets of Israel. Be sure to get there early, as they've been known to sell out before closing!

Tom's Dim Sum & Dim Sum Mania

Tom's Dim Sum: 13 E. State St.

610-566-6688 / TomsDimSum.com/Store2.html

Dim Sum Mania: 17–19 E. State St.

610-557-8757 / DimSumMania.com

Three years after Chinatown staple Tom's Dim Sum opened a location in Media, we were

surprised to see Dim Sum Mania appear just two doors down the street. Turns out that Tom Guo, namesake of Tom's Dim Sum, parted ways with his partners to open Dim Sum Mania. Both serve Shanghai-style dim sum — think soup dumplings and scallion pancakes — at similar price points and share a sleek, modern atmosphere. Though many have chosen a side in the dim sum turf war — from Yelp reviewers to the *Inquirer's* Craig LaBan — we say that both are delicious and worth sampling.

Shere-E-Punjab

210 W. State St.

610-891-0400 / Shere-E-Punjab.com

This is a top go-to spot for authentic cuisine from India and Pakistan. Freshly baked naan, chicken and fish tikka, tandoori entrees and biryani rice dishes round out the menu and bring that distinctly Punjab flavor to State Street. Plenty of vegetarian and gluten-free options, too. Finish your meal with a classic Indian dessert — kheer, gulab jamun or kulfi to name a few. Come for the popular lunch buffet on weekdays, or drop by Thursday through Saturday nights for Punjab Live, open mic nights and live performances exclusive to the Media location (another location in Glen Mills).

The Towne House

117 Veterans Sq.

484-445-2041 / TowneHousePA.com

All of Delco rejoiced when the iconic Towne House reopened in 2020. Native Irishman Brian McLaughlin breathed new life into the restaurant, creating five unique dining rooms, each with its own menu and theme. Choose among over 300 whiskeys at The Shebeen, sip seasonal cocktails in Idlewild's open-air courtyard, unwind at the Colony Cocktail Club's velvet lounge, host your next event at the Towne Hall or check out the farm-to-table Towne House — order the Irish breakfast for brunch or overnight Guinness short ribs for dinner. No matter which dining room you choose, this Media landmark continues to satisfy.

Rye BYOB

112 W. State St.

610-263-7832 / RyeBYOB.com

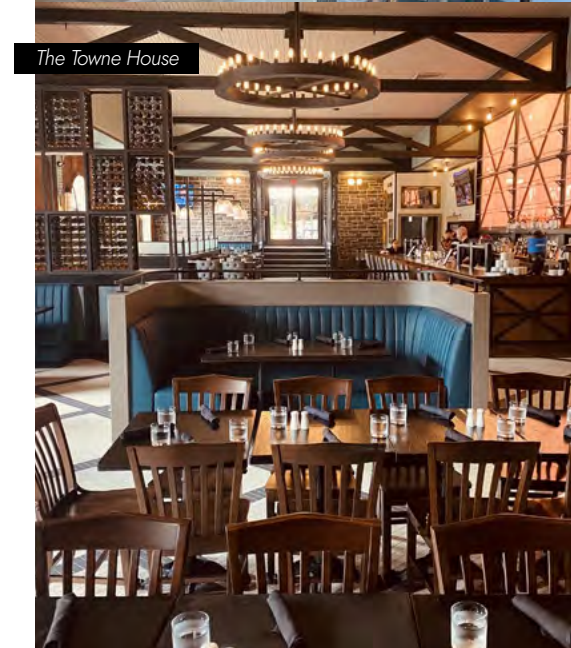
Two years after its highly anticipated opening, Rye BYOB still lives up to the hype for New American food made from scratch. Decorated with local art, Rye's atmosphere is comfortable and inviting for both special occasions and casual nights out. Enjoy a menu emphasizing small plates that encourages diners to mix and match for a customizable experience. Highlights include protein



Azie



Brick & Brew



The Towne House

dishes, including chicken Milanese and baked cod with bamboo rice, and pasta made onsite, like the saffron mafalde with shrimp scampi. And with a focus on local and sustainable ingredients, Rye lets you feel good about eating out.

Pinocchio’s Restaurant

131 E. Baltimore Ave.
610-566-7767 / PinPizza.com

Serving up pies since 1955, Pinocchio’s is a go-to destination. Delco’s first pizzeria and Media’s oldest restaurant is now run by its third-generation owners who brought something new to the table: the award-winning Beer Garden To Go. Beer connoisseurs come for over 1,000 specialty beers, including 200 from craft or international breweries. Mix and match six-packs or fill up a growler or crowler from their 25 rotating taps. New beers arrive daily, so be sure to come back again and again for the latest brews.

IN PHOENIXVILLE

Avlos

258 Bridge St.
610-455-4110 / AvlosGr.com

Thanks to sisters Nikoleta and Katerina Skart-sila, you don’t need a passport to experience great Greek food in Chester County. They’ve brought their home village’s cuisine to Phoenixville. While crowds pour in for octopus and lamb, their chicken with chickpeas is also delicious, as is the beef with tomato and pasta with notes of cinnamon. Desserts conjure up an island vacation: honey-drenched baklava with Greek coffee, popular walnut cake or *Ekmekek Tsoureki* (Easter bread slathered in whipped cream, vanilla custard and honey syrup). Dine in, eat outdoors or attend a Greek evening at the Colonial Theatre when Avlos’ food is paired with a film. A great addition to the community.

Paloma’s Restaurant & Market

101 Bridge St.
585-472-4295 / ILovePalomas.com

Phoenixville dining has changed dramatically over the past 25 years and now welcomes a broad array of options for the hungry. A recent notable addition with a modern European take, Paloma’s shows off a bit of sparkle from its site in the town’s oldest building, enriching the community with culture, cuisine and hospitality. Chef Chris Siropaides (Culinary Institute of America grad, Brasserie Perrier, Georges’) heads the kitchen that turns out impressive fare like filet mignon,

striped bass and Stanley Tucci’s Spaghetti Alla Nerano. For your drink, try Fear and Loathing in Phoenixville. A new take on this old steel town.

Sedona Taphouse

131 Bridge St.
484-302-5714 / SedonaTaphouse.com

Every hour is Happy Hour with Sedona Taphouse’s Southwest cuisine. And there’s no better place to hang with your crowd. Its inventive menu includes canyon nachos, shrimp and grits with a jalapeño kick, burgers with chili glaze and pepper jack, mojitos, prickly pear margaritas and cactus lemonade. Explore a long list of craft beers and ales, or autumn’s ciders — pumpkin and traditional apple — on the patio with heaters to extend the season. If there’s no space left after the great food and libations, take home amaretto liqueur cake: locally made liqueur, chocolate and almonds. You’ll thank yourself later.

Great American Pub

148 Bridge St.
610-917-3333 / TheGreatAmericanPub.com

The party rocks at the Great American Pub on Bridge Street, sometimes spilling through the doors, past outdoor seating and beyond. The upbeat music matches the mood, drinks flow and the food — vegan, gluten-free and other options — is all festive. Large portions of brisket tacos, chicken and waffles, cheese fries, cheesesteak spring rolls and wings mean there’s plenty to share with friends. The Impossible quesadillas and burgers get great reviews, too. If your pup is part of your fun-loving crowd, she can join you at your outdoor private table. But maybe leave the kids with grandpa — this is a rollicking spot.

Bistro on Bridge

212 Bridge St.
610-935-7141 / BistroOnBridge.com

A rooftop beer garden with a VW beer bus, arcade games, tabletop shuffleboard, fireplace, huge wall murals, live music on weekends, and a sparkling bar. So many reasons to go to Bistro on Bridge and get together with friends. The menu has 24 beers with more on deck, plus an extensive list of bourbon, rye, scotch and whiskey. Or order a flight, but just don’t drive afterward. This fun spot has all kinds of apps and bar food — cheesesteak egg rolls, crispy ribs, eight flavors of wings, four of fries, bowls, salads, soups, sandwiches, burgers. Zack and Seth Hoffman have built a place that perfectly captures the feel of Phoenixville.

Steel City & Mont Clare Deli

Steel City: 203 Bridge St.
484-924-8425 / SteelCityBrews.com
Mont Clare Deli: 500 Bridge St., Mont Clare
610-935-8773 / MontClareDeli.com

It’s no wonder that Steel City Coffeehouse and Brewery is the heart of Phoenixville, and the new Mont Clare Deli is becoming another community hub. Co-owners Laura Vernola and Ed Simpson, as well as staff, greet customers like family and continually add music, menu and market offerings to serve the community’s needs and tastes. At Steel City, grab flatbreads, Mexican street corn salad, vegan breakfast burritos and bowls, plus great cups of coffee, of course. At Mont Clare, find donuts, soups, salads and delicious, thick sandwiches including a fried PB&J. Pick up Steel City’s Phoenix Rising artisan beer at both. Cheers!

ON THE MAIN LINE

DiBruno’s Alimentari

385 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
484-581-7888

DiBruno.com/Locations/Wayne

The shopping center’s exterior looks unassuming, but shiny rows of Mercedes, Audis and BMWs say something interesting is going on inside. That something is the Alimentari bar inside the Main Line’s DiBruno Bros. It’s quite the place to see and be seen, celebrating with champagne or kicking back over red, orange, white and rose wines or classic and curated cocktails. The menu offers tasty bites including house-made focaccia with Sicilian olive oil, beef and pork meatballs, pan-seared octopus, salads and not-remotely-ordinary grilled cheese sandwiches, all surrounded by the market’s best gourmet Italian foods to be found. Do a little shopping on your way out.

Autograph Brasserie

503 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-964-2588 / AutographBrasserie.com

Wander the many star-studded rooms at Autograph Brasserie and gaze at 1,000 vintage photos on its walls, from Marilyn to Kiss, Sting to Audrey Hepburn and Keith Richards to James Gandolfini. After work, on weeknights 4 to 6 (or until 9 for women on Wednesdays) enjoy a great Happy Hour. The wine list tops out at over \$500 a bottle, but you can find many affordable by-the-glass options. In warmer months, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, there’s live music. Meanwhile, Execu-



Rosalie



Nectar



La Cabra Brewing

tive Chef Jim Davidson invites you to savor his fine steaks, luscious seafood, delectable sushi and pasta dishes, topped off with apple crisp cheese-cake. For Marty Grims of Fearless Restaurant, it’s another success story.

Rosalie

139 E. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-977-0600 / RosalieWayne.com
(Locations in Bala Cynwyd and East Norriton)

Whenever you can, sit on the veranda of the glorious 117-year old Wayne Hotel, a Tudor Revival structure that’s home to Rosalie, where you can sip a Negroni or Goodbye Summer, in season. The beautifully appointed dining rooms welcome diners in colder times to find Italian soul food from Chef Merrick Devine. Try prawns and fegato (foie gras torchon), fritti (crispy pork with a long hot pepper pistachio pesto and aioli), casoncelli and gnocchi, branzino and eggplant. Cannoli, of course for dessert. Rustic yet elegant. Another hit from Fearless Restaurants.

White Dog Café

200 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-225-3700 / WhiteDog.com/Wayne

Yes, yet another Fearless Restaurant, White Dog Café was originally founded in University City by Judy Wicks, a pioneer of the farm-to-table movement. Now there are five locations — adding in Glen Mills, Haverford and the Vickers Tavern transformation in Exton, coming soon — all still supporting sustainable food. At Wayne, choose from four artfully and whimsically appointed rooms plus outdoor patio. The welcoming bar is festooned with dogs — portraits on the walls, on the pillows. Chef Greg Maloney turns out seasonal fare — Kennett Square mushroom omelet, oysters, lamb Bolog-

nese, for example. All very fresh and sustainably raised. And always a delightful dining experience.

Nectar

1091 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn
610-725-9000 / TasteNectar.com

As a kid, we “had Chinese” every Sunday night, picking from well-worn menus. But Nectar’s Pan Asian cuisine is quantum leaps beyond that experience. Sample starters include crispy calamari, steamed pork buns, lobster sliders. A long list of sushi and sashimi — tuna, striped bass, flying fish roe. Or, try the King Kong Roll, with filet mignon and lobster. For entrees, moo shu pork, grilled tea-smoked salmon or pan-seared wild Alaskan halibut are tempting. Kenny Huang and the late Patrick Feury fused French and Asian cuisines, inspiring a cascade of tastes and aromas, matched with Nectar’s impeccable service. A towering silk-screened Buddha discreetly monitors your meal ... and smiles. You will, too.

La Cabra Brewing

642 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn
610-240-7908 / LaCabraBrewing.com

With over a dozen beers on tap — including a favorite dark bourbon-barrel-aged Kosta (a Russian imperial stout) — Head Brewer Chris Young produces some of the best beer in Chester County. A hop-forward pilsner, complex farmhouse ale, full-bodied wheat beer, malty lager, English barleywine and a few amazing sours, all from a seven-barrel brewhouse with a seasonally adjusted lineup. Executive Chef Patrick Seyfried supplements the brews with a host of bar bites, small plates, salads, tacos and sandwiches. Try the Cubano, al pastor burger or blackened shrimp taco. La Cabra’s mission is

to be a great neighbor and their good food and community events — Oktoberfest and beyond — are making that a reality.

Malvern Buttery

233 E. King St., Malvern
610-296-2534 / MalvernButtery.com

Your mouth waters as the door opens to Malvern Buttery. The aroma of fresh coffee and baked goods is just one reason it’s a favorite year after year. Now open seven days a week, the Buttery makes it worth opening your eyes early to get warm sticky buns covered in nuts, hot pesto and egg sandwiches, and light flaky croissants — regular, sweet-filled or savory with herbs and feta. The ultimate to savor by the sunny windows or under outside umbrellas — the Buttery’s cuffin: croissant pastry filled with chocolate ganache and topped with hazelnuts. No wonder we keep returning to this neighborhood treasure.

A Taste of Britain

503 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-971-0390 / ATOBritain.com

Fancy a cuppa? We highly recommend heading for A Taste of Britain. You’ll find over a dozen black teas, flavored and unflavored, another dozen green and white teas, even more decaffeinated and herbal options. Complement your tea with warm scones, Welsh Rarebit or a Ploughman’s Platter cheese board, featuring Stilton, Leicester and cranberry Wensleydale. Or choose lovely salads, soups, sandwiches, pasties — Cornish or cheese and onion — and chicken pot pie. For dessert, savor grapefruit posset pudding or a slice of chocolate Guinness or orange marmalade cake. All fit for a king. Be assured, owners Debbie Heth and Edward Pierce will serve you royally, especially



A Taste of Britain



Terrain Garden Café

with the recently expanded space featuring British home goods and gifts, plus an extensive British grocery market.

Terrain Garden Café

138 W. Lancaster Ave., Devon
610-590-4675 / ShopTerrain.com
Devon-Restaurant

Outdoors comes indoors and indoors appears as outdoors at Terrain Garden Café. Any meal becomes an elegant picnic in a charming Woodland Village tent in the nursery or greenhouse where ivy, succulents, hanging floral baskets and hungry patrons thrive. Baked bread arrives at the table in a customary flowerpot — very on theme. Edible blossoms garnish artisanal cheese boards. Soups, salads, bowls and plates incorporate fresh local produce. In addition to the Garden Sips menu, garden spritzers include



Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co.

rose, lavender and elderflower flavors. Dessert offers a delightful terrarium — a glass bowl filled with tasty chocolate cake, mousse and ganache sprouting from matcha crunch “earth.” Paradise.

Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co.

235 Lancaster Ave., Malvern
610-240-9566 / ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com

The setting may be modest — located in the Lincoln Court Shopping Center in Malvern. But the Scotto family — four children, plus inspiration from their father, Nonno Tony — produces excellent and satisfying pizzas along with Italian chicken and veal specialties from this convenient spot. Pizza with thin caramelized crust, luscious, savory and expertly seasoned tomato sauce, the finest mozzarella ... Mmm! And the toppings — pepperoni, meatballs, sausage, peppers, artichokes, eggplant, mushrooms, pesto ... Plus there's so much more than pizza — semolina pastas, eggplant parmigiana, lasagna, fettuccini, for example. The pizza's so good, you may miss the Pasta Company part of the name at this BYOB with separate dining room.

IN DELAWARE

Buckley's Tavern

5812 Kennett Pike, Wilmington
302-656-9776 / BuckleysTavern.com

Almost 100 years after its culinary opening, Buckley's Tavern still attracts fans to sit at barstools, fireside tables and porch seats by the garden. Cross the state line into Delaware for Sunday brunch hot cakes, seafood Florentine omelets, lip-smacking cheese potatoes and family-style meat plates. Return later for salmon cakes topped with sesame seeds, mushroom soup,



La Fia

burgers and ahi in the laidback atmosphere of a historic home. At the bar or table, beer always flows — Old Speckled Hen from England or local Krauch's Creation by Wilmington Brew Works. Or try a cocktail to match your mood — Steel Blu Spring Water with Delaware vodka or a Spicy Margarita. It's what keeps a tradition going.

La Fia

421 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-543-4474 / LaFiaWilmington.com

La Fia is known as one of the best restaurants in Wilmington for a host of good reasons. Every course on the prix fixe menu that changes seasonally with sustainable ingredients and creative combinations from Chef Bryan Sikora is exceptional. First course duck leg confit with pomegranate and sesame granola gets kudos from fans, as does second course ribeye cap steak with mushrooms and miso caramel. And where else will you find divine sweet potato and orange cake with blood orange mousse and hazelnuts? In the bistro's warm ambiance in the historic district, knowledgeable staff can help you pair a perfect wine with each dish. ♦

The local dining scene is changing rapidly, so check websites and other sources for up-to-date information. And for more great places to eat, read the Dining Guide in this issue, our monthly Food News columns and on our website, *CountyLinesMagazine.com*.

Drinks

In addition to a bounty of food news, there's also a big gulp's worth of developments for the sippers among us.

Famed Amani's BYOB in Downingtown opened **Amani's North**, upstairs, as a craft cocktail bar also serving local beer and select wines, alongside small plates. Partnering with Boardroom Spirits, they bring a creative cocktail menu (blood orange cinnamon smoked old fashioned, others with smoke bubbles), elevated bar food (prosciutto & fig flatbread), special events (rum cocktail classes, bourbon tastings) and generous Happy Hours (Mon.–Fri., 4 to 6; Sat. & Sun. 1 to 3).

This time downstairs from the anchor restaurant (Stove & Tap), **Good, Bad & Ugly** is a modern twist on an old-fashioned dive bar (though decidedly upscale and not very dive-y), with a western saloon vibe emanating from imposing murals of Clint Eastwood, cowboys and horses. There are games (pool, foosball, shuffleboard), music, sports (six 60-inch TVs) and drinks. Sample a dozen beers on taps at the 80-foot bar, or quick cocktails (lots of tequila, WC Ranch Water) and bar food (try the Tap Fries).

Manatawny Stillworks, from the Lenape meaning “the place we meet to drink,” added a new spot to sip their small-batch American whiskeys and other spirits in Ardmore, expanding from the Pottstown Circle of Progress, Passyunk and Fishtown locations. The eastern Main Line bar, tasting room and bottle shop promises the craftiest cocktails in their space for 50 guests. Maple whiskey and apple brandy are just two options to warm you up this winter.

Also in Ardmore, **Char & Stave Coffee Roasters**, an all-day café and cocktail bar, serves up coffee made by whiskey people, the Bluebird Distilling folks. So, it's coffee by day and cocktails, music, poetry and more by night. Wondering about the name? Stave is the word for the wooden pieces that make up the bourbon barrels and char is the process of burning the inside of the barrels to impart flavor as the bourbon ages. Caffè Negroni, anyone?

We've always been pushovers for beer gardens, but **Longwood Gardens'** version was a special treat, especially for throngs of thirsty visitors to the Bruce Munro light installation. String lights over picnic tables set the mood in warmer weather (closed Nov. 13). Local craft beer (Levante, Sly Fox, Victory, Yards and two Longwood flavors) plus pizzas and pub grub available, with heartier fare at the adjacent Café (mushroom soup, salmon). Hoping for its return in 2023.

A third brewery plans to open in Downingtown. **Dublin Brewing**, helmed by Ireland-born owner and brewer Brendan Fitzgerald (a 30-year home brewer), will produce a variety of styles: Irish dry stouts, IPAs, saisons, red ales, lagers and barrel-aged beers in their large space comprised of taproom, brewhouse, fermentation and kitchen (healthy, Mediterranean food) plus a winemaker. Look for a 30-foot bar, games, indoor-outdoor beer garden, deck and stage. Fitzgerald is DIYing it, so it's a process.

Amani's North



Kung Fu Tea



Coatesville-based **Animated Brewing Company** expanded with a second location — this one in Parkesburg. It's late November opening on Drinksgiving (day before Thanksgiving) was well attended by local beer fans. Located on busy West First Ave., the thousand-square-foot taproom and former gas station has inside seats for 35 to enjoy 40 craft beers, with 12 on tap. Food trucks will provide the eats to accompany your choice of brew, like the namesake Animated Pale Ale, dry hopped, 5% ABV and \$6 pint.

In wine news, West Grove's Kruetz Creek Vineyards was bought by Kyle Jones, formerly of Nissley Vineyards & Winery in Lancaster County. The Kirkpatricks retired after 25 year of winemaking, selling their eight acres, now named **The Acadian Wine Company**. The initial wine release and Acadian tasting room opened in May 2022, offering wines from the Estate Selection, Regional Curation and Pride of the Lake Side (that's Lake Erie), including red blends, Crown Red and Tidal Red.

Finally, bubble tea news is ... bubbling, especially in West Chester, which last August added **Kung Fu Tea** (in the former Starbucks location) to **Tsaocaa** (around the corner) and **One Zo** to the east, making a trifecta of options in one town. And we admit it — we don't get the fascination, even after researching it. Yes, it's a highly customizable Taiwanese drink with several names (milk tea, boba) that blends a tea base with choice of milk, fruit and fruit juices, plus the signature “bubbles” of soft chewy tapioca pearls that sit on the bottom but get slurped up through the wide straw. Maybe if we Instagrammed our technicolor order? ♦