

MAIN LINE TODAY Article from Main Line Today April 23, 2011

Ever wonder where Charles Barkley eats when he's in town? Chances are, he's at Ryan Christopher's, the neighborhood eatery situated on a quaint residential street in the heart of Narberth.

"He gets the same thing every time: the cheesesteak egg rolls and a hot turkey sandwich," says Phyllis Klaumenzer, who owns the two-year-old neighborhood BYO with her chef husband, Michael.

If you're not a "Narb", you may not even know that the Woodbine Avenue restaurant exists. Barkley and his wife stumbled upon the place one night as they were driving by. Now, he's a regular. Whether you happen upon Ryan Christopher's accidentally or intentionally, you will, no doubt, be charmed.

On any given night, you'll find Mike and Phyllis working the kitchen (she's in charge of the baking). Daughter Kim works the small, 12-table dining room, helps dad and shops for fresh ingredients. Her son—the restaurant's namesake—takes orders from behind the counter. You get a sense of closeness and family when you walk in the door, and that's exactly what the owners were after.

Michael's background includes stints at the old Marbles in Bryn Mawr, Twenty One West in Chestnut Hill and the Rose Tattoo Café in Fairmount. He was close to renting a space in Center City, when he fell in love with the vacant spot that most recently housed Caviston's. Seeing a hole in Narberth's bar-filled dining scene, the Klaumenzers created a menu that's great for kids, those with gluten-free diets, and everyone in between. If you can't find something you like here, you're in the wrong place.

In the warmer months, customers have been known to station themselves on the patio with a few bottles of wine for hours, chatting it up with friends and enjoying the local sights. If you choose to dine inside, you'll find simple, unpretentious digs that, honestly, could use some updating. The couple didn't change much after Caviston's closed, but a few unspecified projects are in the works.