

# DINING

I N • S T Y L E



## **Foxfire at The Stone Barn**

**Owners: The Thomforde Family**  
**550 Upland Road (Rte. 842), Kennett Square**  
**610-347-2414 • [TheStoneBarn.com](http://TheStoneBarn.com)**  
**Dinner: Thursday, Friday, Saturday 5:30 to 11 p.m.**  
**Sunday Brunch: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
**BYOB**

Lise Monty

**F**oxfire has a huge advantage over other restaurants that focus on the increasingly popular farm-to-table concept. Its beautiful country setting provides an ideal backdrop for top-notch cuisine based on local and seasonal food. Located in a stately old barn in the midst of Chester County's appealing countryside with horse farms scattered among the rolling hills, Foxfire boasts its own herb and vegetable garden right out back, and apple trees that were once part of orchards that flourished there.

If you take away the bucolic setting and put Foxfire in downtown Philly, say, it would still be a restaurant worthy of your short list, on a par with the best in the area.

Foxfire opened in September, an addition to the long-time Thomforde family business of weddings and special events plus their popular Sunday brunches and holiday buffets, which continue to draw crowds. The rustic site was ideal for a conventional restaurant and for experienced Chef Ray Maxwell, long a seasonal/local proponent. He buys pro-

# Foxfire

AT THE  
STONE BARN

BYOB  
Farm to Table Cuisine

Dinner  
Thursday Friday Saturday

Lunch  
Thursday Friday Saturday in December

Sunday Brunch Buffet

Seatings by Reservation  
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#### HOLIDAY EVENTS:

Thanksgiving Buffet  
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Reservations are recommended on Weekends.

duce grown in Chester and Lancaster Counties, meat and dairy products from humanely raised animals, and seafood from sustainable sources.

Even the décor is "green." Reclaimed materials were used to update the handsome dining room, spacious and airy with a huge stone fireplace and tall windows looking out on all that country charm. "We have kept it fairly original," says Charlene Thomforde, one of three generations of her family in the business. Her grandfather, who operated a dairy farm here in the 1920s, planted the apple trees. In restoring the barn, "we used brick from old buildings in the area and stone from the old farmhouse across the road." Some of the paneling is from old mushroom houses so "it's already seasoned."

A few farm implements from decades back hang here and there, blending in with the warm oriental carpets and fresh flowers that add a touch of sophistication. Sturdy Windsor-like chairs surround tables covered with brown-over-beige cloths.

Popular Beatles' tunes serenaded us as we settled in for our feast, having learned from our friendly, efficient server that the Special Thursday Night Taster Menu, a five-course prix fixe dinner for \$29, was in effect (regular pricing on Fridays and Saturdays).

#### Haute & Hearty

The amuse bouche set a fine-dining tone without taking away from the best of country fare. The savory crab flan, a tasty little treat with sweet crab pieces, came in half an eggshell nestled in an architecturally influenced white serving piece, complete with a small arch. We were totally "amused." Square and rectangular plates in various sizes and combinations continued the simple yet modernistic theme that fit right in. Hot popovers provided the homey note.

A crown of curly micro greens topped delectable *Roasted Figs*, their sweetness intensified by high-quality prosciutto and tangy Cashel bleu cheese. Down-home goodness oozed from the rich *Kennett Square Exotic Mushroom*



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*Soup* served in half a roasted acorn squash, colorful and earthy, with abundant Jarlsberg melted throughout. *Purée of Local Spinach with Chesapeake Blue Crab* was an elegant soup with its lumps of sweet crab in a delicately seasoned, pastel-green broth.

Other starters included a torte with exotic mushroom, roasted acorn squash and herb chèvre — a tough one to pass up; sweet-potato gnocchi with pan-roasted honey-smoked Berkshire pork belly tossed with sage/black walnut/brown butter sauce; and a salad of Harrow Delight pears, field greens, candied walnuts and bleu cheese tossed with port wine vinaigrette.

The *Intermezzo*, a small scoop of bright sorbet made with white grapes and lavender and garnished with a sprig of lavender, prepared us for our entrées.

Both haute and hearty, the *Day Boat Diver Scallops* included three large beauties pan-seared just enough, sitting on a heap of corn grits with roasted Lancaster County sweet corn. Sautéed Swiss chard provided balance

while the delectable Choron sauce, a tomato-enhanced hollandaise, brought it all together.

Just plain hearty: *Angus Filet of Beef*, a pasture-fed filet over a beefy demi-glace sauce with brandy and peppercorn adding oomph. In supporting roles: glazed baby carrots from Goshen View, smashed Yukon Gold potatoes, and a colorful line-up of roasted grape tomatoes.

*Wild Eastern Halibut* matched a hefty fillet of pure-white, moist fish with lobster smashed potatoes, sautéed Lancaster spinach and golden tomato concassé (peeled and with seeds removed), vibrant in color and flavor.

More entrée options: jumbo lump Chesapeake crab cake with scallop mousse, haricot verts and lemon-raspberry beurre blanc; Lancaster free-range chicken breast with braised Savoy cabbage and Phillips maitake mushroom risotto; and double-bone domestic lamb chop with Farmdale eggplant and herb goat cheese tart. On every evening's menu, the vegetarian plate showcases a selection of local produce.

### Sweetness & Bright

It would be difficult to get more country than *Stone Barn Orchards Golden Delicious Apple Fig Tart*, its rich crust cradling fruit grown on the premises. Cinnamon ice cream made it even more of a treat. On a lighter note, but every bit a winner, was the *House-made Raspberry Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream*. It came with strawberries and blackberries cut into quarters and artistically arranged in geometric shapes placed in small square plates.

Other desserts include crème brûlée with vanilla bean and bourbon, warm soft-centered chocolate torte with caramel drizzle, and European-style chocolate pot de crème.

### Next Comes Fall

Pumpkins, gourds and squash, plus fall flowers, will brighten the barn for cozy dinners in November. And the elaborate Thanksgiving buffet will offer the traditional carving station plus New England seafood pie and breast of chicken Madeira and an extensive array of other entrees and side dishes.

December brings the popular Brunch with Santa, served every Sunday. The staff has been doing these for decades, so they have the formula down pat. The crackling fireplace will warm the dining room, which is elaborately decorated with wreaths and lights for brunch and dinner.

Lunch service will be added in December, according to Charlene Thomforde, and as demand increases, the plan is to add dinner hours. All the more opportunities to spend time in the country. ♦



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