

[where to eat now]

Local chefs weigh in on their favorite restaurants and dishes, the state of the Main Line dining scene, and more.

By Beth Ceccarelli | Food photos by Steve Legato Chef photos by Jared Castaldi



Wood-Grilled Atlantic Salmon, 333 Belrose (Radnor)

"Chef Carlo deMarco changed my opinion of grilled salmon. He not only makes it exciting, but he consistently gets it right. Who knew getting your omega-3's could taste so yummy." —Tina Krinsky (Julian Krinsky School of Cooking, Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges)



[the roundabout chef]

Tina Krinsky has been in enough world-renowned kitchens to make any chef jealous. From the Arzak in San Sebastián, Spain, to Les Crayères in Reims, France, she certainly isn't at a loss for enviable culinary experiences.

"I was getting my college education, but not in cooking," says Krinsky, a graduate of Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia. "I sought it out by working with famous chefs and constantly going to cooking schools and taking classes."

Her appreciation for ingredients, their histories and bringing them together in the kitchen led her back to the Main Line, where she's been for 25 years now—18 of them spent as director of the Julian Krinsky School of Cooking for kids and young adults ages 10-18. And, yes, she is married to Julian.

Growing up in Philadelphia, Krinsky was profoundly influenced by her Italian grandmother's cooking. Krinsky aims to convey that same passion to her students.

the country's top young chefs in the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Jeunes Commis, a grueling international competition.

Curtis tried computer science at Drexel University for a year before transferring into its culinary arts program. He never finished, joining Georges' in Wayne as its sous chef. "I figured the time at work was a lot more important for my career than staying in school and going into debt," he says now.

After Curtis left Georges' in 2008 and went to Gilmore's, he was encouraged to enter the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Jeunes Commis. For the competition, each young chef gets a mystery basket with a few key ingredients and is asked to plan a three-course meal in 30 minutes, then prepare and serve it in four hours.

"Today's young chefs have strayed from grandma's traditional recipes, and they gravitate to the world of celebrity chefs," she says. "I want to develop students' critical appreciation of food."

Krinsky still travels frequently, learning as she goes and attending cooking schools whenever possible. She has a diploma from the Rhode School of Cuisine in Tuscany's Villa Lucia. She's also a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier, an international society for women in the food, beverage and hospitality business.

In her classes, Krinsky tries to change the way young adults see food, taking them to farms to see how food is grown and teaching proper knife skills. "I've been very blessed," she says. "I've had a lot of experiences, and I feel like I have to share them." —B.C.

*Julian Krinsky Camps and Programs,
610 S. Henderson Road, King of Prussia;
(610) 265-3678, jkcp.com/cooking*

Curtis took first place in the Mid-Atlantic regional with a red snapper mousse atop cucumber "cappellini," braised short ribs, and dark-chocolate-and-dried-cherry mousse. He won the national competition in Seattle a few months later with an equally ambitious menu. And while he didn't take the international leg, it hasn't dulled his passion in the least.

"I like to experiment and work with ingredients I don't know too much about," he says. "I don't like things to be boring."

What's in Curtis' future? "I've been dreaming about having a restaurant of my own since I can remember," he says.

Until that day, you know where to find him. —B.C.

Gilmore's, 133 E. Gay St., West Chester; (610) 431-2800, gilmoresrestaurant.com

The worst things about the Main Line dining scene ...

"Too many restaurants with the same kind of food."

"Summer vacations."

"Too many beef-and-beer ale houses, and some of the bigger establishments don't want to change or expand."

"There are so many restaurants to choose from. I can't possibly afford the gas to sample them all."

"Lack of choice, lack of variety."

"Its limited culinary scope. For the most part, you have to have salmon, you have to have filet, you have to have rack of lamb, you have to have chicken. It becomes a little more difficult to try to branch out—and the Philadelphia dining scene is vastly overrated to begin with."

Most overrated Main Line restaurants or chefs ...

"I can't think of a chef who doesn't have at least one dish I like."

"David Clouser from Sola."

"Patrick Feury."

"White Dog Cafe in Wayne."

"Blackfish. There's no way they deserve the press they get."