

Reviewed by Robert Gordon

Borghis

BACK IN THE FIFTIES in Philly, cuisine was — well, come to think of it, cuisine was not. The culinary arts were taking a breather here in America. Post-war society was gloating over some sort of perceived redemption from the shackles of nature. Americans gloried in processed foods, tasteless trophies of the sleek and chic new nuclear age. There were exceptions, like the “red gravies” of South Philly. “Red gravies” were little mom-and-pop neighborhood eateries dispersed randomly from South Street to Pattison Avenue and from Broad Street to Delaware Avenue. They became bastions of old-world cooking, suddenly dismissed as outmoded. The “red gravies” hitched their cuisine to ingredients bought fresh that day from the Italian Market. They eschewed frozen vegetables juiced with preservatives and other new-fangled chemicals that liberated the Fifties stay-at-home mom to wear house-dresses around the house while she trusted Swanson.

Fortunately, gastronomic and social philosophy did a U-turn. Nature reclaimed the kitchen as her dominion. Nowadays, fresh ingredients rule at all the top tables. One aspect of those old “red gravies,” however, remains elusive to replicate. Call it a neighborhood feel. Call it a *mi casa es su casa* vibe that can't be faked or ordered from a catalogue.

Good food and a great neighborhood atmosphere — both elements of those old South Philly “red gravies” are alive and well at Borghi's. Owners Dino and Scott Borghi center their culinary philosophy on fresh ingredients. Meanwhile, they fill their spacious dining rooms with familial warmth. That's literal familial warmth. Everywhere you turn it seems you run into a member of the Borghi clan. Dino's father and mother alternate as host/ hostess. Scott's sister Bethany is an extraordinary server. The entire staff functions as a family. The operation is down-to-earth polish without pretentiousness.

The building is the centerpiece of the reborn, or perhaps rebirthing, Chalfont. The attractive white-stucco structure was built in 1761 and features a second-story balcony that seats thirty for warm-weather al fresco dining. Inside, although previous owners stripped the building of the lion's share of its historically significant architectural elements, what remains is spacious and airy. The Borghis have laid out the restaurant with plenty of space between tables. Noise

BORGHIS
4 North Main Street, Chalfont, PA
(215) 997-1188

Hours:	Sunday-Thursday: 11:30-11; Friday & Saturday: 11:30-12:30
Credit Cards:	Accept all major cards
Reservations:	Suggested
Cuisine:	The Borghis have melded the culinary traditions of their Italian roots with littoral influences from the Jersey shore. The menu is heavily Italian with good, reasonably priced pastas and well-crafted seafood dishes.
Recommended:	Toasted walnut encrusted salmon with a raspberry sauce
Atmosphere:	The restaurant has plenty of space between tables and noise levels are remarkably low.
Service:	Servers add amiable spice
Prices:	(8) Appetizers: \$4.95-\$8.95; (4) Salads: \$3.95-\$7.50; (3) Pastas: \$12.95-\$16.95; (3) Chicken: \$13.95-\$14.95; (3) Veal: \$15.95-\$17.95; (3) Fish: \$16.95-\$18.95; (2) Steak: \$17.95-\$19.95; Desserts: \$4-\$5
Web Site:	Under construction
Chef/Owner:	Dino and Scott Borghi

levels are remarkably low. The owners have done a yeoman's job in extracting a commodious atmosphere that's at once understated and sophisticated.

Dino and his brother Scott toiled at restaurants at the shore for years. They started when they were in high school and continued through their days at Penn State. When the pair graduated from Penn State (at different times), each heeded the call of the kitchen. Most recently, Dino worked at Roasted Pepper North in Doylestown, all the while keeping his eyes open for a place to stamp his personal mark. When the Ristorante de Caesar

2004 primetime
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Best Neighborhood Eatery

(the name of the previous establishment) in Chalfont became available, he leaped at the chance. His dream was to set up a neighborhood place with a loyal base of locals locked in by consistent, upscale food that's reasonably priced. He's on the mark.

Dino has melded the culinary traditions of his Italian roots with the littoral influences of his former summer playground, the Jersey shore. The regular menu is heavily Italian. The daily specials are primarily fresh seafood dishes that lend a breath of seashore and summertime. Recently for instance, tender pillows of lobster ravioli topped with succulent scallops and grilled asparagus were moistened with fresh basil roasted garlic and oil studded with tomatoes, capers, and red onions. The composition was busy yet delicate and coherent. Baked flounder stuffed with rich crabmeat imperial was smooth and tasty, although the flounder

