

Chester County

TOWN & COUNTRY LIVING

Summer 2006



Dining Out

THE WHIP TAVERN

By MARGO ARMENIAN RAGAN

The 18th-century British writer and raconteur Dr. Samuel Johnson may have said it best, “There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.” Although Johnson has long been gone, I am positive he would have enjoyed The Whip Tavern as much as I have in my many visits to that establishment.

Co-owners K.C. Kulp and Luke A. Allen assembled a team that included local architects Archer & Buchanan and Conrad Somers Construction to create an authentic English-styled pub. The Whip Tavern provides a relaxed environment for friends to meet, play games before a roaring fireplace, enjoy a brew from 30 or more varieties drawn from all over the world and enjoy delightful fare prepared by Chef Jason Ziglar and his staff.

The stylized logo of a riding whip in the shape of a “W” is a decorative theme that recognizes the equestrian oriented landscape of Chester County. A horseman himself, K.C. admits to

having made a leap of faith when he left the world of stocks and bonds to begin his culinary venture. Judging by the enthusiasm with which The Whip has generated since its inception last year, it appears that K.C. has made a wise choice.

Chef Jason manages to have daily specials that are challenging. For example, on one occasion, he featured maitake mushrooms, an exotic mushroom even for Kennett Square. Another example of Jason’s talent was in another special, pureed cauliflower soup. A touch of truffle oil heightened what would have been the blandness of the cauliflower, making it a soup that was outstanding.

But The Whip does remain true to pub fare with its standard menu. If you enjoy having an appetizer of Scott Egg (\$3.95) with your brew, it is there. Or another favorite, Bubble and Squeak (\$5.95), a browned potato cake made with leeks, cabbage and scallions that too is available on the menu.

Entrees are just as traditional. A pub would not be a pub without Fish and

Chips (\$11.95), always a favorite. My personal preference is the Cottage Pie (\$12.95), a variation on the classic Shepherd’s Pie (\$10.95). Instead of using lamb, the kitchen uses locally raised buffalo. Topping both dishes is a layer of mashed potatoes, a hearty fare that will satisfy the biggest of appetites.

My husband’s favorite is the Mussels with Sausage (\$16.95). The mussels are steamed in Strongbow cider, and the sausage is made from lamb meat. Different, yet delectable.

The menu also accommodates those who would prefer Filet Mignon (\$25.95), which is served with a topping of Stilton cheese. Chef Jason makes this dish extra special by adding truffle flavored whipped potatoes. He can continue his talent show with a classically prepared Steak Au Poivre (\$22.95). If you enjoy tender sirloin steak with a brandy cream sauce, this is definitely for you.

Even if you have experienced an English styled pub before, a visit to The Whip is still in order.



June 10, 2006



Cracking The Whip Wins the Race

BY TERRY CONWAY

When the third leg of the Triple Crown goes off this evening, there may not be a better place in Chester County to take in the action than an out-of-the-way country pub in West Marlborough.

That's because The Whip Tavern, on Route 841, caters to the area's well-represented horse set that can analyze horse races like the Belmont Stakes with an insider's critical eye.

"Initially we just wanted a hangout for the horse crowd," said Kulp, of Highland. "Then we hired a fantastic chef and now we have people coming from 25-30 miles away. The success we've experienced — it's an amazing feeling."

The tavern offers a rustic look that's balanced with old-fashioned charm. The walls are a light mustard color and offset the dark wooden seats and paneling that stretches around the perimeter walls. Colorful prints sketch steeple chasers in flight and hounds on the hunt. Open fires, a game table

and hefty wooden beams add to the pub's ambiance. Dressed in rugby jerseys, the staff pulls pints of real ale and traditional cider, and serves diners a mix of English and continental fare. In less than a year, Chef Jason Ziglar's inventive dishes featuring fresh, local ingredients have built up quite a following.

Overhead, plasma televisions beam in horse racing, show jumping and soccer from around the globe. In season, Wednesdays are "Race Night," when visitors can enjoy a pint at the handsome wooden bar and strike up a conversation perhaps with a jockey, trainer, world-class equestrian, blacksmith, owners or breeders.

The Whip Tavern building dates back to the early 1900s when it housed a wagon wheel business, then later a blacksmith shop. It eventually evolved into a corner store and then neighborhood bar. Situated near the village of Doe Run, K.C. Kulp and Luke A. Allen bought the bar in April 2004. Kulp previously had sold Head Ski equipment to wholesale accounts on the East Coast, then was hired as a telecommunications analyst and stockbroker on Wall Street. After six years, and in the aftermath of 9/11, Kulp reevaluated his career path.

"When my wife Danielle and I were dating we came to the bar," recalled Kulp.



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"I told her I wanted to buy it. She thought I was insane. After leaving New York I felt I didn't have much to lose. My partner and I knew the area needed a nice pub and if we didn't do it someone else would. We stripped everything down to the cinder block walls. The interior was in very bad condition; the only thing that's still original are the ceiling joists."

"The horse community is very close-knit, we all support each other. You'll find me here once a week, might be more if it was closer."

The partners assembled a team that included West Chester architects Archer & Buchanan and Conrad Somers Construction to create an authentic English pub. Renovations began in October 2004 and the doors opened June 27, 2005. Celebrating the region's passion for horses, Kulp hired West Chester's Eric Smith to produce their stylish logo — a riding whip in the shape of a "W."

"Initially we just wanted a hangout for the horse crowd," said Kulp, of Highland. "Then we hired a fantastic chef and now we have people coming from 25-30 miles away. The success we've experienced — it's an amazing feeling."

"The Whip is very similar to pubs I've visited in Cheltenham, England. It used to be this nasty, old redneck place that kept shutting down," said Hunter with a laugh.

"Now it's a wonderful neighborhood meeting place. All they need is a dartboard."

On a recent Wednesday evening, an older gentleman in a tweed cap was sipping Strongbow cider from a tankard. Les McNamar was reveling in his steeplechase



horse Java To Go's victory that was being replayed on the pub's televisions. Next to McNamar sat owner/jockey Michelle Hunter of Cochranville. Originally from North Yorkshire, England, eight years ago, Hunter took up steeplechase riding in the states. Her mount, Joe at Six, captured the Virginia Gold Cup in 2004. "It's a great place for old friends to meet and to watch all the regional races from the previous weekend," McNamar said. "The Whip is very similar to pubs I've visited in Cheltenham, England."

"It used to be this nasty, old redneck place that kept shutting down," said Hunter with a laugh. "Now it's a wonderful neighborhood meeting place. All they need is a dartboard."

A few seats over, Xavier Aizpuru is watching himself on television as he pilots the first of his two jump winners at the Fair Hill Races. His pal Taffy

gestures at the screen and starts to critique the jockey's post-race television interview. Aizpuru's Spanish parents owned The Horse & Groom, a pub in the Cotswold region of England for 30 years.

"I grew up in this kind of business so I know what a special place it is," noted Aizpuru. "The horse community is very close-knit, we all support each other. You'll find me here once a week, might be more if it was closer."

At the far corner Heidi White is talking about her 13-year-old bay thoroughbred, Northern Spy. Together they won the U. S. Equestrian CCI National Three Day Eventing Championship in early May. They'll be competing at the World Championships in Aachen, Germany at the end of July.

"It's a brilliant place to have a drink and a chat," she said. "It's a little bit like home, but then again it's not home. The food is fantastic."

The News Journal

February 16, 2007



Fun, Food and Drink, the British Way

BY PATRICIA TALORICO

COATESVILLE, Pa. — While it wasn't exactly K.C. Kulp's intention, The Whip Tavern has very quietly become a gathering spot for homesick British expatriates. "They come out of the woodwork. I never knew there were so many around here," says Kulp, who opened the snug, 42-seat West Marlborough Township tavern in June 2005.

If you create a cozy and inviting English-style pub in Pennsylvania horse country, don't be surprised by a British invasion.

Look around The Whip on almost any night (except Tuesdays, when the tavern is closed) and you'll see tables of Wellie-wearing customers quaffing pints of Tetley's English Ale, canoodling near the fireplace or chowing on bangers and mash, mushy peas, Guinness lamb stew and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding.

Pubs are a central part of British life. More than three-quarters of the adult

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population go to pubs, and more than a third regularly rest elbows at the bar at least once a week, according to "Passport to the Pub: A Guide to British Pub Etiquette."

Kulp has brought that same sort of convivial, neighborhood pub atmosphere to The Whip Tavern.

In April 2004, he bought the tiny cottage-like building, or what he calls "a greasy-spoon beer joint that got rowdy on weekends," and began major renovations. He stripped the

interior down to the cinderblocks, added a fireplace, new bar, tables and bench seating.

Kulp decided on an English-style pub theme because of the area's rich "equestrian tradition." Horse farms dot the rolling countryside. One of the oldest fox hunts in the United States is just "up the road" in Unionville, and nearby is the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center. That's the hospital that treated the late Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro.

Television sets around the bar of The Whip are almost always showing rugby or soccer matches. The tavern opens early for the Six Nations Rugby Championships, which are shown live. (The next big matches are March 10: Ireland versus Scotland at 8:30 a.m. and Wales versus Italy at 10:30 a.m. Breakfast is served that day until 11 a.m.)

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“We try and feature as many European sports as we can,” Kulp says. Live music is performed on Friday and Saturday nights.

Here are some quick facts about The Whip Tavern and a few other eateries with British influences:

The Whip Tavern

*1383 N. Chatham Road,
near Coatesville, Pa.
(610) 383-0600 or
www.thewhiptavern.com.*

*Open 11 a.m. - midnight every
day but Tuesday.*

What you need to know: While beer is served at the pub, The Whip is actually a BYOB restaurant. You can bring your own wine, but a \$2.50 corkage fee will be charged. Cigarette smoking is permitted after 9 p.m. (This is a Pennsylvania tavern.) This is a small place, and Friday and Saturday nights are extremely busy –

“We try and feature as many European sports as we can,” Kulp says. Live music is performed on Friday and Saturday nights.”

get there after 6:30 p.m and don't be surprised to wait an hour, most likely longer, for a table. An a la carte Sunday brunch is served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

What to try: Welsh rarebit, a warm blend of melted English cheddar and Stilton cheeses swirled with Smithwick's Irish Ale and served with crostini for dipping. The mushroom soup is made with locally grown mushroom in a porcini broth. Kulp says the kitchen turns out Shepherd's pie with ground lamb, regulars love the Guinness lamb stew, and the toad-in-the-hole – or sausage

baked in Yorkshire pudding – is now offered as an entree instead of an appetizer. Kulp, a Buffalo, N.Y., native, also plays homage to his hometown on the menu by offering its famed sandwich Beef on Weck, layers of roast beef served on a pretzel salt and caraway seed-encrusted “Kummelweck” roll.

“It pains me when I see people trying to turn this into a cheesesteak,” he says.

What to wash it down with: The Whip offers 40 different beers. For an authentic

“What to try: Welsh rarebit, a warm blend of melted English cheddar and Stilton cheeses swirled with Smithwick's Irish Ale and served with crostini for dipping.”

British taste, Kulp suggest Tetley's, a light ale with a creamy head that pours similar to Guinness. He has Strongbow Cider, brews from Black Sheep Brewery and St. Peter's Old-Style Porter.

