

just can't afford to keep the winery open. We want to thank our customers for all the support you have given us ... We will miss all the wonderful people we have meant these past few years."

What we miss: "I only went to DeMarsico's a few times. It was a comfortable place. I went with my sister both times, for wine tasting. The wines were delicious, and we both bought two bottles. Sangria was a featured wine on one occasion and cider on another. I guess I liked that it was local and the owners had a history with the city. I was also happy that it was housed in a rehab building. The best memory is that one of the times (my sister and I) went was to celebrate our birthdays. We did not realize we would get a free wine tasting for our birthdays. My birthday at the beginning of the week and my sister's at the end, we both got a free wine tasting. All the better to buy a bottle or two of wine."

— *Sue Haas Columbus, North Adams*

Name: The Mill on the Floss

Address: 342 Route 7, New Ashford

Type of food/atmosphere: French cuisine, fine dining

Who last owned it: Jane Champagne

Brief history: Chef Maurice Champagne and his wife Jane purchased The Mill on the Floss in 1973. Maurice, a classically-trained French chef from Montreal who had trained in Montreal and at the Plaza Hotel in New York City, had worked for the restaurant, both as full-time and seasonal staff, for 21 years prior. Maurice helped establish The Mill on the Floss as a French fine dining restaurant in the early 1960s.

The Mill on the Floss first opened in 1938, as a seasonal tavern inside its present location. The Colonial farmhouse, built in the 1800s, and the surrounding 2,000 acres had been operated as an inn and recreational area for 25 years prior. The Smith-Van Cott estate, known as the Mill on the Floss (its name borrowed from the 19th-century George Eliot book), was owned by Murray D. Smith. He sold the inn and tavern to Mortimer and Peggy Van Cott in 1946, who would expand the restaurant over the next three decades.

In 1978, just five years after the Champagnes purchased the restaurant, it received an unexpected review from New York Times travel writer James Egan who wrote: "... we had the best dinner we've ever had in New England. The fare is authentically French, the owner/chef is appropriately named Maurice Champagne."

The Champagnes put The Mill on the Floss on the market in 1987 (it never sold), as the couple was focusing on Drummond's, their family-style restaurant at Jiminy Peak. Daughter Suzanne Champagne Ivy, who trained under her father, took over in the kitchen and remained head chef until the governor's temporary COVID-19 shut-down orders closed the restaurant on March 16, 2020. On Aug. 23, the Champagne family announced the restaurant was permanently closed, after 47 years of ownership, with a farewell video posted on [its Facebook page](#).

What is there now: The property is currently for sale with an asking price of \$599,000 through Burnham Gold Real Estate in Williamstown. The historic building includes a second-floor living space with four bedrooms, a living/dining room and kitchen.

What we miss: "Walking into that deeply rich, polished dark wooden bar and dining room for me always just felt like being drenched in comfort and elegance. The look and feel of the place will forever be the benchmark for which all other dining experiences are measured ... and in my travels, none can compare. The hanging copper pots at the pass and the fantastic tile work around the the kitchen and garde manger area all just exude the feeling that you're in for a treat. Most importantly, my fondest memories come from the people who worked at The Mill. The Champagnes are special people. They gave their heart and soul to that place and to the people they served. To spend time with them was always a pleasure and time spent with family ... because they treated you as if you were their own."

— *Scott Charland, Westborough (Williamstown native who worked at Mill on the Floss in the late 80s/early 90s).*



Chef Suzanne Champagne Ivy at The Mill on the Floss.

"Jane [Champagne] was the first restaurateur in the Berkshires that started buying our berries and vegetables. Long before the Berkshires were known as a farm-to-table hotbed, Jane would come to The Berry Patch on a weekly basis to get our berries, squashes, tomatoes, melons, fresh flowers, lettuces, and other items that we would tell her about. She put

orders in on a regular basis and we
would have such great

conversations when she would come and pick up products. I especially remember when we had a devastating hail storm that destroyed our tomato crop on the very first harvest day of the year. Her empathy and true understanding of what a loss that was to us really is etched in my mind. Most of the public had no understanding how much that one hail storm impacted us for the rest of the season, especially impacting our ability to have the perfect produce that everyone in the U.S. expects. Jane truly understood and was more than happy to get cosmetically damaged produce because it still tasted great.”

— *Dale Ila M. Riggs, The Berry Patch, Stephentown, N.Y.*

“The Mill has been such an important place for my husband and I whenever we visit The Berkshires. We are from New Jersey and have been visiting The Berkshires for a long time. Visits ALWAYS included dinner at The Mill, whether it be to celebrate Thanksgiving, an anniversary or birthday. The food, the staff and the warm, cozy environment will forever be etched in our minds: impeccable service, outstanding food and an ambiance that couldn't be beat. We were lucky enough to be able to share this special place with friends and family whenever they joined us on our visits. The Berkshires will no longer be the same for us.”

— *Carla and Spencer Tracey, Verona, New Jersey*

“I have long considered The Mill on the Floss the 'go-to' restaurant to celebrate important family milestones. The atmosphere, food and service have always been dependably top-notch. My fiancé and I held our rehearsal dinner at The Mill on The Floss the day before our wedding ceremony on top of Jiminy Peak. Jane Champagne was so kind and helpful to us in planning the event, and the evening itself was beautifully memorable. My husband and I celebrated our one-year wedding anniversary with a special dinner at The Mill on the Floss. It was the obvious choice!”

— *Sandra Stott Gridley*

“The Mill on the Floss has been our favorite restaurant since we moved to The Berkshires in 1973. We will miss this restaurant forever, but we are thankful that they served this community for as long as they did. We have so many memories of evenings with family and friends in that special atmosphere. It

felt like being on vacation when we walked in that door and were greeted by Tim [Bushika, front-of-house manager] after just our 20-minute drive from home. The good part about that was that when we were at a fine restaurant when we were actually on vacation, we would often remark to each other that the food and atmosphere there were very good, but no better than at The Mill on the Floss and we could get there any time. We spent many birthdays and anniversaries at The Mill on the Floss. For my husband's 70th birthday, we brought all our children and grandchildren and since his favorite color is yellow, everyone wore his signature color. My husband would always go to the kitchen to ask Jane how the hot dogs were that night. She always chatted and made us feel special no matter how busy the restaurant was. All the staff, from Maurice, Jane, Suzanne and Tim, to all the waitstaff (especially DeeDee) were the finest that can be found. We will miss that experience forever, because that is what it was. It was a fine dining experience that we had the privilege to enjoy for almost 50 years. We are all better for having had that in our lives. “

— *Barbara Cece, Williamstown*

“Mill on the Floss has always been my family's favorite restaurant. We went there on every major holiday; my husband and I had dinner there every Valentine's Day. When he passed away, my daughter and her husband took me there often. My favorite meal was duck with orange sauce, so delicious! I will always remember the beautiful, cozy restaurant with delicious food and good times with family and friends.”

— *Susan Zuckerman, Pittsfield*

“We celebrated every wedding anniversary or major life celebration for over 20 years there! The exceptional quality of the service, food and atmosphere made it a very special place to enjoy. We also enjoyed going in early for our reservation and sitting at the cozy bar for a cocktail while chatting with Tim [Bushika, front-of-house manager] so much that we made it a part of every visit. Sitting by the cozy roaring fire added to the great atmosphere. Such a special special place!”

— *Kit and Will Turner, Pittsfield*

“The first time my husband and I went there was in 1974 when some friends invited us to join them. We loved it so much we continued right until they closed their doors. Along with many other times each year, it was the place we shared our anniversary. We even went on our 25th anniversary, which was on

Sept. 11, 2001, when the world stopped turning for a while. It was a bizarre evening as we really did not know whether to cancel or not. Despite the circumstances, we enjoyed another fabulous meal and felt safe if even for a few hours. Over the years we have enjoyed special, fun and sometimes crazy evenings with many friends and family. Always greeted graciously and personally by the Mill's "family." By far our favorite restaurant over many years. A special thanks to everyone at The Mill...we miss you all."

— *Kathi and Mark Wheeler*

"A large contingent of golfers who participated in the Taconic Golf Course's Women's 3-Day Invitational would always frequent The Mill on the Tuesday (our "free" night) during the tournament. There were usually 10 or 12 of us in our group. But, inevitably, there would be a few more groups who we would meet up with ... We all knew where to go for a great night of food and drink. We will definitely miss The Mill this year."

— *Vicki Richardello*

Name: Sen Sushi

Address: 48B North St., Pittsfield

Type of food/atmosphere: Japanese Cuisine

Brief history: Was called Shiro Lounge when opened Dec. 23, 2009, under the same ownership as Shiro Kitchen in Great Barrington. Changed ownership in 2017 and turned in its license in 2020, according to the city clerk's office.

What is there now: Empty storefront

Name: International House of Tacos

Address: 1231 W Housatonic St., Pittsfield

Type of food/atmosphere: Casual restaurant that served a rotation of fresh, inventive tacos. There was nothing fussy about the atmosphere — no menus, only chalkboards filled with what was available that day — and if you didn't eat tacos, there wasn't much else here besides an extensive, and surprising, wine and beer list. But Berkshire taco lovers knew you got a lot of flavor for a bargain price.