

Bartender
Stephanie Stewart
of Pennsauken
serves a drink from
the new bar.

EAT!

Something special about
**SweetWater
BAR & GRILL**

By **SALLY FRIEDMAN**
SPECIAL TO THE BCT

HISTORY AND CHEF

It's been a landmark at Route 130 and Branch Pike in Cinnaminson for decades. Hathaway's Diner took root there in the 1980s, and even through an epic reconstruction of that intersection, it remained open and welcoming, and loyal customers flocked there.

"But we've been wanting to do something special and new and different, while of course keeping Hathaway's as it's always been," said John Kyratas, one of two brothers who are now the heart and soul of the operation started by their parents, Angelo and Antonia.

"We literally grew up at the restaurant," Kyratas said.

The brothers remember doing their homework there as boys, and both are proud to carry on the family tradition.

And now there's a new member of the "family" at the same site. SweetWater is up and running.

George Kyratas, a graduate of the Academy of Culinary Arts, is the much-honored chef. He's the youngest person, at 20, ever to be certified by the American Culinary Federation and is often behind the scenes in the kitchen, while John Kyratas generally handles the managerial duties.

When both agreed that it was time for something new and different, the SweetWater Bar and Grill was born. It officially opened last month.



Brothers George (top) and John Kyratas operate the SweetWater Bar and Grill in Cinnaminson. Among the entrees are vegetable flatbread and a smokehouse burger (right).



Chef George Kyratas is particularly proud that the Thanksgiving turkey sandwich, one that skeptics weren't sure about, has turned out to be one of the most popular dishes. The combination of sliced, home-cooked turkey with apple raisin stuffing and cranberry sauce, served with turkey gravy on a bun, offers Thanksgiving any time you want it.

Pan-seared scallops over mushroom risotto is another instant hit, and the smokehouse burger is also a champ.

The slow-cooked prime rib is another crowd pleaser, one that's oven-roasted then finished over the broiler. And yes, local produce is used as much as possible.

As for libations, no less than 21 varieties of specialty martinis can satisfy the most discerning maven, and more than two dozen craft beers and 25 wines also are on the menu.

JUST DESSERTS

Bread pudding. Just the name makes you think of home cooking and all things comforting. So how about cinnamon bun bread pudding, complete with warm caramel sauce this fall? Or a hefty slab of rich, moist cake. And if you're looking for gluten-free, you can find it at SweetWater in the form of a hazelnut layer cake with Nutella icing.

Yes, it makes it tempting to eat dessert first.

Just the Facts

Where: Sweetwater Bar and Grill, 10 N. Route 130 at Branch Pike (at the site of Hathaway's), Cinnaminson, 856-829-7458

Hours: Monday-Thursday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-midnight; Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 a.m.

Prices: Lunch, average \$9 to \$12.50; dinner, average \$16-\$21.50

Other: Has liquor license
Website: www.SweetWaternj.com

THE VIBE

"It's everything we'd hoped for," said John Kyratas, noting that the sleek, contemporary look and feel are exactly what the concept was.

This is a place that feels special, even when it's not a special occasion. It's loaded with natural materials — woods and granites — and colored in earth tones. There are definitely hints of city style, but with the warmth of local hospitality.

"It's urban sleek, but with Cinnaminson prices and comfort, and free parking," George Kyratas said.

The Menu and Signature Dishes

Step into the separate entrance to SweetWater and you'll generally see lots of interaction between the wait staff and guests. That's because intensive training took place, and continues, so that the staff fully understands the dishes that come out of the kitchen.



The new restaurant is attached to Hathaway's Diner, also owned by the Kyratas family.

PHOTOS BY NANCY ROKOS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER