

# DINING OUT

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*by Sue Gordon*



Paul Wesley

## THE LOGAN INN

# TOSCANA52 RISTORANTE FIRE GRILL & BAR

## THE LOGAN INN

If you are reading this magazine, there's a good chance you've been to New Hope. After all, the uber-quiet 18th-century village on the banks of the Delaware River is known regionally and nationally as an artistic and cultural Mecca. And, if you've been to New Hope, chances are you've seen The Logan Inn, an imposing three-story stucco over stone Revolutionary-era structure that sits majestically at the corner of Main and Coryell streets. The Logan Inn opened as a tavern in 1722, became an inn in 1727 and maintains bragging rights as the oldest continuously operating inn in Bucks County.

Personally, I love the historic details—as well as the sprawling dining terrace that stretches along Main Street. If there was ever a perfect spot for people watching and al fresco dining, it's The Logan Inn's front porch. Yet given the many other outstanding area eateries—on both sides of the river—a beautiful setting alone would not generate enough interest to bring me back. “Leave the Logan for the tourists,” used to be my sentiment. But no more. The days of viewing The Logan Inn simply as a destination for out-of-towners are gone, thanks to the virtuoso cooking style of new Chef/owner Pete Gialias.

Pete is a newcomer to New Hope, but certainly not to the restaurant business. The chef and his wife, Mary Anne, along with their son Nick, also operate the highly successful Clinton House in Clinton, NJ. Pete was born in the Greek Isles and started cooking in his teens before moving to the U.S. and settling in New York. His Greek background is certainly responsible for Pete's special knack with fish, and many of the most flavorful dishes on The Logan Inn's menu owe their delicacy to the chef's Mediterranean palate.

On a recent visit, I started my meal with a delicious plate of smoked fish including salmon, trout, scallops and mussels served with caper, onions and a tangy horseradish sauce. That was followed by an excellent salad of ripe heirloom tomatoes and licorice-scented fennel, dressed with a light balsamic vinaigrette and soft blue cheese. Crab fondue, a popular holdover from the previous menu, is a tasty dish of lump crab meat, cream and mellow Swiss cheese baked until bubbling and served with pita points for dipping. Caution!

This dish is wonderful, but extremely filling; I'd suggest sharing. Appetizers range from \$9.75 for baked Brie in buttery phyllo pastry to \$23.50 for the generous smoked fish platter for two.

Sticking with the seafood theme, I selected pan seared black sea bass for my entrée. The thick, moist filet sported a golden crust and a generous topping of lump crab; it was accompanied by perfect, cheesy risotto and an assortment of crisp seasonal veggies. My dining partner selected one of the chef's additions, a delicious seared ostrich filet whose soft, meaty texture was dressed up with a sweet mango salsa. Although the chef has Mediterranean roots, his menu is eclectic, including a good number of decidedly American favorites like prime filet mignon prepared three ways: pan seared with a demi-glace and blue cheese topping, grilled to order and topped with sautéed mushrooms or au poivre in a brandy cream sauce. I would personally recommend the salmon fettuccini, with a delicate white wine cream sauce that defies the prevailing notion that pasta with cream equals “heavy.” The twin Maryland crabcakes are practically perfect. All entrées are served with a house salad and range in price from \$16.95 for a marvelous light linguini with sundried tomatoes and broccoli to \$68.25 for the king of all steaks, a 14oz. Kobe strip steak.

The Logan Inn offers separate terrace and lunch menus that include many of the dishes from the dinner menu, but with a wider selection of sandwiches and tavern fare. There are grilled Rubens and tangy spareribs, authentic Greek gyros and even a juicy Kobe beef burger (\$18.95) for those who might want to indulge ... but not for the full steak price.

In addition to the menu, the service at The Logan Inn has been upgraded. The wait staff is not only polished and efficient, but also knowledgeable about ingredients and preparation. Good views, marvelous food, gracious service ... and free (in New Hope!) parking behind the restaurant while you dine. Who could ask for more? ❖

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*The Logan Inn is located at 10 West Ferry Street, New Hope, PA; 215-862-2300; (www.loganinn.com). Open every day.*

*Lunch: 11 a.m.–4 p.m.; Dinner: Mon.–Sun. 5–10 p.m.;*

*Brunch: Sat.–Sun. 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Accepts all major credit cards.*

*Wheelchair accessible; reservations recommended.*