

# There's something fresh for everyone at John Wright

Grab a bite at the John Wright Restaurant, and get a lesson in Susquehanna River history.

"These are the piers of the bridge that was burned in 1863," said Julie McNamara, who co-owns the Wrightsville eatery with her sister, Bess, and brother-in-law Art Mann. The restaurant, on North Front Street, features a spectacular view of the big river, the stone pylons of the covered bridge that was torched during the Civil War to keep the Confederate Army from advancing, and the beloved arches of the Veterans Memorial Bridge, built in 1930.

The location — a sharp right after crossing that aforementioned bridge — can't be beat. But it's the food you'll come for. "Grab a bite" isn't exactly an appropriate introduction to the John Wright. You'll want to linger. Wrightsville is a small corner of the world, but the menu here reaches across the globe. Take time to enjoy the trip.

Executive Chef Aziz Moutabid brings everything from Mediterranean to Moroccan to the table, but there's also a selection



Outside dining at the John Wright Restaurant in Wrightsville above; the restaurant's interior below.

Check out the sesame salmon entrée, for example. Decked out in a sweet pea and leek puree, the dish's flavor and texture — it literally falls apart at the touch of a fork — will please even those not fond of fish. Ditto for the peppered ahi tuna, accented with peppercorns and wasabi vinaigrette. That wasabi packs a punch, but in a good way. It seasons, but does not overwhelm the dish.

Those who like something other than seafood need not worry; Moroccan chicken, tenderloin tips and filet mignon can also be found, as can a bacon cheeseburger made with Lancaster County beef.

That taps into General Manager Vincent Zangari's philosophy.

"I like to use fresh ingredients," he said, noting nearby Lancaster County's bounty of ample meats and produce. Prices are local-style as well, averaging \$14 to \$20 for a dinner entrée.

If Zangari's name sounds familiar, by the way, it's because his family ran several well-known pizza shops in the Lancaster area

way back when. So you know you are in good hands.

That's another history lesson, but here's another: patrons at the John Wright can literally see history in the making. The restaurant expanded earlier this year to include a glassed-and screened-in veranda-style dining room and is enlarging its kitchen. Plans are also in the works for a second-floor deck, a pavilion for special occasions and a landscaped terrace on the river.

In the meantime, customers will have to make do with a grassy lawn that rolls down to the river. It's by no means unpleasant. And if you are at the John Wright at the right time, a gift shop, celebrating the

## sideDish

**NAME:** John Wright Restaurant

**LOCATION:** North Front Street, Wrightsville

**HOURS:** Mon.-Tues., 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; Wed.-Sat. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. and 4-9 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 4-8 p.m.

**PRICE RANGE:** Breakfast prices at the John Wright Restaurant, Wrightsville, range from \$1.55 to \$8.25; lunch ranges from \$5.25-\$12.95. Dinner selections range from \$8 to \$25. Salads are \$5-\$12.

**CONTACT:** 252-0416 or [www.johnwrightrestaurant.com](http://www.johnwrightrestaurant.com)



for kids that includes good old macaroni and cheese. There's literally something for everybody at the John Wright, but the results are by no means slapdash.



building's history as a foundry, is on-site.

"We're trying to make this a destination place," said Zangari.