

# STREET

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thirtyfourthstreetmagazine

SPRING 2009

# DINING GUIDE



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inside:

**3 reviews** Food is yummy.

**24 photospread** Food is pretty.

**26 listings** Food is everywhere.



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## FROM THE EDITOR

My friend Kara's favorite game is to ask new acquaintances to describe in explicit detail what they would eat (every meal and in-between snacks!) if this was their last day on Earth. Because, as she so aptly notes, you can tell a lot about someone by the food they eat.

I contend the best eaters — or foodies, if you will — are those who embrace the Le Bec Fins and the Lorenzos, the Morimotos and the McDonalds. After all, the best food is, not surprisingly, the food that tastes the best. Of course, the experience of eating is oftentimes as important as the food itself.

We here at *Street* have explored the high and the low, evaluated food in its context and separated the best from the rest. This is our first dining guide and, with the help of our mature older sibling *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, we hope we've done the impressive culinary stylings of Philadelphia justice. We've reviewed student staples like BYOs and foodcarts, as well as swanky downtown eateries... not to mention the 800+ listings we've compiled. Yum.

Fuki-san,

*julia*



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## RELAX. IT'S JUST FISH.

Welcoming BYOB, Matyson, offers variety  
by Raya Jalabi

The ambiance at Matyson was one of an intimate dining space — the kind of place you'd go on a first date rather than as a big group of rambunctious people. Quiet and discreet, the cream and red walls perfectly conveyed the quiet and discreet vibe the restaurant was going for, all the while encouraging its patrons to relax.

Despite the welcoming decor, I was somewhat disappointed by the menu items I sampled at Matyson. Having heard consistently good reviews by friends who had recently been to the BYOB, I was looking forward to a delectable dining experience, however Matyson failed to deliver on my high expectations. This is mainly a critique on the food, however, and not the service. In spite of the fact that I was half an hour late to my reservation, (and kept calling them at 10 minute intervals assuring them that I was five minutes away), they were extremely accommodating and didn't try and rush us.

Matyson is known for its \$45 tasting menus which change weekly based on seasonal ingredients or themes, ranging from "The incredible edible egg" to "Let's get nutty." The tasting menu wasn't advertised on my visit, so we ordered à la carte instead.

### Matyson

37 S. 19th St.  
(215) 564-2924

**Don't Miss:** Sauteed diver scallops  
**Skip:** The salmon and tuna dishes  
**Bottom Line:** Creative seasonings save otherwise mediocre dishes

I started with a herb-crusted Ahi Tuna, served on a bed of shaved fennel and watercress salad, black olives and a caper-lemon vinaigrette. The tuna's herb crust was its saving grace as the fish itself was slightly overcooked. As for the salad, the vinaigrette pleasantly spiced up the somewhat bland base. I followed up the tuna with the crispy-skinned wild salmon filet served with curried green lentils, pineapple salsa and a mussel-coconut nage (this culinary buzzword du jour refers essentially to a bouillon). Unfortunately, the salmon was overly done and slightly too crispy, meaning it lost some of its flavor. The curried lentils and the mussel nage were rather delightful accompaniments. It's a shame the fish itself didn't live up to the other two's standards. The sauteed diver scallops, however, was the most enjoyable entree we sampled. Crispy on top and served with truffled mashed potatoes and black trumpet mushrooms, these scallops were one of the hits on a menu that included a few salient misses.



# WINDEX NOT INCLUDED

Effie's Greek restaurant offers a big fat Greek family for everyone

by Ted Koutsoubas

**T**ucked away inside a traditional Philadelphia row house is Effie's Greek Restaurant, the closest any Philadelphian can get to authentic Greek cuisine.

This Philadelphia classic, located on Antique Row, has been serving its own twist on classic Greek fare for 12 years, leaving some like Sarah Weaver, a three-year patron, coming back for more.

"This place is phenomenal," Weaver said, "I bring all my friends from out of town because there is no other place I'd go to get good Greek food."

Effie's serves traditional Greek food in a cozy, at-ease atmosphere meant to make diners feel at home. Traditional Greek pottery, art and music accentuate this lovely Philadelphia staple. But if you think the mood lighting

## Effie's

1127 Pine St.  
(215) 592-8333

**Don't Miss:** Salmon with crispy asparagus and bacon

**Skip:** Loitering post-meal

**Bottom Line:** Greek done right

and the decorations have you sold, just wait until the owner, Effie Boukidis, walks over to introduce herself. She's sure to answer any questions you may have about the food.

It takes a lot for a Greek restaurant to impress a fellow Greek (myself), and Effie's did just that. The appetizers, cooked up in an open kitchen by Chefs Sean Schweich, Boukidis' husband, and Adam Merlin feature a tender, grilled octopus with diced tomatoes (\$9.50). Its crispy exterior complemented by a succulent interior make it a must-have for any seafood lover. Shrimp Reganto, served in a lemon-butter sauce over



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pasta, is yet another favorite among customers (\$12.50).

And don't forget to try some grilled slices of pita bread, found on every table, with the traditional Greek accompaniment of tzatziki, a cucumber-yogurt sauce.

For entrees, try the salm-

on on a bed of soft bean curd highlighted with crispy asparagus and bacon in a tomato-sherry vinaigrette. The crisp texture of the salmon complemented with the fatty bacon was excellent and second to none.

Seafood, however, is not the only item on the delicious menu. In any Greek restaurant, lamb must be served and served well. If you're looking for something special and done right, try the Grilled Baby Lamb Chops (\$19.50). They melt in your mouth.

And if a dish you crave is not on the menu, ask Chef Merlin to whip something up especially for you. When Merlin decided to experiment during our visit, he created a culinary success: lamb wrapped in bacon over a celery-root puree, accented with grilled slices of asparagus for balance. Although not on the menu, I'm sure it will be soon. I have never tasted a lamb so tender and prepared so well.

Diners will love the mousaka or Greek lasagna (\$14). One of Effie's most popular dishes, moussaka is served steaming hot with alternating layers of grilled egg-



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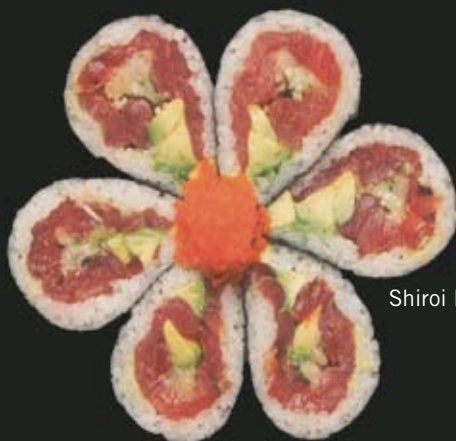
plant and finely-chopped ground beef topped with a creamy bechamel sauce.

And if you're up for dessert after all of that, spring for the traditional flaky baklava layered with honey and nuts with a small Greek coffee on the side. It's a perfect way to end a perfect meal at Effie's.

In *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, Gus Portokalos says, "There are two kinds of people — Greeks, and everyone else who wish they was Greek." Though that may be true, at Effie's, any customer, Greek or not, will be treated as one of the family and will want to come back often to enjoy not only the excellent food but also the company.

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