

Taste and Style: Plenty on Twenty

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

One block from Rittenhouse Square amid colorful and welcoming storefronts on 20th Street between Spruce and Locust, a cornucopia of restaurants and food markets offer indoor and outdoor dining: take-out, delivery and catering; cocktails and BYOB; gourmet and ethnic; prepared or cook-it-yourself; breakfast, brunch, lunch, happy hour and dinner; meat, fish, fowl and vegetarian; and cooking classes.

So what's new on 20th Street? Spread Bagelry, offering Montreal-style bagels and a variety of spreads, opened after much anticipation and immediately generated long lines of people anxious to get a taste. What's different about these bagels? They're made from low-sodium dough, malt is added and they're boiled in honey water before baking in a wood-fired brick oven, resulting in a sweeter, smokier taste. The owners are Larry Rosenbush, a Center City resident, and Mark Cosgrove.

Restaurantur Audrey Taichman recently opened Cook, a novel and stylish corner classroom-kitchen. Evening cooking classes and demonstrations by chefs and other food experts plus cookbooks, kitchenware and pantry foods are offered. Visit www.audreyclairecook.com for information about events at Cook. Audrey's trifecta includes two other winners: her first entry, aptly-named Audrey Claire, is a Mediterranean BYOB, with a charmingly simple décor, a cozy, intimate ambiance and, in good weather, open windows. Twenty Manning Grill, a restaurant that Audrey opened with Executive Chef Kiong Banh advertises fish, fowl, beef and pork featuring "globally inspired but locally sourced" food and a trendy bar. This restaurant celebrated its 10th anniversary by relaunching itself last year and was listed in *Philadelphia Style's* 2010 Best New Restaurants.

Just north of Locust, you will find owner-chef Steven Vassalluzzo's recently renovated gem Caffè Casta Diva, an intimate Italian BYOB, with a menu of perfected dishes - cash only. Yogorino is on the corner and features all-natural Italian-style yogurt and a variety of toppings. It is a popular neighborhood spot, especially in spring and summer.

One of the oldest restaurants on the block is Seafood Unlimited. It was renovated in 2000, and the tile backsplash behind the bar is a stunning Isaiah Zagar mosaic. This restaurant



Second Friday openings at studio:christensen, 333 South 20th Street, are lively events.

receives fresh fish and lobster and other shellfish six days a week, and it is available for purchase to cook at home or served grilled, broiled or pan-seared. Starting in late April, soft-shell crabs are a big attraction. The owners, David and Judy Einhorn, are Center City residents, and David has been a reader at the annual Bloomsday event at the Rosenbach Museum held every June 16th.

Two relatively new food markets, Maxx's and Food & Friends, offer really fresh produce, a variety of gourmet packaged foods and friendly staff. Maxx's is owned and operated by Kim and Jim, long-time Center City residents. Food & Friends, open until midnight, is highly rated for its selection of beers and has a few tables for eating in.

An older establishment still cooking is family-owned and operated D'Angelo's Ristorante Italiano and Lounge, which offers fine dining indoors and outdoors. For quick and casual meals, The Spot, a pizzeria, and Szechuan Hunan, offering Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese food, are also options. Even the 7-Eleven has an interesting selection of vegetarian/vegan sandwiches, dumplings, noodles and other fresh wrapped meal options.

What to do between meals? Salons, shopping, people-watching, strolling in Rittenhouse Square! Ozzie Perez, a hair stylist, has completely renovated the old General Store. You wouldn't recognize it now. Ozzie plans a facelift for his shop in the spring and will add a complete line of hair accessories, styling tools and products and free consultations by appointment. New personal grooming shops are Rittenhouse Manicure & Waxing and The Make-up Bar.



Audrey Taichman recently opened Cook, at 253 South 20th Street, a collaborative kitchen-classroom. It is her third culinary enterprise on 20th Street.

Two contrasting shops are Hello World, which offers a continually changing selection of trendy home and wearable accessories and children's items, and Arcadia Boutique, an "eco-fashion boutique," which features clothing and accessories with a vintage look. Farther south at Panama Street is studio:christensen, a combination retail furniture showroom, art gallery and design office, showcasing modern designs by the owner, interior architect Jt Christensen. If you are in the mood for exercise, a few steps away on Rittenhouse Street you will find the Rittenhouse Square Fitness Club, which offers zumba, spinning, yoga, Pilates and massage. As an added bonus on Saturdays you can often watch wedding parties come and go at Saint Patrick's Church.