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REVERENCE AND REINVENTION

Led by the team of hospitality veterans behind the historic Blue Bell Inn, the modern yet warm restaurant known as **The Copper Crow** takes flight in Horsham.

BY LEIGH ANN STUART | PHOTOS BY JODY ROBINSON

Restaurateur Scott Dougherty had amassed a long and impressive résumé in hospitality by the time he and his partners founded The Copper Crow in Horsham. Dougherty and his team began developing The Copper Crow in 2020, and the restaurant opened its doors in 2022. It has been soaring ever since.

Dougherty's team also helms the Blue Bell Inn, which is known for its classic style and historical significance. The vibes of the two restaurants are quite different, which Dougherty describes as an intentional choice, even a necessary one.

"At Blue Bell Inn, we wanted to respect its long history of memory-making for the many who celebrated life moments there," he says. "The décor is kept more traditional, allowing guests to feel like they are enjoying dinner in their own home. The newly expanded bar, cafe, terrace, and patio areas gave us an opportunity to create a more modern vibe for those looking for a more casual experience.

"The Copper Crow had no history to perpetuate so inspiration there came from its name and the volume and openness of that empty space," he continues. "We knew we wanted modern yet warm, something more out of the box—cool and chic—and where the food

would be the star. The Copper Crow was the perfect example of a large and dedicated team, both in the front and the back of the house, all putting their talents on the line, and their heads together, to plan, open, and operate this new and exciting venture."

Designed and decorated by partners Bruce and Judi Goodman, the style minds behind the Blue Bell Inn, The Copper Crow has a chic yet welcoming air. The lighting leans toward mid-century modern, while the wood details at the bar, columns, and other décor bring the warmth and a bit of nature. The touches of copper throughout, from the front desk to the antiques displayed to the upholstery, speak to the restaurant's namesake.

Guests no doubt appreciate the one-of-a-kind atmosphere, but the lineup of cocktails and cuisine is likely to make the biggest impression. Standout dishes on the menu of bold, internationally inspired fare include charred octopus, lamb lollipops, wood-fired pizzas, and bao buns. As for the cocktails, Dougherty describes the Smoked Crow-Fashioned as a hands-down winner: "It is created with Maker's Mark and is featured on one of our 24 rotating taps. We then smoke the cocktail table-side with our wood staves. It's delicious!"

While he knows there's always room for improvement, Dougherty is happy to report that guests have embraced all aspects of The Copper Crow.



The Copper Crow's menu features bold, internationally inspired fare.

"I would say what people like most about the Crow is simple," he says. "The atmosphere is modern and chic, while the food, prepared by executive chef Pete [Sherba] and our head chef at the Crow, Ralph DiPopolo, is trendy, cutting edge, worldly, and delicious. There is truly nothing like the Crow in our area, and if you happen to give it a try, you would absolutely agree."

Grandma Knows Best

Dougherty has his Grandmother Virginia to thank for the start of his career in hospitality, which began in 1990. On her recommendation, he took a job as a busboy at the Blue Bell Inn, as she raved about the owners, the Lamprecht family, and their general manager, Jack Friel.

"I busbed tables for about a year, then served and tended bar for about a year as well," he recalls. "By 1993 I took on the role of manager, running the host desk, the staff, and the dining rooms, and I did that for the next eight or so years. It was a wonderful time in my life, especially because during that span, I was fortunate enough to meet and work with so many incredible people, many of whom are still my very good friends to this day. That includes my wife, Colette, who I hired in 1995."

His next adventure came through fatherhood, though the culinary world never strayed too far from his mind. In 2004, he worked with Mike Sloane, then owner of KC's Alley in Ambler, as general manager, and five years later took over Sloane's stake in that restaurant and its neighbor, Bridgets Steakhouse.

His journey came full circle in 2012, when opportunity brought him back to the Blue Bell Inn. He took over as owner, a responsibility he did not take lightly. In fact, the team closed the restaurant for more than a year to accommodate a multimillion-dollar renovation of the entire building.

"My heart has always been at the Blue Bell Inn," he says. "I feel incredibly honored to be a part of this amazing restaurant, and even prouder to be going back this time as the operating partner—a very surreal moment for sure."

"Even after 12 years," he continues, "we still receive many compliments of how nice it was that we were able to pull off such a massive renovation, while still preserving so much of the history of the old Blue Bell Inn. I truly could not be more proud of our team, who all work so hard every single day to ensure that the Blue Bell Inn always remains the best restaurant in the suburbs, as it has for the last 281 years."

A Growing Empire

Never one to rest on his laurels, Dougherty and his partners acquired the property formerly known as Meadowlands Country Club—situated just behind the Blue Bell Inn—in 2016. Again, large-scale renovations led to a stunning transformation and the creation of Bluestone Country Club. He describes Bluestone as a "private, boutique-like club with incredible members,

an immaculately kept golf course, and food that many consider the best of any club in the area."

Though each of his properties has its own distinct style and, of course, flavors, Dougherty acknowledges a few commonalities—namely, a commitment to shared culture, vision, and dedication to overall excellence. In addition, both The Copper Crow and Blue Bell Inn offer a variety of live music acts on weekends to delight all the senses.

Of course, Dougherty always has his sights set on expanding his empire.

"With an incredible real-estate developer as my partner, and a dedicated team with a successful track record in this industry by my side, there are always new opportunities that come our way," he says. "We are always discussing new projects and considering other locations."

"One day I would love to find the perfect location for a restaurant in Sea Isle, Avalon, or Stone Harbor, New Jersey, where I spend a lot of time," Dougherty continues. "While I really enjoy many of the restaurants in the area, I would love the opportunity to create something new and special, something that does not currently exist." ■



The Copper Crow

116 Welsh Road
Horsham, PA 19044
(267) 855-CROW

coppercrowhorsham.com

Blue Bell Inn

601 Skippack Pike
Blue Bell
(215) 646-2010

bluebellinn.com

Bluestone Country Club

711 Boehms Church Road
Blue Bell, PA 19422
(215) 646-2300

bluestonecc.com



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