

BEST ★ Of The BEST 2026

EAT LIKE A LOCAL

Eating well in the Brandywine Valley is easy. We're blessed with a bounty of choices for places to eat, drink and meet up. Last year for our Best of the Best review, we highlighted places that have stood the test of time — those with a history of hospitality that have drawn faithful diners for generations.

For 2026, we shift our focus to places that also have a loyal following but are where the local community gathers morning, noon, night and happy hour, plus some gems not to be missed. It's where you can eat like a local and learn what draws patrons back again and again. Places where you'll get a sense of place along with good food — from diners to steakhouses to vegan restaurants and from French bakeries to neighborhood Italians to Asian-fusion gems.

As always, we've also rounded up recent additions that contribute to our vibrant dining scene. Help support these new businesses and visit restaurants and casual spots, more options for wine, beer and spirits, plus speakeasies and sweet treats.

This year make plans to gather with family and friends, share the ambience with neighbors, and make new memories at these local favorites.

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





The Borough

NEW PLACES TO TRY

The Borough

149 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown
484-364-4525 / BoroughDowningtown.com

There's a new lively modern dining spot in Downingtown, with two bars (signature drinks, 20 beers on tap), an entertainment space (live music, open mic, karaoke, private parties) and patio. Sample elevated pub fare along with sushi (that's a surprise!), a raw bar and gastro-style plates — something for everyone. The 60 TVs make a perfect spot to catch the game — any game. Or stop in for trivia night, live comedy or a boozy brunch.

La Fête

2530 Concord Pk., Wilmington
302-374-0779 / LaFeteDelaware.com

Look for French dining in the Wilmington suburbs now that La Fête opened on Concord Pike (Route 202), next to the Charcoal Pit — an unusual but well-known neighbor. The upscale yet welcoming interior — with bar, patio and restaurant space — sets the stage for French classics including escargot, mussels, beef tartare, steak frites, roasted chicken and duck prepared by Executive Chef Max Kaklins (from Marc Vetri's Fiorella). A top-tier cocktail list featuring selections from pre-Civil War through modern no- and low-alcohol options, plus 500 bottles in the wine cellar curated by advanced sommelier Scott Zoccolillo make this destination drinking as well as dining.

Mistral French & Fast

130 W. Miner St., West Chester
610-816-1817 / MistralFrenchAndFast.com

Check out a new West Chester source for your favorite Julia Child classics for takeout, delivery and catering. Enjoy rustic French cooking — nothing fussy — blending classic bistro flavors with global specials. Menu offerings include bouillabaisse, tuna Niçoise, jambon-beurre sandwiches, coq au vin and beef bourguignon. Perfect for busy days, cozy nights and events that need something special. Note the limited hours.

Mother

202 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown
MotherTaco.com

It's called Mother — a new taco+ place (replacing Estrella Tacos) in Downingtown announced itself: Tacos. Margs. Beer. Mother is here. Sample elevated tacos (confit duck carnitas, beef cheek barbacoa), empanadas (smoked pumpkin), starters (paella bites), guacs (hot spiced maple bacon), mains (chorizo sloppy joe, quesabirria). Local beers, including from upstairs neighbor East Branch Brewing, and the margaritas are getting raves. And got to love the kids cheese quesadilla.

Station 142

142 E. Market St., West Chester
484-947-5416 / Station142.com

West Chester natives know 142 East Market Street has seen restaurants come and go — from The Note to Serum.



La Fête



Mistral French & Fast



Mother

Luckily Saloon 151 stepped up to create a new fun live music venue with plenty of bands, karaoke, a spirited Christmas-themed bar (sorry if you missed it) and more. Two bars serve up a long drinks list (yes, there's food too), plus Happy Hours and a rooftop bar for warm weather.

Taquero

111 Veterans Sq., Media
610-920-0115 / TaqueroMX.com

Media's newest Mexican restaurant, Taquero (taco maker), is helmed by Chef Antonio Garcia, formerly of Ariano. This BYOB (with mixers) on Veterans Square, 18 months in the making, serves a range of modern and traditional Mexican dishes — including some Garcia's grandmother made — plus five types of tacos, appetizers, soups, salads, entrees and desserts.

Triple Crown Restaurant, Events & Garden

593 E. Lancaster Ave., St. Davids
610-632-5000 / TripleCrownRadnor.com

The name Triple Crown previews its equestrian theme in its nod to the epitome of horse racing. Expect classic American fare, from hearty entrees (40-oz. Tomahawk ribeye) to small plates from the restaurant and wine, beer and perfect cocktails from the Blue Ribbon Bar (try the Main Line Julep with elderflower liqueur). The ever-expanding Fearless Restaurant group (White Dog, Rosalie, Autograph) has gone full-on equestrian everywhere for the ambiance — mahogany and brass, boots and polo mallets, framed horse paintings. Add a lovely garden and glass conservatory for event spaces at this spot at the Radnor Hotel.

ITALIAN / MEDITERRANEAN

Lasagnola

134 E. Gay St., West Chester
LasagnolaWC.com

An offshoot of dolce Zola, Lasagnola specializes in one thing — lasagna, and they make it chef-worthy. From the ghost kitchen filled with Nonna's secret recipes and techniques, choose pickup or delivery of their one-pound portions, ranging from classic to chicken alfredo to garden harvest. Add an app and tiramisu, too, for a soul-satisfying meal.

LaScala's Fire

44 W. Gay St., West Chester
610-773-2222 / LaScalasFire.com

At last LaScala's Fire opened in downtown West Chester, joining other locations includ-

ing Newtown Square and Villanova and offering "classic Italian American reimagined" at Jack Loew Plaza. The extensive menu includes almost 20 apps (Tuscan and Fire wings), plenty of salads, paninis, wood-fired pizzas (Tony from Gentili's is a partner), house-made pastas and favorites (parmigianos, picattas, marsalas) along with ... a sushi bar! Good drinks selections at a bar with a circle of TVs, plus Happy Hour, weekdays 3 to 6 p.m. Welcome to the Borough!

L'Olivo Trattoria

570 Wellington Sq., Exton
610-340-8115 / LOlivoTrattoria.com

Joining Eagleview's Restaurant Row (in the former Suburban spot), L'Olivo (olive tree) adds authentic northern Italian flavors from the folks at Birchrunville Store Cafe and ButterScotch Pastry Shop — Chef Francis and Nui. Enjoy rustic flavors and creative twists from Executive Chef Jon (of Amani) with signature dishes featuring fresh-made pasta and chef's specials including slow-cooked meats and grilled seafood. Now with a liquor license. Some say it could be the next Birchrunville-level star.

Maris

214 W. State St., Media
267-500-2979 / MarisSeafood.com

Seafood and Mediterranean flavors are what Maris (of the sea) delivers to Media's diverse restaurant selections in the former Two Fourteen space. Local restaurateur Loïc Barnieu (La Belle Epoque, Sterling Pig) put together a menu with plenty of Greek specialties (from Greek salad to spanakopita, saganaki and more), fish (whole branzino, grilled swordfish, tuna) and raw bar along with steaks and chops. A new lighter, brighter interior with white and Mediterranean blue accents seats 75 diners, more at the bar.

Settantatré Pasta & Provisions

802 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn
610-314-0876 / SettantatrePasta73.com

Moving from Delco to a larger space in Berwyn, Settantatré (meaning 73) delighted gluten-free pasta lovers who come for Matt Gentile's creations (tomato pie, topped focaccias get raves), made in a dedicated facility. Others come for regular pastas, sauces and extras at the store or farmers markets. Front of the house is a cafe and lunch spot — espresso and pastries, tomato pie and focaccia. A \$73 monthly membership gets access to dinners, special-release foods, cooking classes and more. *Inquirer's* Craig LaBan, whose daughter is allergic to gluten, named it one of his favorite gluten-free spots.



Triple Crown



LaScala's Fire



L'Olivo Trattoria

ASIAN OPTIONS

Bao Nine

10 Liberty Blvd., Ste. 120, Malvern
484-320-8481 / BaoNine.us

Malvern's restaurant scene welcomed the fluffy Taipei street-style bao buns at Bao Nine — the nine in the name refers to cloud nine, your postprandial experience. About a dozen options (order three, they're small), with the Sticky Chicky (teriyaki glazed chicken) getting raves. The "Gob-baoler" was a special for Thanksgiving. Mainly for delivery and pickup, given the few tables.

Maison Lotus

175 Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-527-5700 / Maison-Lotus.com

The latest venture of the Win Hospitality group (Azie, Blue Elephant, Teikoku), Maison Lotus offers up French-Vietnamese food in the sumptuous reno of the former Margaret Kuo's building. Over two stories "designed to capture a bygone era of romance and celebration" — plus the new lower-level Jade Rabbit speakeasy — enjoy brunch (including dim sum), lunch or dinner, with plenty of signature dishes, like the vermicelli noodle or rice bowl, lobster shumai, shaking beef, hot stone wagyu. Weekday Happy Hour, 4 to 6 p.m. The place to live out your "White Lotus" fantasies.

Mama-San

226 N. Radnor Chester Rd., Radnor
484-580-6942 / MamaSan-Restaurant.com

A fast-casual "elevated Asian Shake Shack," Mama-San is another new venture from the Win Hospitality group, this one in Radnor's former Buena Onda spot. Eat in or take out handmade sushi rolls, poke and noodle bowls, and plenty of Asian-fusion fare (umami fries and drunken noodles are faves). Everyday \$7 Happy Hour, 3 to 5 p.m., cocktails and sushi.

Mino Sushi & Ramen

2 W. Gay St., West Chester
610-301-8869 / MinoRamen.com

An offshoot of the longtime Malvern location, Mino Sushi & Ramen opened at the Gay and High Street intersection in West Chester (former Starbucks corner). Enjoy authentic ramen, bubble tea, poke bowls, sushi and traditional Japanese cuisine. Try their sushi tacos — crispy fried seaweed shells with sushi rice — or the many other apps, rolls (raw and cooked), bowls and balls (rice balls) from their extensive menu. Lunch, dinner and takeout.

CASUAL SPOTS

Bored Trading Cafe

139 W. Gay St., West Chester
484-947-0802 / BoredTradingCafe.com

Opened in West Chester in November and open most mornings at 7 a.m. for early birds, Bored Trading Cafe is a dynamic pop-up eatery with locations in Center City (planned for Ardmore). Expect casual dining with an elevated twist, including handhelds, smash burgers, inventive toasts and matcha lattes. Whether you're grabbing a bagel and latte to go or sitting down for a full meal, you'll find bold flavors and cozy vibes.

Jackson Street Steaks

110 S. Jackson St., Media
JacksonStreetSteaks.com

Looking for the Philly classic without the drive to the city? Then head to Media and Jackson Street Steaks (once it opens). Enjoy a European vibe along with city faves like cheesesteaks, hoagies and burgers, while the bar pours beers from Meyers Brewing Company. Media resident and co-owner Pete Kada looks forward to bringing great cheesesteaks to the 'burbs.

Nanu's Hot Chicken

314 S. High St., West Chester
610-840-6008 / NanusHotChicken.co

All natural, never frozen, Nashville hot chicken. Nanu's Hot Chicken kicked off their grand opening in West Chester as the fourth or sixth hot chicken spot (if you count national chains) with a free food giveaway, a great way to gather fans (44k Instagram followers over four states). The cheesy, spicy, over-the-top fries are another. You'll likely need a refreshing sweet smoothie to calm your palate. Watch for plans for a charity section to help others like the founders' little brother Nanu.

Oola Bowls

16 E. Gay St., West Chester
610-978-9380 / OoloBowls.com

Say ooh la la for this nutrition-focused brand started at Lancaster Central Market, now with locations from Maine to Florida. When the West Chester shop opened (more Chester County spots planned, including Malvern), it became the Borough's fourth açai spot. Oola also offers pitaya bowls, fruit smoothies, Oola bites (peanut butter, Nutella, PB chip), healthy snacks, plus an at-home açai bowl kit. Add fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants for the full effect.

Taqueria Los Poblanos

445 Hannum Ave., West Chester
484-908-8680 / @Tacos_WC

Starting as a food truck at a Shell Station, Taqueria Los Poblanos quickly became a West Chester fave, now with a red-and-yellow, brick-and-mortar location (Sam's Pizza Island). This family business is known for authentic flavors of street tacos, including lengua, tripa and chorizo tacos, birria burritos, quesadilla, tostadas and quesabirria. Open daily, with late-night weekend hours (10 p.m.) for takeout and delivery.

NEW WINE, SPIRITS, BEER

The Barrel by Brothers Kershner

112 Pennsylvania Ave., Avondale
BrothersKershner.com

The latest addition to the Brothers Kershner Brewing Company in Skippack plus seasonal Brothers on the Brandywine Beer Garden in Coatesville, The Barrel is a new gastropub in Avondale based in a historic two-story building (previously Be Here Brewing Co.). Look for craft beers, wine and cocktails along with live music and pub grub classics — including delicious smash burgers.

LoCali Wine Lounge

123 E. Market St., West Chester
484-459-7498 / EnjoyLoCali.com

Stay local, sip Cali, live fully. That's the idea behind LoCali Wine Lounge, a neighborhood lounge built for hanging out, slowing down and sipping California wine in West Chester. The vibe is relaxed, unpretentious and with the belief that wine should be enjoyed, not analyzed. Try small plates, charcuterie, snacks, seasonal bites locally sourced. Plus beer, cocktails, spritzes. It's a music-forward space with plenty of vinyl on the playlist, plus live music, open mic nights and events.

John Roberts Cellars

115-117 W. State St., Media
@JohnRobertsCellars

Delco's only "urban winery," John Robert Cellars brought bold wines and big flavor to their new Media tasting room (also in Essington). In a stylish space made for winding down, sip wines handcrafted by lifelong friends (50 years!) and founders John Irving and Robert Goodwin, enjoy local brews from Sterling Pig and sample tasty bites.

Sweet Treats

We are always happy to scope out the latest scoop on ice cream places, bakeries and other local sweet treats to sample.

• **Ice Cream West Chester** opened (at last!), making summers in the Borough even better. If you haven't visited this third leg of local foodie-preneur Speer Madanat's empire (pizza, cheesesteaks), check the website for shortened cold-weather hours. Soft-serve goodness, plus Dubai chocolate sundaes. 14 N. Church St., West Chester. @IceCreamWestChester

• **Urban Scoop** in Exton offers small-batch, handmade flavors, aka a hug in a cone. Fresh ingredients + decadent mix-ins give you flavors like ube cookie dough, Thai tea and Tuscan trifle. Egg- and gluten-free options as well as signature bubble cones with treats like Mamma Mia — birthday special ice cream, strawberry syrup and gummy bears. 309 Lincoln Hwy., Exton. Urban-Scoop.com

• **Malvern Buttery** keeps expanding and evolving, with three new locations (Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Malvern Station) and a reno of the King Street flagship. Celebrate the extra opportunities to enjoy their gourmet pastries, breads, soups, salads, sandwiches with your coffee, along with treats like eggplant focaccia, lemongrass rice bowl or seasonal panzanella. 233 E. King St., Malvern. MalvernButtery.com

• **PanDoughMonium Bakery** is creating weekend madness with long lines salivating for the small-batch bakery's goodies. Fourth-gen baker Robert Weinrich and his fiancée started the venture last summer, producing pies, pastries, pretzel pockets and more. Indulge in some Instagram scrolling (and drooling), then set your alarm clock to secure your spot in line before Friday's 6:30 a.m. opening. 10 Wallace Ave., Downingtown. PanDoughMoniumBakery.com

• **The Biscuit Lady** is set to deliver what the name promises — buttery, made-from-scratch biscuits in early 2026. Look for a rotating menu of 15+ biscuit varieties (savory and sweet), plus holy biscuits (think donuts), nine breakfast and lunch sammies, plus coffee. 39 W. Gay St., West Chester. VisitTheBiscuitLady.com



Nature's Vin

193-197 E. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
NaturesVin.com

A natural Cali-style wine bar owned by Ragini Parmar, Nature's Vin serves and sells natural, organic and biodynamic wines — low carb, sugar free, low sulfites, no toxic additives — made around the world by women. The aim is to create a relaxed environment for learning and enjoying wine through tastings, private events and a membership club.

The Ridge at Chesterbrook

1400 Liberty Ridge Dr., Chesterbrook
@TheRidgeAtChesterbrook

Yes, yet another seasonal beer garden opened this past spring, adding to the growing list of local options for enjoying a brew in an environment that adds to the pleasure. Head for The Ridge to enjoy selections for a lineup of rotating food trucks, live music and family-friendly vibes. Maybe wait until the weather warms (closed October 31).

Bao Nine



Maison Lotus



Taqueria Los Poblanos



The Barrel



LoCali Wine Lounge



The Ridge at Chesterbrook





Jade Rabbit



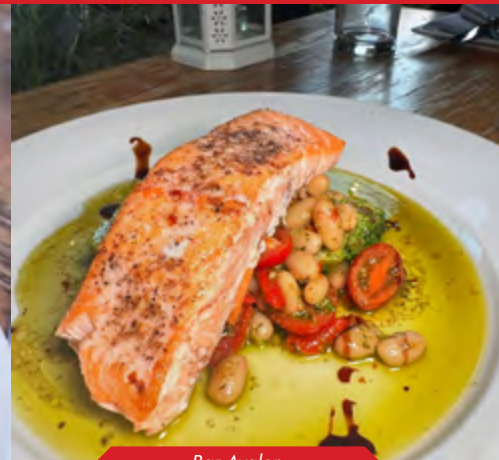
La Baguette Magique



Roots Cafe



Limoncello Ristorante



Bar Avalon



Slow Hand

Speakeasies

For a taste of 1920s glamor, head for a local trendy speakeasy and relive the thrill of the Prohibition era.

• **Johnny O's**, in the lower level of West Chester's steakhouse 9 Prime (in the 1864 First National Bank Building), was the first speakeasy on the scene. It's a membership-based club (entry fob required), emanating exclusivity and upscale vibes with its elevated fare, plus special member events. Dress to impress. Grab a drink inside the vault! *9 N. High St., West Chester. JohnnyOsWestChester.com*

• **Room 109**, in the lower level of Hotel Indigo in the heart of West Chester, is more accessible — no membership required. Just show up at this Prohibition-era hidden bar for special drinks and bites — better with a reservation if you're coming late. There's even Happy Hour, Monday–Thursday, 5 to 7 p.m. *39 E. Gay St., West Chester. WCS seafoodKitchen.com/Room-109*

• **Jade Rabbit** opened in October in the lower level (sensing a pattern?) of Wayne's Maison Lotus (former Margaret Kuo's). There's an Asian legend linked to the name (Google it) of this Main Line spot. Look for Asian-inspired crafted cocktails and small plates, including a five-course cocktail pairing option. Small space means reservations are a must. *175 Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Maison-Lotus.com/JadeRabbit*

• **Martinique Deux**, tucked beneath the Phoenix Building, is Delco's more casual contribution to the genre and is more speakeasy-adjacent, with a 2,400-square-foot entertainment venue + bar offering cocktails, live music, comedy, darts and Birds' games on big screens. Thursday–Sunday, 4 p.m. to midnight. *115 W. State St., Media. MartiniqueDeux.com*

BEST PLACES TO EAT LIKE A LOCAL — MORNING, NOON, NIGHT & MORE

WEST CHESTER

Morning: Market Street Grill

6 W. Market St.

610-429-5328 / TheMarketStreetGrill.com

If you want true insight into a town's must-hit morning spots, walk the streets on Sunday morning and look for the line. In West Chester, it will take you to the Market Street Grill with its red vinyl booths and walls peppered with pop art paintings. There's a breakfast bar to the right and one too many tables squeezed down the middle, but you don't mind because you came for a hot cup of coffee, a pancake as big as your plate and one of their outrageous breakfast specials. Bacon-honey-banana-peanut-butter French toast, anyone?

Morning: Two Birds Cafe

653 Downingtown Pk.

610-222-6200 / TwoBirdsCafeWC.com

Fans of Two Birds Cafe's velvety eggs Benedict, to-die-for cinnamon rolls and rotating seasonal menu are so devoted that the cafe recently had to leave tips for the best way to park in their always-crowded Downingtown Pike parking lot. So it's probably not surprising that not too long ago, this from-scratch kitchen was named one of Yelp's Top 100 Places to Eat in the country. A labor of love from husband-and-wife team Jess and Justin Minchak, Two Birds serves breakfast and lunch six days a week (closed Tuesday) against a modern country backdrop. Head over now. The coffee is waiting.

Morning: La Baguette Magique

202 W. Market St.

484-947-5024 / @LaBaguetteMagique

Not every meal requires pomp to be memorable. Sometimes, it's the simple things. Quality ingredients, proven techniques and a charming backdrop that ushers you to a world a thousand miles away. For a decade now, La Baguette Magique — affectionately known simply as the French Bakery — has been that place. Whether you choose to people-watch by the window with a cappuccino and a thick slice of vegetable quiche, or dash home with a white bag full of flaky croissants and whatever treasures you find that day, a stop into La Baguette will leave your day a little brighter. And sweeter.

Noon: Roots Cafe

133 E. Gay St.

610-455-0100 / RootsCafeWC.com

With only 11 tables until spring weather opens the patio, Roots Cafe may make you wait, even for a mid-week meal. But don't worry, it will be worth it. Located at the eastern end of Gay Street, Roots has been serving up farm-to-table classics like rainbow carrots in a delightfully tangy tzatziki sauce and light-and-airy mushroom omelets for more than a decade now. The lovingly created dishes, the friendly staff and the overwhelming floral prints can give the distinct impression that you're visiting grandma's house. That's assuming grandma makes a perfectly juicy breaded fried chicken sandwich and her own hot sauce.

Noon: Taco Mar

122 E. Gay St.

610-455-1400 / TacoMar.com

Some say you need to go to Kennett Square to find authentic Mexican food. Well, Taco Mar would beg to differ. The Gay Street taqueria has gained a reputation and solid 4.7 Google rating by consistently dishing up freshly made Mexican

classics like their savory red chili birria and crispy fish tacos served with cilantro, onions and salsa (or, for American-style, lettuce, tomato, cheese and salsa) in a vibrant, casual environment. Pair with homemade guacamole or a side of the rich, creamy queso, and finish with everyone's favorite cinnamon-and-sugar-coated churros.

Night: Opa Taverna

40 E. Gay St.

610-696-4100 / OpaTaverna.com

With many long, narrow spaces to work with, restaurants in West Chester definitely have a signature feel. They're often energetic and buzzy, flush with waitstaff dodging traffic and delivering patrons and platters in equal parts. That's the feel of Opa Taverna, West Chester's popular Greek restaurant, on a Friday night. Bring in a group and order for the table. Start with the freshly made hummus platter and indulgent moussaka. And don't forget the bar — the drinks all feature fresh-squeezed juices and housemade syrups. End the night with a slice of baklava. The flaky, sweet Greek classic is a perfect treat to share.

Night: Limoncello Ristorante

9 N. Walnut St.

610-436-6230 / LimoncelloRestaurant.com

Limoncello is a good meal any time of year, but there's something special when you tuck inside on a January evening, closing the cold behind you and giving into the warm embrace of the surely overstuffed restaurant. While you wait for the hostess to ready the table, pop to the bar and order up a glass of wine or, if you're feeling festive, a limoncello cocktail with prosecco and lime. Then peruse the menu with winter abandon, swaying between tender clams, homemade gnocchi in a San Marzano tomato sauce, or juicy, breaded chicken stuffed with mozzarella and asparagus.

Night: Bar Avalon

116 E. Gay St.

610-436-4100 / AvalonRestaurant.net

Started a quarter of a century ago as a BYOB eatery, Bar Avalon has gained quite a reputation for its popular cocktail list. Made with fresh ingredients by a knowledgeable staff, drinks here make it hard not to think back at a memorable Bar Avalon night that lasted for hours. Start the evening with a signature smoked Manhattan, or if you are abstaining, one of their equally well-thought-out mocktails, before moving on for an elegant meal served beneath the long arms of their trademark painted clock. The bacon-wrapped dates are a treat, the crispy calamari a favorite and any of the pasta dishes a worthy indulgence.

Happy Hour: Slow Hand

30 N. Church St.

484-999-8638 / SlowHand-WC.com

When you enter Slow Hand on Church Street, you're confronted almost immediately with throwback vibes. Perhaps it's the large picture of Conway Twitty that hangs over the main bar or the fact that there are no TVs in Slow Hand. That situation has a way of nudging you ever so subtly into a conversation with your bartender, who will explain, if you let him, the magic that goes into each expertly made drink. Ease into the post-work world with a paper plane and an order of the addictive pimento cheese dip, and relish the reminder of an era that did Happy Hour right.

Happy Hour: Sedona Taphouse

44 W. Gay St., Ste. 1

610-738-5104 / SedonaTaphouse.com

Sedona Taphouse's Happier Hours have become so popular, you might not be able to get in, but at least they'll be honest with you. Perhaps it's that attention to capacity that allows the servers

to keep serving, the vibe to stay hopping without turning claustrophobic, and those who make the cut to understand why the place is so popular. Pop in early — Happier Hour at 4 p.m. — to beat that rush, grab a seat at the contemporary stone-backed bar and lean into their signature Southwest style with a craft-made prickly pear margarita and a BBQ chicken flatbread to share.

Happy Hour: Good, Bad & Ugly

158 W. Gay St.

484-999-0922 / GoodBadUglyWC.com

As they like to say at West Chester's Good, Bad & Ugly, "There are three sides to every story, and we've told them all." Have one of those nights when you just want to let off some steam? Sneak downstairs to GBU. Located in the lower level under Stove & Tap, this lightly country, mostly modern bar offers games to play, music to dance to and a surprisingly good array of apps and cocktails to choose from. Try the sticky garlic chicken wings with a WC Ranch Water — Hornitos Plata, sparkling water and lime. Happy Hour runs late here, 8 to 10 p.m. So no need to rush. And no excuse not to stay.

Happy Hour: Barnaby's

Restaurant & Pub

15 S. High St.

610-696-1400 / BarnabysWC.com

Pick your poison — football, basketball, hockey, baseball, MLS, West Chester University games? It doesn't matter. If it's streaming somewhere, Barnaby's Restaurant & Pub, a multi-floor sports bar housed in a historic building once home to the Borough's municipal offices, can likely find it for you. The rich mahogany live-edge bar (one of seven) is already a welcoming beacon off the cold street. Add a \$4 draft of your favorite domestic and the lively commentary of like-minded fans, and really, it can't be beat. Not a sports fan? There are seven other rooms, each with a different vibe to choose from.



9 Prime

Gem: 9 Prime

9 N. High St.

610-365-3309 / 9PrimeWestChester.com

Some nights you just want to feel special. Those are the nights you break out the sparkles, the velvet, your Saturday night best, and saunter up to 9 Prime's grand bar and order a martini, extra dry, two olives and savor the crisp, cool liquid while embracing that Bond feeling. Once here, you must stay for a meal. The charred octopus salad, light and refreshing, is a perfect place to start. Add to it a selection from the in-house dry-aged beef program. Aged for up to 50 days, these cured cuts deliver a more tender, flavor-rich steak. Now that's sophistication.



Ground Provisions

Gem: Ground Provisions

1388 Old Wilmington Pk.

610-355-4411 / GroundProvisionsPA.com

For three years now, Philadelphia restaurateurs Rich Landau and Kate Jacoby (of Philly's James Beard-winning Vedge) have been defying suburban expectations by consistently delighting and surprising diners with what can be done with an all-vegan menu. Ground Provisions features a rotating seasonal tasting menu served in the best kind of rustic country setting. Think late afternoon light, copper pots on the wall, fresh flowers on the table, and a glass of all-natural Sicilian wine in hand. Reservations often need to be made weeks in advance, but the effort is a small price to pay to partake in this culinary adventure.



The Farmhouse

Gem: Bier and Loathing

113 W. Market St.

610-289-0079 / BierAndLoathing.com

Until Bier and Loathing opened in 2024, West Chester was seriously in need of some gaming action. Well, no more. Bier and Loathing on Market Street combines classic bar games — think multiple pool tables, shuffleboard and darts — with over 30 of your favorite arcade classics, all in the backdrop of a laidback bar. Come early with the kids and enjoy a pour from their rotating draft menu, while the little ones entertain themselves bopping between pinball, Pac-Man and the various racing games. Or come later (kids are out by 7 p.m.) for a surprisingly good cheesesteak, karaoke, tiki drinks and to relive your youth at this barcade.



Myrtos

DOWNINGTOWN

Morning: Green Street Grill

150 E. Pennsylvania Ave.

610-873-1700 / GreenStGrill.com

Green Street Grill is a bustling grill focusing on eggs, plate-size pancakes, cinnamon

swirl French toast, 10 kinds of gourmet omelets — you can also build your own — and eight kinds of Benedicts. Signature breakfasts include chicken and waffles, Camacho's nachos (tortillas with eggs, chicken, chorizo, cheese, black beans, sour cream, cilantro), the Telly (eggs, hash browns, green peppers, onions and cheese scrambled with spicy andouille sausage and choice of meat) and about eight other combinations. In a downtown shopping center, the restaurant is described by locals as quirky, bright, clean, unpretentious, casual and family-friendly, with fast, friendly service.

Morning: The Farmhouse

Coffee & Espresso Bar

115 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-269-1400 / FarmhouseCoffee.com

It's early. Very early. Need coffee? The Farmhouse Coffee & Espresso Bar, owned by Dana and Pete Petrizzio and open since 2017, is known for its specialty coffee, crafted beverages and espresso drinks, plus its highly praised, baked-daily dessert selection. Its fruit tart was described by a Yelp reviewer as "possibly one of the best baked goods" tasted in many years. Its scones also are regarded as excellent. No wonder that Downingtowners find it a popular spot for morning pick-me-ups and casual meetups.

Noon: Downingtown Diner

81 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-873-4545 / DTownDiner.com

At night, the giant "DINER" sign shines over the entrance and declares it "open 24 hours." It's where scenes from "The Blob" were filmed (though not the same diner). There are jukeboxes at the booths, and it's where to take a casual date. In short, the Downingtown Diner is "so retro." For lunch, the menu is more diverse than you'd expect, offering not only burgers, club sandwiches, French fries and wings — we love the onion rings — but also salads, steaks, seafood, pasta, sandwiches and wraps. And they serve a Blob Special — eggs, home fries, pancakes and choice of meat — all day.

Night: Myrtos

47 W. Lancaster Ave.

610-514-0000 / MyrtosRestaurant.com

Myrtos is a Greek and Mediterranean BYOB, inspired by the owners' family roots in Kefalonia, Greece. The vision is to bring authentic Greek cuisine to Downingtown. The menu includes dishes like moussaka, souvlaki, fresh grilled seafood, authentic gyro platters, falafel and Greek salads. Its Taste of Greece special features octopus, saganaki, lamb chops and more, while

desserts include baklava and other traditional Greek pastries and cakes. The atmosphere is casual and welcoming, and the community has embraced the restaurant since its opening. Hear the strumming of the bouzouki.

Happy Hour: Station Taproom

207 W. Lancaster Ave.

484-593-0560 / StationTaproom.com

Meeting friends after hours? Across the street from the Downingtown rail stop, Station Taproom is a popular gastropub, known for its rotating craft beer selection, comfort food and its casual atmosphere. It's a hip, cozy hangout with a trendy atmosphere, perfect for Happy Hour. Its beer list changes often, including American and hazy IPAs from various brewers. It also offers lagers and pilsners, stouts and sours, and some Belgian and European styles. As you quaff your brew, a pulled pork sandwich is an ideal accompaniment. Pork taquitos, chicken pretzel bites, chicken quesadillas or zucchini fritters are also available.

Happy Hour: Victory

Brewing Company

420 Acorn Ln.

610-873-0881 / Downingtown.VictoryBeer.com

At Happy Hour, Downingtowners visit the home of one of the best craft breweries in the country, Victory Brewing, and enjoy the discount. From 4 to 6 weekdays, they'll get \$2 off on drafts — there are over 30 — wine, spirits and shareables. Weekday deals on food include wings for \$1 off on Wednesday or \$8 for a burger on Thursday. On Fridays, it's 20% off of beer to take home. Kids also enjoy the menu and eat free on Sundays. Note: Victory's dining room is top-notch, serving a full menu of shareables, handhelds, salads and pizzas.

Gem: Dressler Estate Cidery & Bar

112 E. Lancaster Ave.

484-693-0918 / DresslerEstate.com

Owned by husband-and-wife team Brian and Olga Dressler, Dressler Cidery's unique "wine-like approach" and the dry, elegant finish of its ciders have been recommended by Craig LaBan of the *Inquirer*. Offerings include sparkling ciders and still, bone-dry varieties. In addition to cider, the bar offers select beers, wines and nonalcoholic drinks, as well as a small food menu. The tasting room is located in Downingtown's historic business district and is hailed for its fast service, snug atmosphere. Locals express immense pride at having Dressler as a choice local producer.

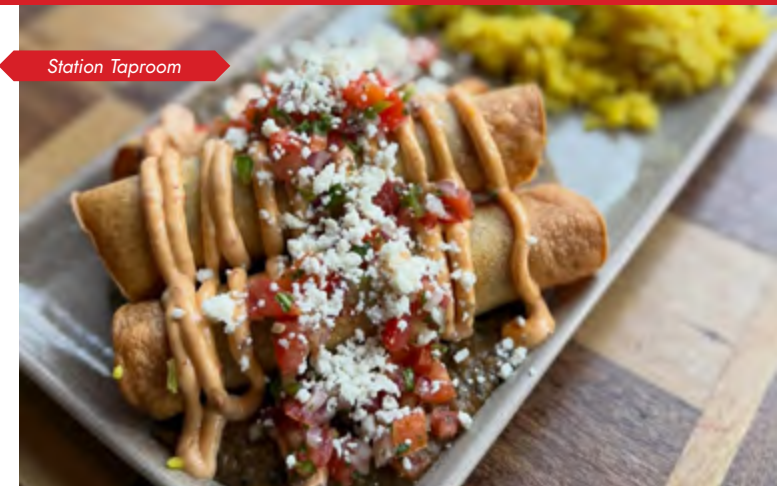
KENNETT SQUARE & CHADDS FORD

Morning: Talula's Table

102 W. State St., Kennett Square

610-444-8255 / TalulasTable.com

Breakfast and brunch are a foodie's fantasy at charming Talula's. Select decadent cinnamon buns or spinach and feta puff pastry that's as appetizing to see as it is to eat. Their frittatas are healthy, scrumptious starts to the day. Get creative with brunch with fig dip and crackers, artisanal cheeses or farm salad that includes egg and bacon along with other delectable morsels. Grab an outdoor table under the awning in warm months or seat at the cozy nook table inside anytime. Whatever you choose, with a steady stream of customers coming into the cheery market, people-watching is great over a rich cup of coffee.



Station Taproom



Victory Brewing Co.



Dressler Estate Cidery



Talula's Table

La Verona



Noon: Hank's Place

1625 Creek Rd., Chadds Ford
610-332-0400
HanksPlaceChaddsFord.com

When a line's at the door, there's something worth waiting for. That's Hank's Place, newly reopened on stilts in Chadds Ford after the 2021 flood. An icon since its hamburger stand and artists' gathering days, it's where locals take great guests for great cooking — scratch comfort food. The sunny space with a beamed vaulted ceiling and art is a fresh setting for four-cheese penne pasta, classic corned beef specials or anytime breakfasts of eggs Benedict with cream chipped beef on a biscuit. The wait on the ramp is just long enough to enjoy longtime friends or make new ones.

Night: La Verona

114 E. State St., Kennett Square
610-444-2244 / LaVeronaPA.com

When the whole family is in town, La Verona is the place for lovely ambiance, attentive service and plentiful options for wonderful Italian food. The inviting feeling begins the minute the doors with beveled glass windows open. Every cousin can order their favorite pasta — tricolor with seafood, the best gnocchi around or ravioli with lobster or spinach and mushrooms. There's also a gorgeous roasted half duck for Uncle George and gluten-free options for Grandma, including their special mushroom soup. Perfect for anniversary celebrations or cozy gatherings, fireplace light is reflected in your glasses, ready for a toast.

Night: Portabellos of Kennett Square

108 E. State St., Kennett Square
610-925-4984
PortabellosOfKennettSquare.com

Under starry skies, walk past the twinkling lights on State Street and enter Portabellos, where the cuisine, atmosphere and hospitality shine. Chef Hulbert's and Sandra Morris's changing menu is a tribute to local mushrooms plus other delicious offerings. Savor delectable dishes of starter mushroom en cocotte and entrees of portabella ravioli, egg noodles with white mushrooms and stroganoff with truffle sour cream. Options for cocktails, mocktails and premium wine are abundant. The experience completes any day, whether after work or adventures at Longwood Gardens or local horse country.

Happy Hour: The Creamery of Kennett Square

401 Birch St., Kennett Square
484-732-7040 / KennettCreamery.com

Looking for summertime hibiscus margaritas at picnic tables or wintertime craft beers under indoor sparkling lights? Stop for Happy Hours at the Creamery. The former milk plant includes a bar for cocktails, local wines, large selection of beers — some you may have never sampled — and loads of fun. Changing snacks and yummy food options to pair with drinks are as varied as the community: quesadillas, Bavarian pretzels and pasta, to name a few. Double-check the online calendar for days and times before friends — including your four-pawed bestie (Fido is welcome, too!) — pile into the car.

Gem: 1906 at Longwood Gardens

1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square
610-388-1000
LongwoodGardens.org/Dine/1906

Longwood's 1906 restaurant is its canvas for cuisine, bringing the same talent and artistry to the plate as it brings to its gardens. Unveiled in autumn 2024, the space and menu are creatively designed and beautifully articulated. The seasonally changing menu (with attention to sustainability) features local ingredients, including flowers and ornamental delights. Bundled for winter, enter after a stroll among the trees to warm up with hearty soup in a china bowl. Dress to the nines to celebrate with special cocktails, mocktails and dinner while watching fountain shows through the arched windows. Order dessert — a culinary tribute to horticulture.

MALVERN

Morning: The Buttery

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

If you're new to Malvern, discover where the local community gathers to begin the day. The Buttery is known for fresh ingredients, favorite cuppas and baked goods from the oven behind a giant sunny room where people are smiling. Stroll past a long glass case to choose pastries. At the register order beverages, extraordinary Turkish eggs, fruit bowls and yogurt with bee pollen and honeycomb. Go ahead. Dip into the big cookie jar or order sourdough bread for a mid-morning coffee break or elevenses. The Buttery is so popular, it recently expanded its Malvern seating space and to more locations.

Noon: Fork & Bottle at The Desmond

1 Liberty Blvd.
610-296-9800
ForkAndBottleMalvern.com

The Desmond's Fork & Bottle restaurant is just the place for an upscale lunch. Patrons popping in from nearby and hotel guests give kudos for service — excellent for large groups, as well as couples — and plating that's worth an Instagram post. In a classy, upbeat atmosphere, yet not too loud for good conversation, you'll benefit from the chef's relationships with quality fisheries and farms. Pair Maryland crab bisque with a signature cocktail, innovative flatbreads and remarkable hand-cut fries with local draft beer, or the chicken, portobello and goat cheese sandwich with a glass of wine.

Noon: Fattoush Med. Cuisine

182 Lancaster Ave.
484-568-4465 / FattoushHealthyDining.com

Come in from the cold to family-run and family-friendly Fattoush, where dazzling aromas of flavorful spices greet you. The lunchtime crowd relishes Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food in a casual setting where staff and surroundings are genuinely warm and helpful. Faves are delicious shawarma — seasoned, marinated beef or chicken with lettuce, tomatoes and more — on Lebanese bread, a superb, mouthwatering thin pita. Mjadra with lentils and rice is a delight for vegetarians or omnivores. Portions are generous — ask for a box so there's room for dessert. Or get it to go because the baklava isn't to be missed. Go once and you'll be back soon.

Night: The General Warren

9 Old Lancaster Rd.
610-296-3637 / GeneralWarren.com

Named for Dr. Joseph Warren, a physician and American Revolutionary figure killed at Bunker Hill in 1775, The General Warren (formerly an inne) is a cherished local landmark. Known for its historic ambiance and dishes like beef Wellington and snapper soup, the restaurant offers traditional American cuisine with a contemporary flair. Executive Chef Joshua Smith leads the culinary team, using local sourced foods and classic techniques to create an extraordinary dining experience. History, he believes, “sets the pace for the future of food, much the same way General Warren has set the pace for local hospitality in the Great Valley for centuries.”

Night: Joey Chops

245 Lancaster Ave.
484-450-8890 / JoeyChops.com

A classic steakhouse, Joey Chops is focused on serving superior, prime-grade, hand-cut steaks, praised as tender, flavorful and perfectly cooked. Its premium seafood is “fresh off the boat.” For starters, try the green garlic escargot, oysters Rockefeller or she-crab soup. For mains, locals declare the dry-aged ribeye exceptional, and the filet mignon, New York strip, Delmonico and wagyu beef are all top-notch, as is the seared tuna steak. The interior of the restaurant is modern, cozy, intimate and quiet, considered an excellent spot for date nights, special occasions and relaxing, intimate dinners. Be sure to sample a classic cocktail from the bar.

Happy Hour: The Jockey Tavern

240 Lancaster Ave.
610-296-2222 / JockeyTavern.com

Calling all horse lovers! Saddle up! When business is over, they call it “Jockey Hour.” Enjoy half-price pints of beer, house wines, mint juleps, martinis, old fashioned, highballs and buck-a-shuck oysters. Plus a long list of “bits & bites” — smoked brisket nachos, crispy calamari, hot cheese fondue and more. The Jockey Tavern's décor sports equestrian artifacts and photos, with brick, oak floors and wood tones throughout, and is inspired by Chester County's horse country heritage. Live piano music is featured on Friday and Saturday nights, contributing to the lively atmosphere. Outside find seating for your hounds.

Gem: Restaurant Alba

7 W. King St.
610-644-4009 / RestaurantAlba.com

Chef Sean and Kelly Weinberg created Restaurant Alba as a restaurant that not only uses locally produced foods, but also offers contemporary wholesome cuisine. Dishes, changing seasonally, are simply prepared over a wood-burning grill allowing for flavors to stand out while being enhanced by hickory and mesquite, a concept found throughout the countryside of Europe. Favorite appetizers have included grilled octopus, burrata and whipped ricotta bruschetta with honey and sea salt. Entrees have included wild boar ragu or guinea hen agnolotti. Diners praise their desserts too, such as bread pudding and budino, and are grateful for the culinary artistry.

Fattoush



Joey Chops



Jockey Tavern



The Creamery



1906 at Longwood Gardens



MEDIA

Morning: Bittersweet Kitchen

18 S. Orange St.
610-566-1660 / EatAtBittersweet.com

For over a decade, Delco locals have gathered for breakfast at this cozy spot on Orange Street. Expect a bit of a wait, especially on weekends, so order a coffee or cold brew to go and take a stroll down State Street in the meantime. Decadent crème brûlée pancakes with a burnt sugar top and challah French toast stuffed with cream cheese and topped with bourbon-caramel sauce and bananas are to die for. More of a savory person? Opt for the Bittersweet breakfast (eggs, buttermilk biscuit, potatoes), huevos rancheros, avocado toast or their rotating omelet selection. Be sure to take home a fresh-baked pastry for later!

Noon: Fellini Cafe

106 W. State St.
610-892-7616 / FellinisCafe.com

Though this beloved family trattoria is best known for family dinners, date nights and celebrations, its lunch selections deserve just as much attention. Fellini's offers one of Media's best midday deals: a \$15 combo with soup or salad plus your choice of more than two dozen pasta dishes — penne Bolognese, fettucine alfredo, rigatoni alla vodka and much, much more. You'll also find lunch-sized portions of classic Italian entrees, wood-fired paninis, sandwiches and all the traditional antipasti. Portions are generous, flavors are spot-on, and whatever you do, don't skip the housemade bruschetta.

Brick & Brew



Noon: Brick & Brew

226 W. State St.
484-443-8441 / BrickNBrewPub.com

For a lively noontime meetup with friends, you can't beat this vibrant gastropub in the heart of State Street. Warm woods, industrial touches and a friendly, bustling vibe make it an easy place to linger over lunch. Start with a few crowd-pleasing apps — Bavarian pretzel sticks, confit wings, birria eggrolls — before exploring a menu that's both comforting and creative. Take your pick of flavorful handhelds like the buttermilk fried chicken sandwich or French onion grilled cheese, hand-tossed pizzas, tacos and hearty salads, or build your own half-pound burger. Pair it all with a local craft beer or a signature house cocktail.

Night: Ariano

114 S. Olive St.
610-892-6944 / ArianoMedia.com

Tucked down a quiet side street, Ariano's terracotta, stucco-clad façade feels more Mediterranean than downtown Media. Inside, hand-hammered copper tables, a dramatic curved bar and striking second-floor ceiling mural set the scene for rustic Italian cooking. Known for its wood-fired pizzas, Ariano also serves Old World-inspired entrees — chicken parmigiana, bruschetta-topped salmon, short rib Bolognese over risotto — and housemade pastas, including brown butter ricotta gnocchi and spicy crab vodka. Don't miss stand-out apps like crab-stuffed arancini or littleneck clams served in a bread bowl. Pair your meal with a handcrafted cocktail and finish with gelato made onsite — even better as an affogato.

Ariano



Happy Hour: Azie

217 W. State St.
610-566-4750 / Azie-Restaurant.com

For a Happy Hour with serious flair — and a setting to match — Azie is your spot. Every day from 4 to 6 at the sleek front lounge and bar, sip \$7 specials like the Azie Blue (blueberry vodka, mint, lemonade), saketinis, margaritas, mixed drinks or select wines, along with \$5 drafts and bottles. Pair your drink with discounted bites: umami fries with seaweed aioli, pork or veggie dumplings, classic fried rice, sushi rolls or the \$14 temaki trio — three signature sushi hand rolls, spicy tuna crunch, salmon avocado and shrimp tempura. And dream of warmer evenings on the rooftop deck ...

Happy Hour: Departure

2 S. Orange St.
610-502-3833 / DepartureDelco.com

A newcomer to Media's Happy Hour circuit, Departure opened in fall 2024 and instantly stood out. Housed in a former bank across from the Delaware County Courthouse, it's been reimagined as a chic global dining spot with airport lounge vibes — right down to the vintage-style arrival/departure board. Weekdays from 4 to 6, enjoy drink specials and cleverly named signature cocktails (The Takeoff, The Contrail, The Northern Lights) alongside jet-setting small plates like hummus, tabbouleh, tandoori chicken dumplings, carne asada and jerk shrimp. Come warmer months, head to The Runway, the outdoor bar buzzing with live music and Philly sports on flatscreens.

Departure



The Boardroom Restaurant



Avlós



Bistro on Bridge

Gem: Desert Rose

305 W. State St.
484-442-8012 / DesertRoseMediaPA.com

Locals know that the unassuming storefront beneath a blue awning hides one of State Street's true gems. This husband-and-wife-owned BYOB has built a loyal following for its authentic Mediterranean and Middle Eastern street food — and for the warm hospitality that keeps regulars coming back. Choose from towering chicken shawarma, overstuffed falafel sandwiches, melt-in-your-mouth brisket, comforting shakshuka and rotating specials — with a side of fresh-baked pita and silky housemade hummus, of course. Online reviewers even insist Desert Rose serves the best cheesesteaks in Delco. With plenty of vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options, it's a great choice for diners with dietary restrictions, too.

Gem: The Towne House

117 Veterans Sq.
484-445-2041 / TowneHousePA.com

A true Delco mainstay, the Towne House has welcomed generations of diners since 1951 — and its recent revival has brought new life to this beloved landmark. The sprawling, multi-concept space includes a main dining room, tavern, cocktail lounge, event space and seasonal patio, each with its own vibe. Dinner favorites range from overnight Guinness short ribs and classic shepherd's pie to signature burgers — from all-American to seasonal game and bone marrow wagyu. Shareables like grilled lollipop lamb chops and the local charcuterie board round out the menu. Whether it's brunch, a special gathering or an evening of live music, the Towne House proves why it's a Delco classic.

PHOENIXVILLE

Morning: Nook & Kranny Kafe

847 Valley Forge Rd.
610-933-5393 / NookAndKrannyKafe.com

The Nook & Kranny Kafe was founded, with her father's gentle push, by then-19-year-old Christina Rubeo (now Swartzentruber). Ultimately, the Kafe became a family business. A small and congenial spot, known for its fresh, homemade breakfasts and friendly atmosphere, serves up such dishes as omelets, eggs Benedict, French toast muffins and Monte Cristo sandwiches all day. Patrons describe the Kafe as a "hidden gem" with a "homey" ambiance in overwhelmingly positive reviews, with customers consistently praising the delicious homemade-style food and generous portions.

Noon: The Boardroom Restaurant

101 Bridge St.
610-235-0620 / TheBoardroomPXV.com

The building was once the superintendent's office for the Phoenix Iron Company, but it now houses The Boardroom Restaurant & Bottle Shop, an upscale casual restaurant, focused on from-scratch cooking, with New American cuisine. For starters, it offers a selection of cheese and charcuterie along with other apps. For main dishes, try filet mignon, heritage pork or Chilean sea bass. Relatively new to Phoenixville, the eatery's founders Pat and Kate Merriman sought to provide a fresh and exciting dining experience. They created The Boardroom as a tribute to their beloved town, where they were inspired by the local community.

Night: Black Lab Bistro

248 Bridge St.
610-935-5988 / BlackLabBistro.net

An intimate dining room, featuring classic woodwork, the Black Lab is snug, restful and romantic (although it can be lively on busy weekend nights). The menu is tempting, with popular choices being crispy calamari, spicy tuna tartare and lobster bisque. Mains include pan-roasted duck breast with scallops, jumbo lump crab cakes and sesame seared salmon. For dessert, try tiramisu, pumpkin cheesecake or cinnamon bun ice cream sandwiches. There's outdoor seating in good weather for people watching, and it's a perfect place to bring a date.

Night: Avlós Greek Cuisine

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

Held by two Skartistila sisters, Executive Chef Nikoleta and sister Katerina, who grew up near Mount Vesuvius, Avlós Greek Cuisine has an outstanding reputation for authenticity. Serving spanakopita, tzatziki, moussaka, souvlaki, grilled octopus and other Greek specialties, Nikoleta and her staff are committed to superior ingredients and generous portions. The atmosphere is informal and warm, lauded for its hospitality and friendly service. Avlós, known for its ambiance and occasional live Greek music nights, is a superb addition to Phoenixville's dining scene.

Happy Hour: Bistro on Bridge

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

Looking for a good place for Happy Hour? Try Bistro on Bridge. With \$5 craft beers, \$9



Soko Bag



The Goat's Beard



At The Table

cocktails, \$9 appetizers plus oysters for a “buck a shuck,” you can’t go wrong. The craft beer list is long, including Allagash Brewing, Sly Fox and others. Appetizers include wings, risotto balls, Buffalo chicken dip and more. The vibe is relaxed and lively, with seating both indoors and out, a second floor with retro arcade games and fireplace flaming, as well as a rooftop beer garden — featuring a VW bus bar — for spring and summer views. There’s no reason at all to head home early!

Gem: Soko Bag

95 Nutt Rd.
855-765-6224 / SokoBag.com

A must visit in Phoenixville! Soko Bag is Korean inspired, specializing in fried chicken. But Colonel Sanders didn’t just buy a ticket to Seoul. Three varieties of fried chicken — bamboo salt, ghost cheddar BBQ and white cheddar snow — are offered, all very crispy. Plus a variety of dipping sauces. And don’t forget the yummy menu or the beer list, offering about nine beers, including blonde, hazy and West Coast IPAs, American and Korean lager, chocolate, vanilla or sour jaw. Enjoy them all while watching Philly sports on high def TVs. Cheers and cheers!

WAYNE

Morning: Matines Café

757 Lancaster Ave.
484-580-2982 / MatinesCafe.com

Transplanted Parisians, Matines’ owners Amanda and Arthur de Bruc ask you to savor the rich aroma of its coffees, lattes, espressos and tea. Take in the luscious, sweet smell of their pastries and breads. Taste their delicious quiches and breakfast sandwiches. You’ll be taken back to a glorious morning by the Seine. The sounds of conversation, the bistro chairs, the small, round tables, the uncomplicated framed watercolors, the shelves of mustards, jams, chocolates, books and Eiffel Tower souvenirs, all enhance the Gay Paree vibe. *Tres bien!* The folks in Wayne find it an excellent place to hang out with friends.

Morning: Minella’s Diner

320 Lancaster Ave.
610-687-1575 / MinellasDiner.com

For a different vibe, there’s reliable and beloved Minella’s Diner, with fast, friendly service, a family-run feel, serving generous portions. It’s a local staple for its classic diner setting and comfort food. Breakfast is served all day, with French toast, omelets and eggs Benedict most often recommended. But for the true experience, order the Wayne Special, which typically includes scrambled

eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, home fries and toast. The dish often arrives, because of its size, on two plates. Minella’s is also known for its baked goods, entirely homemade, especially its blueberry and apple muffins.

Noon: The Goat’s Beard

103 N. Wayne Ave.
484-584-4979 / TheGoatsBeardPhilly.com

Co-owners Sean Coyle and Mike MacCrory named the Goat’s Beard after a native Pennsylvania plant — a tall, bushy perennial that produces cream-colored flower plumes (resembling a goat’s beard) and attracts a wide array of pollinators, including bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. The name intends to emphasize the restaurant’s culinary focus on regional, seasonal sourcing of its food. Serving locally sourced fare, such as sweet potato cornbread, shrimp paella, cheesesteak egg rolls, maple carrots, pastrami roasted turkey club and smash burgers, the menu is also widely praised for its inventiveness.

Night: Rosalie

139 E. Lancaster Ave.
610-977-0600 / RosalieWayne.com

The Wayne Hotel’s front porch is a perfectly mellow place to watch the sun set. Inside Rosalie, you’ll find a lively bar, the sophisticated main dining room, an airy space with vaulted ceilings, as well as several smaller spaces for private parties. The restaurant, owned by Marty Grims and daughter Sydney (of the Fearless Restaurant group), boasts Italian “soul food” — wood-fired pizzas, homemade pastas, main courses like branzino and beef osso buco, and desserts like olive cake, cannoli and gelato. A pleasant and comfortable spot for satisfying Italian fare, plus a see-and-be-seen bar scene.

Night: At The Table

118 W. Lancaster Ave.
610-964-9700 / AtTheTableWayne.com

Order the Royal Seafood Tower, consisting of a dozen oysters, shrimp cocktails, salmon crudo, scallop ceviche, mussels and crab Louis & claws. You’ll need to share, but wow! You can order a six-course tasting menu, which changes seasonally, or off an a la carte menu as well. Alex and Tara Hardy, owners and Executive Chefs, declare At The Table’s mission is to evoke “oceanic vibes” and offer a high level of service and thoughtful cuisine. The small restaurant’s modern, beautifully decorated interior gives it an intimate, upscale feel. It’s lively when full, with positive energy. Wayne diners appreciate the friendly and attentive staff.

Happy Hour: The Great

American Pub

4 West Ave.
610-964-9535 / TheGreatAmericanPub.com

On weekdays, come quitting time, the Great American Pub becomes a popular, high-spirited place, drawing in customers from Wayne and beyond, with discounts on beer, cocktails and snacks. Happy Hour offers \$3 for Miller Lite drafts, \$5 for Levante, Allagash or Sly Fox beers, White Claws for \$5, and \$8 for an orange crush or Moscow mule. You’ll easily forget your workplace blues. They also serve an assortment of bites, wings, pretzels and fries for \$6 to \$10 in a space with plenty of TVs and, when the weathers allows, lots of seats on the inviting rooftop.

Gem: Autograph Brasserie

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

The walls are covered with vintage vinyl, framed celebrity photos and other pop culture memorabilia — over 1,000 pieces! At Autograph Brasserie, the mood is romantic and nostalgic, just right for date night. The cuisine is upscale, featuring premium steaks — the dry-aged Angus ribeye is especially good — seafood, homemade pasta and an expansive wine list. Lobster bisque, lobster mac & cheese, and the Autograph burger are very popular. Go to enjoy weekly half-price wine specials and live music on Tuesdays and Fridays. And the staff is praised for being attentive, friendly and knowledgeable.

WESTERN MAIN LINE

Morning: Black Cat Cafe

42 Berkley Rd., Devon
610-688-1930 / TheBlackCatCafeDevon.org

Owned and operated by PALS (Pet Adoption and Lifecare Society), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit,

Black Cat Cafe’s proceeds go directly to the needs of homeless, abandoned, injured and sick cats and kittens. Executive Chef Judy Link oversees the hearty and wholesome menu. Patrons coming in for breakfast love the food choices — eggs, pancakes, French toast — with vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options a plus. The cafe is a charming and homey space, and the cats and kittens, always adorable, are available for viewing and adoption in a separate gift shop area.

Brunch: Terrain Cafe

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

Next door to the Devon Horse Show Grounds, Terrain Cafe inhabits a spacious, plant-filled greenhouse, a space often mentioned for its unique, natural ambiance, designed to pay homage to the area’s pastoral history (in the former Waterloo Gardens spot), featuring local materials like Pennsylvania fieldstone and reclaimed barn wood. The brunch menu is seasonally inspired, featuring choices like wild mushroom frittata, chicory and citrus salad, shakshuka, cauliflower sandwich and more. The culinary team works closely with its purveyors to ethically source its fresh ingredients (listed on the menu), laying the foundation for its nourishing dishes. Plus seasonally inspired cocktails and enticing mocktails — orange turmeric sunrise, anyone?

Noon: Dixie Picnic

215 Lancaster Ave., Malvern
484-320-8024 / DixiePicnic.com

They make everything — well, almost everything — from scratch. Mustard is purchased and potato chips are also bought. But Dixie Picnic is dedicated to homemade, from-scratch cooking. A woman-owned business founded by Tracey Deschaine, who was brought up in a Southern

kitchen, it bakes its bread and cakes preservative-free, on site. Chicken, turkey, pork, beef are all home roasted or smoked. All its sauces are made using simple, natural and often locally grown ingredients. Dixie Picnic is widely known and highly regarded for its upcakes — cupcakes turned over for more icing surfaces — and its loyal following.

Night: Nectar

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

With a goal of artistry and urban beauty, Nectar’s towering silkscreen Buddha, dramatic high ceilings, stunning dining room, elegant bar and attentive service welcome Main Liners to a garden of culinary delight. The menu combines classic French cooking with Asian nuance and offers a broad, delicious selection of appetizers, sushi and sashimi. Wok-seared beef, grilled tea-smoked venison, edamame dumplings, tempura wok lobster and other dishes demand second and third visits. Chef Kenny Huang leads the kitchen with a commitment to using local, seasonal and sustainable ingredients. For date night or for any other romantic occasion, Nectar is a cosmopolitan fusion restaurant that’s unsurpassed.

Happy Hour: The Pullman

Restaurant & Bar

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

Main Liners looking for fun after work are drawn to The Pullman’s “Social Hour,” offering martinis, old fashioned, negronis and margaritas for \$12, glasses of Guinness for \$4, other beers, wines, Stateside cans and small plates. They’re all discounted. There’s live music after 6 on Fridays. And, as if weekdays were not enough, The Pullman does Late Night Happy Hour after 9 p.m.

Autograph Brasserie



Terrain Cafe



Nectar



on Fridays and Saturdays. Cocktails, beer, wine, cans, munchies ... discounts again! Owned by Roni and Jennifer Hammer, The Pullman's goal is to recreate an era of luxury and sophistication in rail travel, with a nod to the iconic Pullman dining cars of the 1940s.

**MORE IN
CHESTER COUNTY**

Morning: Farmer & Co.

5 Cemetery Ln., Unionville
610-347-0209 / [FarmerAndCo](#)

Head to the heart of Unionville for a great reason to get out of bed: Farmer & Co. Walk past the back garden growing flowers and vegetables to reach the cafe and market in a quaint old home. It has lots of cozy crannies to enjoy the yummiest mocha around or a special tea blend. Take your artisan striped cup and fresh egg sandwich up to the library room that overlooks a beautiful sprawling tree. Or for your morning coffee break, indulge in a big, premise-made cookie on the Victorian front porch. Fresh, locally sourced ingredients are just plain good.

Morning: ButterScotch Pastry Shop

1406 Hollow Rd., Birchrunville
610-827-0900 / [ButterScotchPastry.com](#)

Stop in after early-morning hiking on nearby trails or tumbling out of bed at 10 — still in your fuzzy jammies. Cross the footbridge and enter at the red door for a glorious breakfast or brunch. The artisan food, from quiche to salmon croissants with steaming matcha or espresso, made by two fabulous pastry chefs, is always a treat. It's never too early for superlative desserts — signature butterscotch cake, mouth-watering cannoli with chocolate edges and more. The interior stone wall, fireplace and collection of antique kitchen tools make it cozy as home. An absolute favorite!

Noon: Hood's BBQ

1664 W. Doe Run Rd., Kennett Square
610-347-1670 / [HoodsBBQ.com](#)

Leave your tie at work, 'cuz the BBQ sauce is so good you'll have it on everything. Hood's has a whopping-size parking lot and many tables — it's a lunchtime crowd pleaser. Chow down a burger, brisket, a side saddle of fries or baked beans. A quick drive from downtown Kennett, and worth a longer drive from farther reaches to backroads near Unionville, find Hood's star — the "Hoodie." The lip-smackin' sandwich has loads of pulled pork with sauce, provolone and coleslaw. Take home a bottle of sauce and a hooded sweatshirt with their logo. After all, it's "Home of the Hoodie."

Noon: Sovana Bistro

696 Unionville Rd., Kennett Square
610-444-5600 / [SovanaBistro.com](#)

Gracious, spacious Sovana Bistro is perfect for business or friendly lunches with any size group. Whether you're a first timer from elsewhere or a local who became a regular, its cheery, accommodating staff greets you with a smile while opening the door for you. Chic décor with high ceilings and wooden tables holding modern white dishes create an ambiance that impresses, while spotlighting the great food. Order the ever-changing express lunch — soup from scratch, sandwich and salad with innovative taste combinations and scrumptious dessert for a superb meal that gets you back to your office or next activity on time from this idyllic spot near the Willowdale races.

Night: Bloom Southern Kitchen

123 Pottstown Pk., Chester Springs
484-359-4144 / [BloomSouthernKitchen.com](#)

If there's a dish you love from south of the Mason-Dixon line, you'll likely find it at Bloom: hush puppies and deviled eggs for starters, seafood

jambalaya, and fried chicken and waffles for dinner entrees, plus Arnold Palmers and juleps. Whether you grew up with Granny's hand-ground pimento cheese, or you didn't, you'll approve of the pimento smash burger. It's big — big bacon slices, big roll and burger, big flavor. Dining rooms are a warm combination of chic, comfortable and charming. All with an eye-catching mural of poppies growing up the outside of the old inn.

Night: The Whip Tavern

1383 N. Chatham Rd., Coatesville
610-383-0600 / [TheWhipTavern.com](#)

The Whip Tavern celebrates 20 years of consistently great food and the bustling atmosphere of a popular English pub. Its hearth beckons guests from fields and hills of local horse country and the county's towns. Tables indoors and on the patio by the stream are laden with traditional dishes of beef Wellington, Yorkshire pudding, fish and chips with malt vinegar for the asking and sticky toffee pudding. The bar is rich with character, friendly servers and glasses of For Fox Sake cider, Everything Naughty stout and Belhaven nutty Scottish ale. Reserve a table — you'll want to linger until the moon is high in the sky.

**Happy Hour: The Stables Kitchen
& Beer Garden**

160 Park Rd., Chester Springs
484-696-7889 / [TheStablesBeerGarden.com](#)

Take your own party or join the one that's already at The Stables. Gather with 449 friends or friends-to-be for bites and sips. From the kitchen, try nachos and pizza, including a street corn pizza option. From the bar and beer garden, choose from taps of craft beers and ales, plus cocktails — mojitos, mules, margaritas and more, a different one featured each Happy Hour. In summer, grab patio umbrella tables or picnic tables near cornhole

games. In winter, ice skate outdoors or play beer pong in the former dairy barn. Friendly servers, casual atmosphere, lively fun.

**Gem: Life's Patina Co.
Mercantile & Cafe**

1657 Art School Rd., Chester Springs
[LifesPatina.com/Historic-Yellow-Springs](#)

In the charming village of Chester Springs, a historic home holds a gem of a cafe — Life's Patina — for first timers or those who discovered it earlier and return repeatedly. Locals know: come early! Every table fills quickly — in the dining room with crystal chandelier and wood floors, in a smaller area with sunny windows and wide windowsills, and on the delightful front porch. Enter the back room with a beautiful wood counter that holds glass cases of masterpiece pastries (both savory and sweet), irresistible cake slices and more. When the line is long, shop for gifts and home goods in the front room while you wait.

**WILMINGTON &
NORTHERN DELAWARE**

Morning: Kozy Korner

906 N. Union St., Wilmington
302-658-0812 / [KozyKorner-Restaurant.com](#)

A local hot spot, dating back over a century, Kozy Korner was founded by John Vouras and continued as a breakfast destination through Wilmington's golden years. Torn down in 1984 to make room for a high rise hotel, Kozy Korner was resurrected in 2002 by the original owner's grandson John, who helmed the eatery when it won the "Best Breakfast in Delaware" award, which it won six times! The menu is straightforward: eggs, pancakes, omelets, breakfast sandwiches. Known for hearty portions, the place can attract a crowd, but it continues as a local favorite,

proudly offering the restaurant's original quality, value and friendly service.

**Noon: Big Fish Grill
on the Riverfront**

720 Justison St., Wilmington
302-652-3474 / [BigFishRiverfront.com](#)

No need to drive to Rehoboth for great seafood. Big Fish Grill at Wilmington's riverfront features fresh seafood, steak dishes and a large covered patio with views of the Christina River. For a small lunch, try the sandwiches: crab cake or fried catfish, shrimp or fish tacos. For larger appetites, order fish and chips, seafood gumbo, Chesapeake crab cakes or fresh Scottish salmon, caramelized with shaved Parmesan or grilled with Dijon cream. The casual, contemporary and nautical-themed interior is spacious, with fiberglass and carved wooden fish models suspended from the high ceilings throughout the restaurant to complete the vibe.

Night: La Fia

421 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-543-5574 / [LaFiaWilmington.com](#)

Owned by James Beard semifinalist Chef Bryan Sikora, La Fia is an intimate bistro and bakery. Executive Chef Dwain Kalup readies inventive, seasonal meals with a focus on local and sustainable ingredients. The menu features French and American influences with globally inspired small plates, house-made pastas and rustic entrees. Popular dishes include Moroccan spiced short rib, crispy duck leg confit and an artisanal cheese plate. The restaurant has over 20 wines by the glass, craft beer and seasonally inspired craft cocktails. Everything is made in house at La Fia from the breads in the bread basket to the desserts. More reasons to visit.

Night: Bardea Food & Drink

620 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-426-2069 / [BardeaFoodAndDrink.com](#)

To bring the community together, Bardea co-founders Scott Stein and Chef Antimo DiMeo, imagined a restaurant that would capture the energy of downtown and offer modern interpretations of traditional Mediterranean cuisine. Pastas include ravioli with duck, foie gras and sweet onions. Other mains include a picanha steak with maitake mushrooms, beef cheek and a sunchoke citrus soy sauce. The restaurant's interior features rustic touches that allude to its Italian heritage. Its chic yet lively atmosphere and open kitchen showcasing the busy chefs add to the vibrant energy. Great patio space adjoining Bardea Steaks, another part of this growing restaurant group.

Bardea Food & Drink



ButterScotch Pastry Shop



Sovana Bistro



The Whip Tavern



The Stables



Life's Patina



La Fia





Merchant Bar

Happy Hour: Merchant Bar

1426 N. Market St., Wilmington
MerchantBarWilmington.com

Wilmington after work? An elevated gastropub, the Merchant Bar is what you want. Sip \$10 cocktails, \$10 wines and \$5 Mexican beers in cans. For food, order a taco for \$3, guacamole and salsa for \$5, and various plates for \$10. Sit at the marble-topped bar, individual tables, communal high tops or counter seating along its large storefront windows for people-watching. High ceilings and exposed ductwork, honey-blond hardwood floors and brass pendant light fixtures contribute to its trendy ambience. Nautical imagery — framed prints of lighthouses, paintings of old sailors — adds a “slightly salty” touch.

Happy Hour: Chelsea Tavern

821 N. Market St., Wilmington
302-482-3333 / ChelseaTavern.com

Directly across from the Grand Opera House, Chelsea Tavern, the popular local gastropub, has an early Happy Hour, from 3 to 6, and a late Happy Hour, from 11 to 1, all weeknights, attracting locals, tourists, the post-work and the pre-show crowds. At both Happy Hours, the menu features a large selection of mixed drinks, craft drafts, wines and canned cocktails. For apps, how about fried pickles, loaded potato bombs and pizzas? The energetic bar scene is a gathering place playing the game of the week on its large TVs.

Gem: Le Cavalier

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

A French neo-brasserie, Le Cavalier — meaning “the horseman” and evoking the equestrian tradition of the Brandywine Valley — is in the historic Hotel du Pont. The elegant space features original oak paneling, an ornate ceiling and gilded chandeliers, marble and terrazzo floors, new banquettes, oak-framed stained-glass windows and a marble bar. The careful preservation of its architecture earned the location in The Green Room a Best Historic Restaurant Award from Historic Hotels of America. In it, enjoy thoughtful French classics, such as short rib Bourguignon or trout amandine. From the bar, order at least one of its inventive cocktails or a glass of French wine and take it all in.

Gem: Buckley's Tavern

5812 Kennett Pk., Centreville
302-656-9776 / Buckley'sTavern.com

Once a blacksmith shop, then an ice cream store, Buckley's Tavern was taken over in 1951 by Dennis Buckley. Popular with stars, athletes and other glitterati, Buckley's dining rooms (as well as its parking lot) were full of glamour. Today, Chef Tom Hannum, former Executive Chef at the Hotel du Pont and guest chef at the James Beard House, offers his “secretly preferred comfort food.” Cream of mushroom soup, New England clam chowder, tobacco onions, crab Cobb salad, macaroni & cheese, baby back ribs — they're all delicious, prepared to perfection. It's where the locals want to go again and again. ♦

Food News + Coming Soon

- **Cutter & Cannon Spirits**, with a curated selection of rum, whiskey and brandy distilled in a 200-gallon pot still, plans to open behind Levante Brewing in West Chester. Look for Old Glory with 13 stars painted on ceiling of the tasting room, plus more themed décor and spirits (Red, White and Blue Bourbon) just in time for the America 250 celebrations. 210 Carter Dr., Ste. 5B, West Chester. [CutterAndCannon.com](#)
- **Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant** chain sent shockwaves around the area with their surprise bankruptcy announcement in late October and closure of all locations. November's surprise was the purchase of 10 locations (including West Chester) by Jeff Crivello, former CEO of Famous Dave's. Plans are to reopen some locations as Three Notch'd Brewing Co. Stay tuned. [ThreeNotchdBrewing.com](#)
- **New Roots by Ramsey's Farm** made hearts warm when they took over the beloved SIW farmstand last year. They closed for the season early November, but look for another bountiful year of fresh produce, including Dr. Martin lima beans, products and plants. The legacy continues. 4336 S. Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. [NewRootsByRamseys.com](#)
- **Salt II**, the planned high-end Korean dining complex (Korean omakase, tabletop cooking, lower price-point option, too) from the Salt Korean BBQ folks in North Wales, is expected to open in Devon this spring. The property, formerly the home of two high-end restaurants — La Jonquille and Shiraz, which closed several years ago — required extensive renovations. Should be amazing! 840 Lancaster Ave., Devon. [SaltKoreanBBQ.com](#)
- **Tired Hands Brewing Company**, the award-winning brewery with multiple locations and James Beard nods, made a mysterious announcement last summer about a future West Chester location. Said owner Jean Broillet IV, “It's the most unlikely spot you could ever imagine for a craft brewery.” Since then, crickets ... Location TBD. [TiredHands.com](#)
- **Wonder**, the national chain of food halls working with celebrity chefs (Bobby Flay), opened in West Chester, Newtown Square and King of Prussia for dine-in, takeout and delivery. Given all the wonderful local restaurants, we wonder why. [Wonder.com](#)

Cutter & Cannon Spirits



Le Cavalier



Buckley's Tavern