Foodies delight! It’s been a record-breaking year for new restaurant openings in downtown West Chester. And that means even more delicious choices and more evenings to enjoy the delectable foodie scene here.

Here’s an armchair tour of a few of the newcomers—alphabetically listed because I don’t have favorites yet—to help you plan your next visit or two. Be sure to bring your appetite!

For years, the mainstay of Italian cuisine on South High Street was Chef John Brandt-Lee’s BYOB Avalon Restaurant. That’s changed—and for the better. Avalon moved to Gay Street where there’s more room for dining and enjoying a full-service bar, plus live music. While it’s definitely an expansion for Chef Brandt-Lee, the intimate quality is still
there, with divided rooms for small groups. And Avalon’s
well-regarded Italian fare is available for Weekday Happier Hour Specials, a bar menu and dinner menu. (116 E. Gay St., AvalonRestaurant.net)

Imagine an Asian burrito. Casual, easy and yummy. Add a couple of seafood salad tacos and soon you’re thinking Bon Bon Sushi. The cultural mix of names describes the simple affordable Japanese street food well. And yes, you can get treats like pulled pork sushi rolls. The menu is perfect for take-home appetizers, lunch or an exotic treat. (22 N. Darlington St., BonBonSushi.com)

You may know Boxcar Brewery Co., which quickly gained a regional reputation for its craft beers—FlipKey, a TripAdvisor blog, named it the number one brewery worth traveling for in Pennsylvania. Happily, this local brewery opened Boxcar Brewpub. Stop by to see how owners Jamie and Kymberly Robinson are combining their love for the arts with the art of finely crafted beers where patrons can enjoy artists’ shows and music performances in a family-friendly environment. (142 E. Market St., BoxcarBrewingCompany.com)

If your taste buds are hankering for eggs Benedict, bacon that’s qualified to be famous, and brioche French toast or buttermilk pancakes, The Classic Diner will satisfy your appetite at its new location in a historic building on East Gay Street. Since opening its first location in Malvern in 1995, The Classic Diner has been serving
up breakfast and lunch to hungry hordes while collecting awards galore, including “County Lines Best Breakfast.” Brothers Tom and Nick Farrell promise new standards for the dining (or is it diner?) experience. (16 E. Gay St., TheClassicDinerPA.com)

Al fresco dining is rising to new levels, quite literally, as The Couch Tomato Café opens its roof garden above Gay Street as soon as the weather warms. Until then, Owners Craig Mosmen and Michael Cassano invite you to enjoy their gourmet pizza and specialty salads (salad greens on a green roof, you say?) in the cosmopolitan fashion that The Couch Tomato is known for at its Manayunk location. (31 W. Gay St., ManayunkTomato.com)

Mercato Ristorante & Bar has combined three storefronts on West Market Street to make an Italian restaurant divided by bare-lath and brick walls and a new, though rustic, wine cellar available for private parties. Alfredo and Barbara Giannaccari have put together lunch and dinner menus with flatbreads, brick-oven Neapolitan pizza, an expansive selection of pasta and fish dishes, as well as daily soup specials. (33 W. Market St., Mercato33.com)

Fashioned after the culture of “tiffin wallas”—the men delivering homemade meals in downtown Mumbai (or Bombay for those of us who took geography long ago) Mumbai Bistro is now open. Their healthy and affordable Indian cuisine combines freshness with a taste melded from dishes prepared slowly yet served fast. There’s also respect paid to a healthy life-style: no butter or ghee is used and no trans-fat cooking oils are allowed. Eat-in, take-out, delivery, online ordering are all available. (18 S. Church St., MumbaiBistro.com)

Chef Bon Siu, who created a go-to Chinese restaurant in Philadelphia, has brought Mustard Greens to West Chester. His food has been described as having an elevated flavor. Vegetable, shrimp, chicken, pork and beef dishes are served fired with spicy sauce or a comfortably mild, yet tasty, sauce. Of course, a plate of mustard greens is a must-have with every meal. (151 W. Gay St., KoomaRestaurants.com)

If you want to go to a place where you can feel like you belong, and we mean truly belong, it’s Sprout Music Collective. That’s because it’s a member-based club, with part of the membership proceeds going to charity. To become a qualified member, you must enjoy great live music, seasonal handcrafted cocktails, local beer and regional wine, along with tapas-style dishes locally sourced and seasonally inspired. So who doesn’t qualify? Check details at the website. (130 E. Prescott Alley, behind Roots Cafe at 133 E. Gay St.; SproutMusic.org)

That should give you a good number of new reasons to come to West Chester. And the guide that follows this article will help remind you of some of your old favorite dining options to draw you back. And for those with a sweet tooth or two, just refer to the December issue of County Lines, for “Christmas in the Sweet Spot,” which covered lots of dessert options to satisfy. ♦
Breakfast, Lunch and More

Baco Juice & Taco Bar (8 W. Gay St., 610-436-4177; BacoJuiceAndTaco.com) features fresh juice, smoothies and tacos for a wholesome, healthy breakfast, lunch or snack.

Buddy’s Burgers, Breasts & Fries (11 W. Gay St., 484-631-1006; BuddySBBF.com) makes great burgers, boardwalk-quality fries, amazing chicken sandwiches and thick milkshakes.

De Sturr’s Restaurant & Bar (112 E. Gay St., 610-692-4160) is where locals go for a good meal and a good deal. Greek dishes, a specialty.

Doc Magrogan’s Oyster House, (117 E. Gay St., 610-429-4046; DocMagrogans.com) is an Oyster House that transports you to a simpler time of food and fun in a local watering hole.

Gramm’s Kitchen, (557 E. Gay St., 610-429-3903; GrammsKitchenFR.com) serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, from home-made healthy selections to sweets and fresh-baked goods.

Judy’s Kitchen, (237 E. Gay St., 610-696-4814; JudyHealthyKitchen.com) offers homemade meals for happy, healthy eaters. Bring the whole family in for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Lincoln Room (28 W. Market St., 610-696-2102; LincolnRoomWestChester.com) in one of West Chester’s most famous historic structures. Enjoy a mid-day meal served in the classic style of fine American tea rooms.

Market Street Grill (6 W. Market St., 610-429-5328; MarketStreetGrillWCG.com) is a popular breakfast and lunch café serving up raves for their avocado omelettes and breakfast burritos.

Nudy’s Cafe, a popular local breakfast and lunch chain (300 W. Market St., 610-696-0550; NudyCafes.com) offers Eggs Florentine, nicely done with a delicious Hollandaise and more.

Penn’s Table (100 W. Gay St., 610-696-0677; PennsTableRestaurant.com) serves breakfast and lunch in a warm, comfortable atmosphere.

Roots Cafe (133 E. Gay St., 610-455-0100; RootsCafeWCG.com) makes great food while supporting a sustainable environment, using local produce from nearby farms.

Smoked Tex-Mex (13 W. Gay St., 610-692-0699; SmokedMex.com) serves it all—sandwiches, salads, burritos, tacos, Tex-Mex BBQ.

Three Little Pigs (131 N. High St., 610-918-1272; ThreeLittlePigsWCG.com) offers a wide selection of sandwiches and salads. Home-made soup, breads and desserts made daily.

Bars, Pubs and More

Barnaby’s of West Chester 15 S. High St., 610-696-1400; BarnabysWestChester.com serves comfort food, ice cold drafts, perfect cocktails.

Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant, (3 W. Gay St., 610-738-9600; IronHillBrewery.com/WestChester) known for a great selection of beer and fresh, delicious food.

Jitter’s Sports Bar (146 W. Gay St., 610-696-0427) for a neighborhood feeling where everyone knows your name, plus entertainment select nights.

Kildare’s Irish Pub (18-22 W. Gay St., 610-431-0770; KildarePub.com) brought an entire Irish pub here, piece by piece, plus great beer and a menu to delight any Dubliner.

Landmark Americana (158 W. Gay St., 610-701-9900; LandmarkAmericana.com) brings cuisine nouveau to town with contemporary design and a menu to match. Late night scene.
Rams Head Bar & Grill (40 E. Market St., 484-631-0241; RamsHeadBarAndGrill.com) is an American bar & grill with a comfortable atmosphere and a menu you’re sure to like.

Ryan's Pub & Restaurant (124 W. Gay St., 610-344-3934; Ryans-Pub.com) is an enjoyable neighborhood pub where you can relax and enjoy good food in a comfortable setting.

Side Bar & Restaurant (10 E. Gay St., 610-429-8297; SideBarAndRestaurant.com) is a popular place for after-work drinks and appetizers, followed by a great dinner.

Social Lounge & Bar (29 E. Gay St., 610-738-3948; TheSocialWC.com) is known for food, fun and fabulous entertainment.

International Choices

High Street Caffé (322 S. High St., 610-696-7435; HighStreetCaffe.com), go for its funky-eclectic atmosphere, plus specialties like Cajun gator and gumbo.

i-Pasta Ristorante Italiano (134 E. Gay St., 484-887-0760; i-Pasta.net) is a family-owned BYOB serving homemade sauces on freshly made pasta. An Italian meal by an Italian family.

Kooma Express (151 W. Gay St., KoomaRestaurants.com/Express) serves Sushi and Japanese cuisine and 50+ beers are available for takeout.

Kooma Japanese Restaurant (123 N. Church St., 610-430-8980; KoomaRestaurants.com) is a hip fusion sushi bar with stylish décor, serving fresh sushi, sashimi, maki and more.

La Mamba Mexican Restaurant (39 W. Gay St., 610-344-7784) lets you enjoy authentic Mexican cuisine in a casual BYOB atmosphere to eat in or take-out.

Limoncello Ristorante (9 N. Walnut St., 610-436-6230; LimoncelloWC.com) serves up authentic, home-cooked, southern Mediterranean cuisine in a bar and dining area, plus a great patio. Try the lunch buffet.

Los Sabores de Mexico (503 E. Gay St., 610-696-4393) is a newly opened BYOB offering orders to go, a private party room, house specialties and traditional dishes.

Más Mexicali Cantina’s (102 E. Market St., 610-918-6280; WestChester.MasCantina.com) hip cantina ambiance sets the stage for family favorites like spicy tacos, plus veggies and tofu, too. With great roof-top views.

The Mediterranean (150 W. Gay St., 610-431-7074; TheMedWCPA.com) is a comfortable BYOB known for authentic ethnic dishes in what feels like the chef’s home.

Nooddi-Thai Chef (10 W. Market St., 610-430-3300; ThaiChefToday.com) offers noodle dishes in many satisfying styles for lunch and dinner, BYOB.

Olive Branch Restaurant (142 W. Gay St., 610-431-7141; OliveBranchWC.net) is a tapas restaurant that’s small but friendly with lots of attention to detail.

Pietro’s Prime (125 W. Market St., 484-760-6100; Pietro’sPrime.com) serves only Pureland Premium Black Angus Beef. Try their Martini Bar before or after dinner.

Spice Indian Thai Bistro (113 W. Market St., 610-431-0113; SpiceBYOB.com) has two kitchens, serving one restaurant, with Thai and Indian cuisine. And a great lunch buffet.

Star of India Restaurant’s (155 W. Gay St., 610-429-0125) simple décor sets the mood for exotic meals of aromatic masalas, vindaloos, curries and biryani of northern Indian fare.

Teca (38 E. Gay St., 610-738-8244; TecaWC.com) offers a light fare tapas-style menu, great paninis and has now developed into a full-service restaurant serving Italian specialties.

Photography by Faith West

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