

Restaurant Review

JustEat by BrownGold

WE'VE all had to make tough choices when dining out — especially when everything on the menu is appealing. No matter what decision you make, no matter how delicious it is, your eyes still widen when the grilled bronzino or braised lamb shank makes its way to another diner's table. You make a mental note to come back another time, and then it dawns on you — the menu changes almost monthly, so you'd better do it soon. And don't fill up on the hot fluffy focaccia just pulled from the wood oven and dipped in golden, herbed olive oil, or you won't have room for dessert.

So goes dinner at JustEat — a restaurant where it can be hard to do as the name suggests, because I want to JustTry everything. Owned and operated by Marc Brown-Gold and his wife, Theresa, the restaurant will celebrate four years in business this Christmas, having kept customers curious and well-sated with a seasonal menu that changes 10 times a year (only February/March and July/August stay the same).

In November, the menu reflected the saturated colors and flavors of the season, offering up pumpkin, orange and onion soup with sage croutons (\$4.50 cup / \$6.50 bowl), wood-oven roasted Berkshire pork loin (\$23), glazed with a peach stout made by a brewer friend, and an acorn squash pizette with goat cheese and nutmeg (\$8).

Several tempting fish preparations, including a whole bronzino (\$27), wild salmon (\$26), yellowfin tuna (\$24) and bass (\$23), all found a place on the grill the evening we were there, simply finished with a drizzle of olive oil, lemon juice or pickled ginger. Creative, yet elemental, each is delicately prepared and handsomely presented. And where vegetarian options can be limited and predictable, Chef BrownGold maintains his inspiration, offering a fried polenta with Point Reyes blue cheese (\$8.25) and a hearty black bean, seitan and spinach pie with spiced yogurt sauce (\$18), as well as several soups, salads and the aforementioned pizette.

For our first course we were both committed to the grilled lamb sausage with white beans and roasted garlic (\$8.50), though I was torn between the lobster and crab



TIMEOFF PHOTOS/JILLIAN KALONICK

A cozy and casual bistro in Buckingham keeps customers sated with seasonal menus, down-to-earth creativity and a welcoming atmosphere.

cake (\$11) and the gnocchi with crab and tomato sauce (\$9). The sausage was spicy and succulent, though I would have preferred the firm beans to be as soft and creamy as the roasted garlic. Having chosen the lobster and crab cake, we were rewarded with a plump, sweet morsel brightened with fresh dill and a creamy mustard sauce. It made me think that the gnocchi was probably really good too.

But there was little room for longing once our main courses arrived. A Piedmontese strip steak (\$28) and fleshy, tender bass were grilled to juicy perfection by the chef, whose open kitchen gives diners an eyeful of the pleasures that await them, as well as everything they are missing out on. It also adds to the ambience and aroma, imparting a casual liveliness to the cozy bistro. I especially liked the paper-thin pickled carrots, zucchini and onions that accompanied the steak, while the escarole and lemon had a nice, sharp bite to complement the mild, flaky bass.

Our meal was leisurely without any significant lags, and the vibe of the restaurant accommodates the pace. The lighting is golden and flattering, and the earthy tones of the room provide a warm backdrop for the vintage curios and oil paintings, which are the work of Theresa BrownGold.

For dessert, we decided on a lemon almond tart with fig ice cream (\$8) and Theresa's apple pie with a scoop of vanilla (\$8). While we were impressed with the quality of the pastries and two well-brewed cups of coffee (\$3 each), the ice cream was curiously bland by contrast. But

it was a minor downbeat in contrast to the total meal, and it served to reinforce one of the chef's strongest traits — a commitment to innovation and down-to-earth creativity.

JustEat by BrownGold

Buckingham Green Shopping Center
Route 202
Buckingham
(215) 794-1818
www.justeatbybrowngold.com

Food Very good

Service Warm and professional

Cuisine "Contemporary seasonal American"

Vegetarian and Vegan Options Soups, salads, and at least one appetizer and one entrée

Atmosphere Cozy European bistro

Prices Expensive

Hours Mon.-Sat. 5:30-10 p.m., Sun. 5-9:30 p.m.

Essentials Menu changes seasonally; wheelchair accessible; BYO; no smoking; accepts MasterCard and Visa; reservations suggested.

