

# Let's Eat

## Susanna Foo Gourmet Kitchen

555 E. Lancaster Ave., Radnor, PA  
610-688-8808

**Cuisine:** Upscale pan-Asian

**Credit Cards:** All major accepted

**Hours:** Lunch, Dinner: daily

**Ambiance:** Understated refinement

**Smoking/Non:** Non

**Specialty:** Handmade Chinese dumplings

**Alcoholic Beverages:** Full-service bar, wines, Asian beers, sakes, single malt scotch

**Services:** Private parties, valet parking, al fresco dining in summer

Philadelphia's foremost chefs and restaurateurs have increasingly recognized the great demand - and the big bucks to be made - in the affluent suburbs. Now, the highly respected Susanna Foo, owner and chef of the eponymous "Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine", one of Center City's premier restaurants, has brought her nationally acclaimed talent to the Main Line, opening her new "Susanna Foo Gourmet Kitchen" in Radnor just three weeks ago. (In 2003, she unveiled "Suilan" in the Borgata in Atlantic City, which Esquire magazine called "one of the country's best new restaurants" of that year).

Before my Sunday evening visit, from the few advance notices I had read, I had expected a more casual Chinese dumpling house. In fact, Susanna (along with Michael Wu's "Yangming") introduced our region to gourmet pan-Asian and Asian fusion cuisine, in strikingly upscale dining rooms; and her "Kitchen" handsomely continues this splendid tradition.

Her large, airy, new main dining room is resplendent in clean-lined, tasteful surfaces of red, orange, black, cream, stone and white linens. There is a spotless open kitchen at its focal point, and a magnificent, 17-upholstered-seat bar. Four big, eight-seat roundtables equipped with lazy susans fill the room's central axis.

The menu does indeed feature a variety of "handcrafted" dumplings, each with a unique sauce, as well as several other dipping sauces, which are not to be missed. But, there is much more on this delectable menu, including a small selection of sushi and hot appetizers, and some outstanding gourmet entrees: seafood, poultry, meats, noodles and vegetarian. On a first visit, a must-do is to try the bamboo steamed dumplings sampler (\$18), as my party of four did. We were presented with two pork, lamb, chicken and mushroom, and vegetable filled dumplings - all quite delicious.

The four of us, sushi lovers all, equivocated between the sushi sampler or the big eye tuna platter, before deciding on the latter, which comprised of spicy tuna roll, nigiri tuna, tuna tartare and tuna sashimi. (Was it truly the lush big eye tuna? Quite possibly.) We thought it was a bit light for its \$23 price tag, but the quality was up there with the best.

These appetizer combinations were elegantly served on elongated white porcelain and textured clear glass. Each platter was ideally sized for two, not four, but combined they were sufficient, and delectably satisfying. Have them with a glass or carafe of smooth, slightly sweet Ozeki Nigori unfiltered sake, as we did.

Each of our four entrees was truly first rate. My favorites were the hibachi grilled cod fish (\$23) and the spicy Mongolian lamb (\$19). The cod was sublimely moist, flaky, and succulent, and was served with baby bok choy and barley and corn "salsa" in a mild white miso sauce. The extraordinarily mild lamb was deliciously spiced, and came with superb Chinese eggplant, black beans and leeks.

The female side of our foursome equally liked the Szechuan seafood (\$25), perhaps Susanna's take on bouillabaisse, a combo of shrimp, salmon, tuna and scallops tossed in a thicker, spicy sauce. Our final entree, "Susanna's classic crispy duck" (\$24), with terrific sweet potato puree, pea pods and steamed vegetables, was a generous portion of tasty, non-fatty tenders of duck breast and thigh and a drumstick, topped with curly sweet potato chips.

Two positively first rate desserts, coconut creme brulee, and a heavenly chocolate sampler, were each enough for two. The serving style was a seamlessly smooth team operation, with a main server and an ever-changing backup staff, all clothed in matching black mandarin shirts with red piping. Though the restaurant had only been open for two weeks, the wait staff operated smoothly, owing in part to their practice of rotating experienced waiters from downtown in with the newcomers.

Susanna's fine new 180-seat restaurant is next to the brand new Fleming's Steakhouse (a high-end chain) on the bottom floor of the 555 office building, just west of the Radnor Hotel, which also houses a gym and a sport center.

**Overall Rating:** MMMM1/2 (out of 5M's)

Contact food reviewer Mitch Davis at [mdavismaincourse@aol.com](mailto:mdavismaincourse@aol.com).

*Review originally appeared in The Trend newsweekly serving West Norriton, Norristown, Jeffersonville, Audubon and Trooper, PA, on November 15, 2006.*