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Posted on Wed, Aug. 31, 2005

Get a head start on Oktoberfest

Though the official Oktoberfest, the one in Germany, runs Sept. 17 to Oct. 3, McGillin's Olde Ale House, 1310 Drury St., already has been celebrating. Until Oct. 2, or "until the beer runs out," the drinkery will serve special Oktoberfest craft brews and three or four food specials daily.

Ludwig's Garten, 1315 Sansom St., holds its one-day-only festival Sept. 24, when the restaurant closes down the street, sets up 15 or 20 draft beer towers outside and roasts several pigs. Beer and food tickets are sold the day of the festivities.

Kildare's Irish Pub (www.kildarespub.com) - with current locations in Manayunk, King of Prussia and West Chester - will have new siblings soon. On Sept. 18, a Kildare's will open in Media, at 1145 W. Baltimore Pike, 610-565-8886, formerly Newport Grill. In November, a Kildare's will take the place of a former Pizzeria Uno on Headhouse Square in Philly.

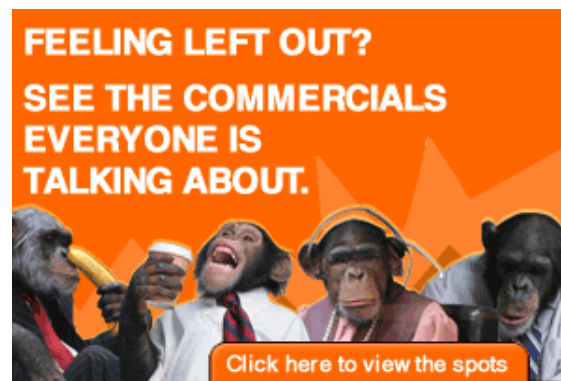
During Restaurant Week (Sept. 18-Sept. 23), Chinatown's Joseph Poon, who is ending his long sojourn as a restaurant owner, will hold a cooking demo of vegetable- and fruit-cutting at Barnes & Noble, 1805 Walnut St., as he shares his memoir, "Life Is Short, Cooking Is Fun." He will appear at the bookstore Sept. 19 at 7 p.m.

As Valanni, 1229 Spruce St., celebrates five years on Sept. 26, new exec chef Miguel Aguilar will unveil his tapas-only menu. Check out the \$5 drink specials, belly dancers and DJs Jon Gill and Argo during the celebration.

Sansom Street Oyster House (1516 Sansom St.) chef Cary Neff will host a fish-grilling class at the Manna/Philadelphia Magazine Design Home, 630 Edgewater Drive in West Chester, a restored farmhouse that offers tours and classes to benefit Manna, a local organization providing food and services to people living with HIV/AIDS. Tickets are \$35 each for the class. Call 215-781-7345, or go to www.mannapa.org.

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