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letter from the publisher

FOOD, FAMILY, AND FUN



We all love food. This issue is dedicated to all the deliciousness that lives on 30-A. With some of the region's best chefs residing on our Emerald Coast, 30-A is privy to some seriously good eats.

Our annual dining guide provides a peek into many of the plates that make up 30-A dining. We hope you enjoy reading about them as much as we've enjoyed researching.

Until next issue, keep your appetite large and don't be afraid to try new things.

Cheers,

Miles K. Neiman

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Food by
Decadent

dining



723 Whiskey Bravo: Cool, Casual, Coastal

BY TRACEY M. HAWKINS

Community and family are important to Victoria and Skip Moore. This is evident when you walk into 723 Whiskey Bravo, their labor-of-love restaurant and rooftop bar in Seagrove Beach, which opened in 2012. Named after the tail number on their Cirrus SR22 plane, (that number itself a combination of their July 23 wedding anniversary and their favorite letters from the aviation alphabet), 723 Whiskey Bravo's story is personal and romantic. When Skip and Victoria came across the seaside property on a beach run one morning, they knew instantly that it was just the perfect spot for which they had been searching, and purchased it within three weeks. In addition to the restaurant, the property, which Skip and Victoria call the "Whiskey Bravo Campus", also features the boutique Shops of Old Seagrove, converted from the beautiful, little, historic cottages they preserved from the original property.

From the uniqueness of the elliptical mahogany bar, built by custom millwork company E F San Juan to evoke the shape of a Chris Craft boat, to the personal sports memorabilia and big-screen TVs projecting all of your favorite sports games, to the glorious sunset views from the rooftop bar named after their favorite musical artist James Taylor's song *The Roof*, this cool, casual, and coastal local hot spot offers something for everyone who enters through the inviting portal. The Moores have beautifully incorporated many aspects of local community, including a vibrant mural of a plane painted by local artist Andy Saczynski on one wall of the rooftop patio where local patrons and out-of-town guests alike gather around the cozy bonfire pits.

Featuring a diverse menu, 723 Whiskey Bravo's delicious cuisine offers something for every taste palate as well. Among many other delectable choices, the menu boasts steaks cooked to perfection, fresh, local seafood, burgers and wings for game day or anytime, and the restaurant's signature Fried Mac and Cheese Sticks. Perfect for casual dining or special occasions, the food at 723 Whiskey Bravo is cause enough for celebration.

This 4,500 square foot establishment is the ideal location for event hosting. Celebrities have sought the warmth and welcome of 723 Whiskey Bravo. For example, Luke Bryant's wife once hosted his birthday party here, and professional baseball player David Ross (former catcher for the Atlanta Braves and the Chicago Cubs) hosted a special event here as well.

Skip and Victoria are actively involved in a number of charities and they are proud of the fundraisers the restaurant has hosted and the work they have contributed.



Grilled Local Grouper



Rooftop dining overlooking the Gulf of Mexico

The Moores have flown missions for Angel Flight and have hosted a fundraiser for the charity at the restaurant. Angel Flight was created by pilots who believe in the importance and benefits of volunteering. It is a non-profit organization that arranges free transportation for legitimate, charitable, medically-related needs and treatments. Another fundraising event at 723 Whiskey Bravo raised half-a-million dollars for the Gary Sinise Foundation. Founded by the actor Gary Sinise, the foundation is a public charity serving and honoring American military service members, veterans, first responders, and their families.

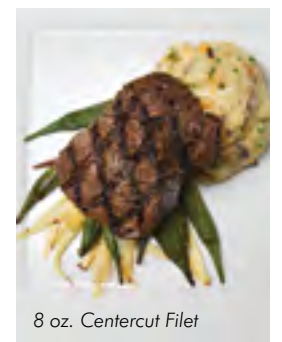


Firepit gathering space

Most recently, Victoria, Skip, and their 723 Whiskey Bravo family and friends have raised over \$50,000 for the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC). ECCAC strives to help children in Okaloosa and Walton counties who have suffered abuse and/or neglect, to raise awareness about the subject, and to protect against and prevent future child abuse. Skip and Victoria met Julie Hurst-Porterfield, the CEO of ECCAC, at a fundraising event for the charity and knew immediately that they wanted to become involved. The Moores came up with the idea of creating a stuffed-animal likeness of Riley: an adorable, 12-year old Maltese



Victoria Salad



8 oz. Centercut Filet

who serves as one of the beloved therapy dogs working with and comforting the children at ECCAC, to offer their restaurant patrons. Now, when you dine at 723 Whiskey Bravo, you will be greeted by this stuffed-animal version of Riley on your table. For a donation of \$20 or more, you can then take the little stuffed dog home with you and know that you have contributed to the life of a child whose recovery is being served by ECCAC.

723 Whiskey Bravo is located at 3031 E. Co. Hwy., 30A, Seagrove Beach, FL 32459. Days and hours change seasonally, for the latest, refer to the website: www.723whiskeybravo.com. Contact: (850) 213-0015 or info@723whiskeybravo.com. For special events: events@723whiskeybravo.com.

Black Bear Bread Company is Expanding

BY MARY WELCH

There's a saying that if something is working; make it bigger and better! That's exactly what the owners of the super popular Grayton Beach Black Bear Bread Co. bakery are doing: opening Bar Room, adding another dimension with additional seating, an expanded menu, and wine and craft beer.

Bar Room, located next door to the Black Bear Bread Co., features an enhanced menu, including sustainably harvested farm-raised Gulf Coast oysters, wine-driven snacks & sharables, cheese, shrimp cocktail, beef tartare, charcuterie, and a wine bar showcasing natural and biodynamic wines. The two eateries work side-by-side as patrons can get Black Bear's menu all day, while the Bar Room's menu and bar opens at 11 a.m. Both close at 5 p.m.

The Bar Room is the natural extension of Black Bear Bread Co's success and the ambitions of Chef/Proprietor Phillip McDonald and Proprietor Dave Rauschkolb. Rauschkolb relates, "We've known each other a couple of decades; we're surfing buddies. I've always wanted to collaborate on a restaurant with Phil because I was always impressed with his talent, leadership, and creativity. It was a natural progression to move forward with a restaurant venture and I already had this building."

The stars aligned. McDonald moved back to his hometown and decided to open a cafe/bakery. "The bakery niche hadn't been filled... well... not with the type of bread we wanted and liked, such as sourdough bread that you get on the west coast."

They opened 1½ years ago (the day of the eclipse) and the café was quickly embraced. The goal was to make freshly-baked naturally leavened bread, with seasonal produce that was sensibly sourced. The café is perfect for a quick breakfast, lunch on-the-go, or lingering to have a lively conversation or do some work. Of course, a huge part of its success is the outstanding food and baked goods. There's a good reason for that! Debbie Swenerton, head baker of the Black Bear Bread Co., was named a semifinalist in the 29th annual James Beard Restaurant and Chefs Awards in the Outstanding Baker category.



Dave Rauschkolb and Phillip McDonald

While the pair is grateful for the community's support, they are quick to point out the "amazing creative team" working to make it all happen. McDonald's wife, Madra, handles PR and social networking, Jake Meyer helps with logos and branding, while Rauschkolb's wife Carol and Libby Baker collaborated on the interior designs. "You never can do it all by yourselves and we had a really great team. I think that's one of the reasons why we were so busy straight out of the gate. In fact, Black Bear Bread Co. is so popular it will open a restaurant at the new Hyatt Place Sandestin at Grand Boulevard in Miramar Beach.

Black Bear's all-day menu includes steel cut oatmeal, alai bowl, egg and cheese biscuit, tartines, soups and sandwiches. Accompanying these culinary delights is Stumptown Coffee Roasters, a cult favorite for coffee aficionados.

"We're expanding," says McDonald. "We're operating a nice bar and will offer natural and biodynamic wines. We'll have a variety of wine types, as well as wines from Slovenia, Germany, Italy, the U.S. and Canary Islands. It'll be a fun and educational bar."

McDonald is proud that they will offer wines with fewer added ingredients and minimal intervention from winemakers. "Many of our wines will not even be filtered and will have no sugars, no additives or minimal sulphates. "I really believe that wines should come with an ingredient label. Sometimes wines have a lot of things in them that aren't good for you. It's good to have clarity



Oysters on the Half Shell



Wine & Champagne Offerings

about what you're drinking." Price points for wines will range from \$10 to \$17 a glass and \$25 to \$150 for a bottle.

The menus for both sides of the eatery change with the seasons and McDonald is always integrating new things. In the upcoming weeks, patrons should expect tomatoes. "Tomatoes are getting ready to come in and we'll be swimming in tomatoes," McDonald laughs. "It's the produce and ingredients that inspires and motivates us."

While it may seem that the 5 p.m. closing is a bit early, don't worry. The Bar Room will be available for private parties and catered events. The combined rooms will seat about 100 for an event; the Bar Room about 40 to 50.

"It's so beautiful at night and perfect for an event space," Rauschkolb says.

Black Bear Bread Co. is located at Logan Lane, Unit G, Santa Rosa Beach, FL, 32459. Phone is (850) 213-4528. Hours are Monday - Saturday: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.; The Bar Room: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The website is www.blackbearbreadco.com.

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b.f.f.

BY RYAN LOFTIS

You've been enjoying a beautiful 30-A summer day, and now it's time for refreshment. A frozen cocktail sounds great, but you don't want to spend the time it would take to go to a restaurant. Well, thanks to b.f.f., the new walk-up bar located next to Great Southern Cafe in Seaside, you don't have to. Place your order at the counter (Astroturf has been laid in front for your comfort), and you can have your drink and be on your way in approximately 30 seconds.

"A lot of people walk around and stroll Seaside, and they come up to Great Southern Cafe, grab a drink, and go walking again," says Dan Tinghitella, director of operations for Jim Shirley Enterprises, which owns b.f.f. "What we wanted to do was open a little business there to be able to provide frozen cocktails that people could come up and grab and stroll around town with. b.f.f. really plays to what makes 30-A so special, which is it's light, it's easy, it fits right into vacation, right into the coastal lifestyle. What attracts people to 30-A is how laid back it is."

Jim Shirley Enterprises' presence has already been felt in the four restaurants, including Great Southern Cafe, it owns in the 30-A area. Jim Shirley, the company's owner, is an acclaimed chef who has owned restaurants for over a quarter century. Florida Travel and Life magazine called his signature dish, Grits à Ya Ya, "the best Southern dish in the state of Florida". Former U.S. Congressman Jeff Miller so enjoyed the dish that as a state representative, he took it to an event on Capitol Hill, giving more than 1,000 dignitaries an opportunity to taste it. "b.f.f. is very much in alignment with Jim Shirley Enterprises in that the quality is unmatched, it's fun, and we use great ingredients," Tinghitella says. "We're excited to carry that on."

The opportunity to carry it on arose in March 2018, when Seaside officials asked Shirley to put the vacant space next to Great Southern Cafe to use. Coincidentally, his company wanted another new bar in the area, and the possibility of turning that space in what Tinghitella calls the "epicenter of 30-A" was instantly attractive. Tinghitella credits Landmark Design of Santa Rosa Beach for "creating a hip, modern, and inviting feel to the business — a place that everybody is drawn to." Meanwhile, he and Shirley spent approximately a month creating the menu, and only recipes that were somewhat unique made the cut. Not that it was all work and no play: "It was a lot of fun sampling frozen drinks."

The bar's name offers a clue as to what's on the menu: b.f.f. stands for bushwackers, frosé, and frozens. In fact, b.f.f. is the only bar in Seaside to serve



The b.f.f. Bar

bushwackers in a quick-serve environment (like Shirley, the drink hails from Pensacola). Every bar needs a signature drink, and b.f.f.'s is called the b.f.f. It consists of vanilla ice cream, bourbon, coconut milk, and, most importantly, banana. Other drinks will be rotated on and off the menu — vodka orange creamsicles, frozen Kentucky Mules, and frozen mojitos are all planned for spring — but the b.f.f., bushwackers, and frosé are permanent fixtures.

Customers' first chance to try b.f.f.'s menu came in the first week of November 2018. The timing was strategic: "We wanted to create a little bit of buzz and open during the Seeing Red Wine Festival," Tinghitella

Every bar needs a signature drink, and b.f.f.'s is called the b.f.f. It consists of vanilla ice cream, bourbon, coconut milk, and, most importantly, banana.



The BFF current lineup - Bushwacker, Frosé and b.f.f.

says. The bar was then open for the week of Thanksgiving and the week of Christmas, giving plenty more people the opportunity to discover it.

The reaction of those early customers gives Tinghitella high expectations for when b.f.f. reopens March 1. "I think it's going to be incredible, especially given the great response we've had in the fall and even during Christmas week. When the sun's out until 8 and it's warm, we expect to be busy all day and all night."

b.f.f. is located at 83 Central Square. For more information, visit its Instagram page, @bffeverybody. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to at least 9:00 p.m.



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Café Thirty-A

BY MARY WELCH

Harriet Crommelin just “does her own thing. We’re not too trendy.” And that is exactly what her customers at Cafe Thirty-A have liked since 1995. Cafe Thirty-A, located on E. Scenic Highway 30 A in Seagrove Beach, has been pleasing locals and tourists alike with its fresh ingredients, well-cooked food and a wait staff that makes the dining experience feel like you are family.

Crommelin didn’t start out in the restaurant business. A native of Montgomery, AL., she worked in real estate and would visit the Emerald Coast on vacation. When the real estate market crashed, she threw her hat in the restaurant business and opened Kat & Harry’s with a friend. “Well, I had no money and no restaurant experience and that was it. Within four years Kat left to go out on her own and I realized I liked to entertain and cook. I liked the restaurant business.”

A customer told her about Seaside and she checked it out. “I saw all these lovely people with money. They were well dressed and their children were well behaved. I thought, ‘These are my kind of folks.’” She found some property near Seaside and opened up the restaurant serving “eclectic or New American. A little bit of everything. We change the menu quite often. Of course, we always have a lot of seafood.”

Her customers are not only loyal and appreciative of Cafe Thirty-A quality but are quick to sing their praises. One customer noted that the lobster mac-and-cheese provided an “out of body experience,” while another said it was a “pitch perfect dinner.”

Among her specialties are Prince Edward Island Mussels, grilled octopus, fish stew, oven roasted wild king salmon, smoked pork chop and shrimp, Maine lobster in paradise, and clam puttanesca. She also serves a variety of wood oven fired pizzas.

Of course, the latest trend is craft cocktails and Cafe Thirty-A offers a wide variety of alcoholic concoctions, including the James Bond (gin, vodka, millet, and a lemon twist), the Hummingbird (prosecco, St. Germain, club soda, and a lemon twist) and the Seagrove Beach Breeze (Smirnoff cranberry, peach schnapps, cranberry, and orange juice).

“There is nothing better than a good cocktail,” she says. Every Tuesday and Thursday there are \$5 ‘tinis at the bar all night. Of course, it’s not one’s every day martini. There is the Berry Blue ‘Tini, the French Kiss, French Martini, and the Strawberry Lemonade ‘Tini (among others).



Sesame Crusted Rare Yellowfin Tuna



“Well, the key is to serve good food. We’ve done that from day one, and we just took off. I run the place thinking about how I would like this as a customer. I believe in that and I hope everyone feels that.”

Opened in 1995, Cafe Thirty-A has counted on its loyal customers to get it through economic downturns, but not with some adjusting by Crommelin. “Back in ’07 we had to lower our prices and then we started a special menu. We also opened a 5 p.m. rather than 6 because we found people wanted to eat and still enjoy the outdoors at night. We have a buy one, get one free from five to six o’clock. It builds up the place.”

She’s learned a few things since opening such as when she screened in the front porch. It seemed like a good idea at the time; but not only was it so hot, it



attracted yellow flies and just ate up all the waiting diners. “It was bad,” she remembers with a laugh. Instead she went to Plan B; and expanded and enclosed the upstairs deck. Called the Fishbone Bar, it has a funky, casual atmosphere that can be used year-round, and offers spectacular Gulf views and a full-service bar.

It also can accommodate between 25 to 80 persons for private parties, weddings, and special events. “Best decision I ever made,” she says.

Crommelin says she has no plans to change her winning formula. “We’re just going with the flow. There’s a lot of businesses opening near us, which is helping, and our local business has been very loyal. I don’t have kids, so my staff and customers really are my family.”



Maine Lobster in Paradise

Café Thirty-A is located at 3899 E. Scenic Highway 30A, Seagrove Beach, FL. 32459. Open daily for dinner at 5 p.m. Call (850) 231-2166 or go to www.cafethirtya.com.



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Christiano's

BY COURTNEY MURRAY

Family is the core value of the locally owned and operated restaurant in Santa Rosa Beach, Christiano's. Having just celebrated their ten year anniversary, owner Chris Chirum finds himself reminiscing on the beginning. Over a decade ago Chris and his wife Rene were getting the restaurant off the ground with two children underfoot, and they attribute a lot of their success to the support from their families. Chris says that they wouldn't be in business without Rene's daily hard work and love.

Their family has grown, thrived, and evolved together in the restaurant business. Their children, Grace (16) and Luke (19), were raised working in the restaurant and have learned to do all of the jobs in the business. They've witnessed what hard work can accomplish and that there is no success in cutting corners.

It's the delicious food that brings you in, but it's the little personal touches that keep you coming back. When you walk through the door of Christiano's you immediately feel a sense of warmth. The scent of a simmering tomato sauce wafts towards the entrance and laughter fills the air. The vibe is cozy and friendly; you feel like one of the family. As you are seated at a table amongst family and friends, you may be so lucky to be seated at the original table from Chris's childhood.

With hundreds of restaurants up and down the Emerald Coast, you have to stand out not only to stay in business, but to have repeat patrons. In a world where restaurants have become all about who has the trendiest cuisine and most unusual food pairings, Christiano's decides to do the opposite. They focus on simple, high quality ingredients with amazing flavors. Forget the dehydrated locally foraged truffle soufflé and bring on the home cooked lasagna. With recipes originating in Calabria, Italy and then passed down the generations, you are certain to remember your culinary experience.

Chef Chris Chirum was trained in culinary arts at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. His early career specialized in French cuisine, but the foundation and skillset he established carries on to his everyday meal preparation. It's all about focusing on simplistic goodness. Chef attributes the incredible flavors of his recipes to California grown garlic, quality olive oil, and the art of seasoning. Many people under appreciate the importance of salt and pepper and finding the perfect balance. "I was taught as a young culinarian that the difference between a good restaurant and an OK restaurant is salt and pepper," says Chirum. Simple as that.

As a family friendly establishment, the classic spaghetti and meatballs is one of the top selling menu

With recipes originating in Calabria, Italy and then passed down the generations, you are certain to remember your culinary experience.

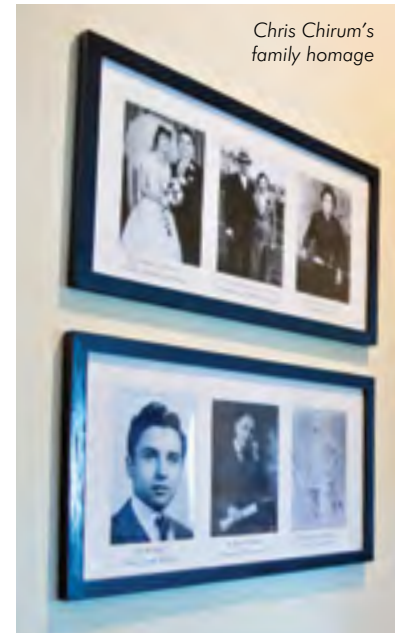


Lasagna



items. In addition to Italian favorites like manicotti and ravioli, Christiano's offers an exciting menu that incorporates local seafood freshly caught in the Gulf of Mexico. The Snapper Elizabeth has consistently been a favorite dish: perfectly sautéed and topped with jumbo lump crab and almonds laced in the restaurant's famous white butter sauce with European green beans and rice.

Christiano's has a knack for taking a basic ingredient, like zucchini, and elevating it. The Zucchini Ernesto appetizer takes delicate ribbons of zucchini and fries it with garlic and Romano batter, creating a decadent crisp. Dip one ribbon in the homemade tomato basil sauce and you are truly in heaven. If you can spare an inch of room after your meal, dessert should not be overlooked. You can't go wrong with Italian favorites like the delicious cannoli or the sweet spumoni, but if you are really wanting to indulge your taste buds, try the chef recommended coconut cream pie.



Chris Chirum's family homage



Shrimp Tuscan

Consistency is their key to success. "We continue to live day to day, taking each day as it comes," says Chef, "trying our best to provide each guest an enjoyable dining experience and earn their return visit. We really enjoy the locals, as well as yearly returning guests, asking about our kids and commenting how they have watched them grow up. Hope they'll be saying that about our grandkids one day." If you're looking to feed your body and your soul, become one of the family and come dine at Christiano's.

Christiano's is open for dinner and take out Tuesday-Saturday starting at 5pm. The restaurant is available for private parties and daytime events. With the holidays right around the corner, consider Christiano's for your corporate luncheon or family gathering. They can also provide on-site and off-site catering services. Please call (850) 267-2185 or visit www.meatballsrb.com for more information.

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Jay Eichelberger of Crêpes du Soleil

BY MARY WELCH

Walk around Seaside and you'll see people laughing, listening to music, texting, and eating. They will be chowing down on fries, ice cream cones, shaved ice, smoothies, and sandwiches: grilled cheese, hot dogs, BBQ; you name it. But something was missing from the scene and Jay Eichelberger and his wife Liz, decided to fill the culinary void.

Now residents and visitors can delight in a crêpe as they enjoy the outdoors, since the Eichelbergers opened Crêpes du Soleil in Airstream Row. They serve sweet crêpes with lots of Chantilly cream, or savory crêpes that could contain eggs, ham, chicken, or vegetarian options.

Jay recalls, "I had spent my summers in Seaside. Liz and I really loved watching those Airstreams and thought it would be cool to do something like that. We didn't know what it took to have one of our own but we were intrigued enough to talk to Seaside and go through the process."

"We came up with the idea of crêpes and pitched the concept of a rotisserie with crêpes," says Liz. "But the Seaside folks gravitated toward crêpes and wanted us to solely focus on them. I was shocked when we were approved. It was round after round of talking and applications and tastings. It was a long journey. But I think they saw that crêpes are fun with so many sweet and savory options."

There was one problem: crêpes usually are a dish that requires sitting and eating with a knife and a fork. "That was an issue," Jay concedes. "That was the one thing we had to work on because Seaside is such a walkabout town. So, we made our crêpes in cones so that you can walk and eat. It's easy. You can do the knife and fork thing but you can also just get one and keep on moving. Walking, to me, is what Seaside is all about."

The concept was developed with Chef Rob Mason; a chef from Charlotte with Kre8 Experiences, a catering and specialty event business; who catered the



The Peppered Pig Crepe & Chantilly Dream Crepe with Frosé

They serve sweet crêpes with lots of Chantilly cream, or savory crêpes that could contain eggs, ham, chicken, or vegetarian options.



Jay, who says he'll have a savory crêpe for lunch ("It's more of a meal than a snack"), wants to explore different special offerings. "I'd like to put seafood in our crêpes, a peanut butter and jelly crêpe and a pumpkin pie crêpe. If any really hit and are successful, they'll be added to the menu."

Crêpes du Soleil opened Labor Day 2018 so this is will be their first high season. They planned on opening earlier but naturally little bumps along the way delayed the opening. First, they had to find an Airstream and then retrofit it, including taking out the shag carpet and 8-track tape player. "Totally out of the 70's," Jay laughs. Next came electrical wiring and



putting in the crêpe makers. Getting the liquor license and other various permits also took more time than expected.

But from day one, there were people in line. "We opened on Labor Day and was extremely busy," he says. Then another setback came with Hurricane Michael.

"It was just terrifying but it could have been worst," Jay says. "We had just opened and we didn't know what was going to happen. It was — and still is — devastating. There are people in Panama City and Mexico Beach still trying to get their lives together."

The couple are excited about their first full year in operations and seeing how the visitors respond to their crêpes. "It's just

insane how many people come to Seaside and Airstream Row. There is so much foot traffic, you can't beat it," says Jay. "It's fun and exciting and the merchants look out for each other. Seaside is an amazing community."

Crêpes du Soleil: 2215 E. Country Highway 30A, Airstream Row, Santa Rosa Beach, 32359. Open every day at 8:30 a.m. Closing times vary. Visit their website at www.crepesdusoleil.com

Eichelberger wedding's rehearsal dinner and goodbye breakfast. Jay says, "He is the culinary mastermind behind the recipes."

They offer several options but Nutella is king, especially when paired with strawberries or bananas. Liz says. "That's more of a 'classic' crêpe that people think of, but we also offer lunch and breakfast crêpes. The most popular savory crêpes are Le Classique; with egg, ham and melted Swiss cheese; and the Bonjour breakfast with scrambled egg, bacon, fresh tomato and Gruyère cheese. They're all pretty interesting and we also have frosé (frozen rosé wine) and a chocolate mousse in a crêpe."



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Welcome to Edward's

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

While the menu might seem short compared to many other restaurants in the area, with their multiple pages of options listing dish after dish, Edward's Fine Food & Wine in Rosemary Beach is not so much limiting their selections as curating them. They are focused on their cuisine, using each plate as a canvas to showcase the beauty of the seafood, meats, and produce that they source locally, as well as the undeniable talent of the chef who stands at the helm of their kitchen.

Purchased in 2016 by father/daughter team Rick Spell and Christy Spell Terry, Edward's is the perfect example of what Southern coastal cuisine can be in the right hands, in the right atmosphere. Every dish is inspired by the region, using such iconic Southern ingredients as Andouille sausage, grits, and — of course — locally-caught fish and seafood. These elements are the basis, the foundation, the flavors that are elevated through technique and enhanced by the other ingredients on the plate; and as Executive Chef Josh Smith proves with every dish, simplicity, focus, and harmonious balance is all it takes to make a limited menu seem unlimited in flavor.

Having joined the family at Edward's in 2017, Smith's own talents in the kitchen is in good company, as his team shares the same passion for what they do. They are indeed a family, working in a family-owned, family-run restaurant, whose managers truly want their employees to know they are appreciated for all they bring to the table — and it shows. "Entertaining and feeding our guests top-quality meals every night is what keeps us all motivated to do better, and we love watching our staff learn more and develop their skills every day," says Christy. "We're surrounded by talented superstars of the industry, and we definitely want to showcase the degree of ability that they bring to our restaurant. We want folks to work hard, but we also want them to love what they do, have fun at work, and feel that we value them like family."

The family feel extends to guests, as one of the major concepts behind Edward's is to offer elevated Southern coastal fare and fine wine in an environment that is both beautiful and intimate, in a courtyard setting where the sounds of live music offer the soundtrack to

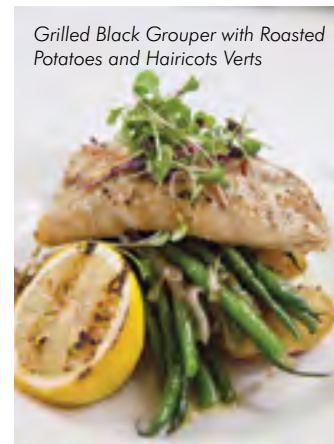


Patio Dining



view of Main Street, and newly updated interior and exterior spaces are every bit as warm as they are elegant. "It's extremely beautiful, but it's also cozy, and it really embodies the feeling we want our guests to have when they dine with us," Christy says. "It's all complementary, from the food and the wine to the live music we feature and the atmosphere. Our chef and his team put out top-notch food every single night; and our general manager, our in-house sommelier Kristy Johnston, and our front-of-the-house team will make you feel like you're dining in our home. We want everyone to feel welcome. And if you love a unique wine selection or want to expand on your wine tastes, we're definitely the place to dine."

Naturally, the perfect glass of wine needs the perfect dish, and Edward's certainly offers its share. Featuring jumbo lump crabmeat served with house-made honey lemon mayo, Edward's Crab Cakes are one of their signature items; their golden crust just crisp enough to provide balance to the softness of the tender meat inside. For a fresh, acidic burst of freshness with the perfect amount of richness, the Classic Tuna Tartare brings together the flavors of lemon, capers, cornichons, shallots,



Grilled Black Grouper with Roasted Potatoes and Hairicots Verts

and Dijon, topped with the sunny yellow blanket of yolk from a farm fresh egg served with crusty Tuscan bread. The Capellini Pomodoro brings the taste of Italy to the coast, with a sauce of roasted tomatoes, garlic, fresh basil, Parmesan, and dried chili over perfectly al dente pasta. Turning its focus to the sea, the Simply Grilled Grouper pairs a tender grouper filet with haricot verts and shallots, accompanied by crisp fingerling potatoes and finished with a garnish of grilled lemon, caper berries, and a drizzle of lemon vinaigrette.



Deviled Eggs with Bacon and Smoked Trout Roe

the sunsets painting the sky most nights. Sidewalk seating offers the perfect every dish, and every glass of wine, Edward's Fine Food & Wine offers irrefutable proof that simplicity in focus and excellence will make people remember your name — and Edward's is one name that people will never forget.

With every course,

Edward's Fine Food & Wine is located at 66 Main Street, Rosemary Beach, Florida, 32461. Open 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Sunday - Thursday; 5:00 - 9:30 p.m. Friday - Saturday. For more information, call (850) 231-0550 or visit www.edwards30a.com.

Fun Dining in WaterColor

FOOW combines fresh, locally inspired cuisine with stunning gulf views

BY TESS FARMER

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Matt Moore



FOOW (formerly Fish Out of Water) has long been synonymous with fresh, locally inspired cuisine that celebrates Florida's best. From its brand-new dining room and focus on a locally sourced menu, to its spectacular waterfront views and coastal-casual atmosphere, FOOW serves up an authentic taste of the gulf in an ambiance that embodies the WaterColor spirit.

Opened in June 2018 as a new dining concept showcasing a more coastal-casual menu, FOOW (pronounced "foo") is located at the AAA Four Diamond and Forbes Four-Star rated WaterColor Inn & Resort. Since its opening, FOOW has received a AAA Three Diamond rating, Florida Trend's "Golden Spoon Award", and a Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor.

I caught up with FOOW's Director of Food & Beverage/Executive Chef Matt Moore, to find out more about what influences his menu and makes FOOW one of the top places to dine on 30-A. Named "Chef of the Year" in 2017 by the American Culinary Federation, Chef Moore has more than a decade of experience leading acclaimed food and beverage programs at luxury properties. Prior to joining FOOW, Moore was executive chef at Nemacon Woodlands Resort in Farmington, Pennsylvania.

What influences the types of dishes you bring to the table?

We are driven by the coast and influenced by our southern roots in terms of where we are located and what grows seasonally. We have sourced everything from lettuces to wagyu beef as close to our region as possible. We have a broker who retrieves produce from five stops on the way to the Panhandle from Louisiana and brings us a fresh arsenal of options twice a week, only two days out of the ground at most. Local, regional, and Southern-

Two Dog Farms, JV Produce Brokers, Wheeler Farms, Water Street Seafood, Inland Seafood, and Destin Ice Seafood Market.

What's your favorite FOOW dish and why?

My Chef de Cuisine and I stand behind all of the menu, but I think I'm most proud of the new addition, the FOOW toasts. It's funny we started this journey making sourdough in-house asking ourselves whether or not we could sustain that type of bread in such a small facility and limited bakery resources. We soon decided it was worth the result and just figured out the logistics. We offer four different toasts, from a play on tomato bruschetta with a local sweet grass dairy cheese, to gulf shrimp and avocado, pimento cheese (can't get more southern than that), and lastly a Benton's Ham and collard toast, which is amazing!

What would you like a guest to take away from their dining experience?

FOOW is southern hospitality at its best. We want you to feel like you're at an old-school café where you see familiar faces and you never worry about what to wear. We invite flip flops and guests directly off the beach, yet we keep the integrity of what we stand for. As a service team and culinary staff, we just want to see the smiles on

our guests' faces when they take the first sip or taste the first bite. They laugh, converse, and sing to the live music. Then when the guests leave I enjoy having them tap me on the shoulder to tell me about their amazing experience... That's what FOOW represents.

What is your team's best asset?

Energy and cultural diversity is what sets our team apart. We invite students from all over the world to work with us — from three months to over a year in some instances. The respect we have for each other in the kitchen directly translates to always succeeding in both food and service. Our cooks and service staff become friends and lifelong colleagues. Our staff cooks with love and that also sums up how we are able to succeed, making 90 percent of our items in house.

FOOW is open to the public daily. Their happy hour, from 3-6 p.m., is not to be missed for live music (seasonally, from 6-9 p.m.) and sunset views while sipping on one of the restaurant's inventive Rum Diary cocktails. They can also accommodate private parties in a more intimate dining setting by the restaurant's wine cellar.

For more information, go to www.foow30a.com or follow them at www.instagram.com/foow30a and www.facebook.com/FOOW30a. FOOW does not accept reservations. Open daily from 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. Seasonal hours: Sept. 9 - Jan. 1 (Tuesday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.); Jan. 2-16 & Jan. 21 - Feb. 12 (Closed); Feb. 13 - March 1 (Tuesday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.)

FOOWBar: Open daily: 11:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. Happy Hour: 3 – 6 p.m. Seasonal hours: Closed Mondays; daily from 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.



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Do You Want to Behave or Misbehave? George's Menu Offers Both

BY MARY WELCH

Do you want to “behave” or “misbehave”? Or do you want to be a little bit of both? At George's at Alys Beach, you can choose.

George's is an upscale, casual restaurant that brings regional coastal flair to Alys Beach. What makes their menu truly unique is that it is divided: Behave and Misbehave. The Behave section features organic, spa-inspired dishes such as jerk crusted Gulf snapper, seared sea scallops and angel hair with kale arugula pesto, while the Misbehave side offers stuffed sea bass, certified angus ribeye and pistachio crusted rack of lamb if decadent is your preference.

“George's is a quaint place where you walk in and feel cozy, like you're coming into someone's home,” says Christy Spell Terry, managing partner of the Spell Restaurant Group. “Our menu is centered around the flavors and ingredients available on the Gulf Coast; everything is fresh, organic, and locally sourced.”

The chef is Camille Withall, who was born and reared in the Philippines and joined George's in 2014 as a sous chef and advanced to Executive Chef in 2015.

Some of the most popular menu items are the lobster quesadilla, grouper sandwich, spicy salt & pepper shrimp, the catch of the day, and the sesame crab & avocado salad. There is seating for about 100 with two side porches and a two-story upper deck, which offers a great view of the Gulf perfect while waiting for a table.

Twice a year the menu is altered a bit with the fall/winter menu being a little heavier in substance. As many ingredients as possible are from local merchants like WaterStreet Seafood, Buddy Gandy's Seafood, Southern Craft Creamery, and City Produce. “We try to get the most out of what's fresh, seasonal, and of high quality. We are very lucky that we have a great abundance of seafood locally and fresh produce that we get weekly not only here but from Louisiana and Alabama as well,” she says.

George's is one of the Spell Group's seven restaurants: six of which are along the Panhandle, the other in Memphis, TN. Locally, the restaurants are: George's at Alys Beach; La Cocina in Seacrest; Saltwater Grill in Panama City Beach; La Crema Tapas & Chocolate, and Edward's Fine Food & Wine, both in Rosemary Beach, and Grits & Grind in Seacrest Beach.

The Spell Restaurant Group was formed when Christy, an accountant, and her father, Rick, a director at Raymond James in Memphis, bought a sports bar, Brookhaven Pub and Grill, as a side business. The two corporate types found they enjoyed the restaurant

“We don't just take orders or cook food, we want our guests to have a whole experience.”



Cornbread Bread Pudding



Rabbit Rilletes



Stuffed Sea Bass

business and in 2015 they were approached to purchase George's and La Cocina. She eventually realized she couldn't keep her corporate job and handle the restaurants.

“I was really drawn to the restaurant side, so I quit my day job,” she says. “I liked the challenges and dealing with people. It wasn't boring and there was something new every day.” For about a year she traveled between Memphis and the Gulf Coast; (acquiring two more restaurants in the process); until she

and her boyfriend Drew Terry went to 30-A for the summer and decided not to leave. “From a business standpoint, it made sense. But, honestly, we really love it here and we looked at each other and asked why we would want to leave. The answer was, we didn't want to.”

By 2017 the group had six Florida restaurants and one in Memphis. Christy married Terry, who now works for the company handling facility management and the administrative side.

Her husband is the only one with restaurant experience, but Christy says they run the restaurants like a business and everyone does their job. “We're always looking to enhance things to make them better. We're putting money into the business and give our team the best tools they need to do their jobs. Our staff knows there are a lot of eating choices, so we make sure everyone feels like a member of the family. We take care of our guests above and beyond.”

Walk into George's — or any of their restaurants — and the experience will be the same, she says. “We don't just take orders or cook food, we want our guests to have a whole experience. An experience of having the freshest, best ingredients that are locally sourced. We want them to feel the love and attention and always remember George's. We want them to come back and back.”

Open daily for Lunch: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Dinner: 5-9 p.m. 30 Castle Harbour Dr., Alys Beach, FL. 32461; (850) 641-0017 www.georgesatalysbeach.com.

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Grayton Seafood Company

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

When Grayton Seafood Company first opened its doors to 30-A in summer 2015, owner Kenny Griner had a plan to present fresh, locally caught seafood in a restaurant driven to return to simpler times: before the development of Seaside when there was little besides long stretches of untouched beach and paved roads were nowhere to be found. “I wanted to create an old-school atmosphere,” explains Griner, who also owned the highly successful Chet’s Seafood Restaurant in Pensacola before shifting his focus to 30-A.

That old-school atmosphere pairs well with the cuisine with its New Orleans inspired flavor, which is most decidedly present in dishes like the Fried Green Tomatoes topped with their signature Shrimp Remoulade sauce; Crab Cake Eggs Benedict served with Cajun-spiced poached eggs; a Sunday Brunch feature; and their famous crawfish boils in the spring. “New Orleans has always been like a second home, and it’s hard not to be influenced by the culture and some of the best food in the world.” says Griner.

Griner went on to bring on partner Tabitha Miller in 2018. Seeing how the restaurant has prospered over the past four years, it’s clear that their vision has been brought to life in the best way. Their dedication to Gulf-to-table, scratch made coastal fare with that NOLA flair is something that their guests connect to, as is the warm reception they receive. “One of the things that people love most about this place is Tabitha, and whether you’re coming to eat with us for the first time or the hundredth, everyone’s a local here and greeted with a genuine welcome — and probably a Tabitha hug!” notes Griner with a wide smile.

Supported by what Miller and Griner consider to be an “awesome, dedicated, professional, and fun staff,” Grayton Seafood delivers beyond expectation, tempting diners with signature dishes that take full advantage of all that the local waters have to offer. Still, even the most beautiful product is nothing if not entrusted to the proper hands, and it takes only one bite to confirm that Miller and Griner have indeed found the perfect person to man the pans and drive the kitchen.

Keeping the dishes on point, new teammate Chef Shelley Thomas brings her culinary prowess in each plate she creates, showcasing the skills and techniques she learned at Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University of Denver with every component she adds, every flavor profile she highlights. And some might say that her

studies in English and Art History at Birmingham could be considered as a proving point for her level of creativity, something that truly serves as an asset to her role as executive chef.

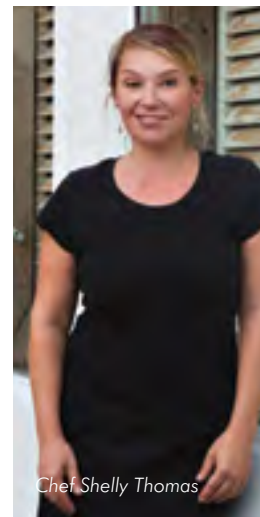
A stickler for making everything from scratch using only the very best locally caught seafood, the freshest produce, and the finest meats, Chef Shelley



Creole Linguini



Fried Crab Claws



Chef Shelley Thomas

has diners lining up for such favorites as the Pan Seared Crab Cakes: an abundance of crabmeat perfectly encased in a golden crust and served on a bed of fluffy, aromatic garlic mashed potatoes served with sautéed vegetables and drizzled with a lemon butter cream sauce. Featuring plump, sautéed shrimp and crawfish with bell peppers and onions in a creamy Alfredo sauce, the Creole Linguini is a new twist on the traditional Italian dish, serving up flavors reminiscent of the Bayou in each bite. Bringing even more of the heat, the Seafood Gumbo is a bowl full of soul that keeps guests coming back for more; and the Fresh Local Catch is always a chart topper worth tasting. “What we do here and what we create in the kitchen is a lot of work, but we’re proud of the level of quality we achieve in doing that,” says Miller, who, by all accounts, is the heart and soul of the restaurant.

Naturally, the plates they serve need the perfect pairing. The restaurant also features a wide range of excellent wines, champagnes, beers, and local brews from

Idyll Hounds, Grayton Beer, and Oyster City Brewing Co. served on tap. “It’s all part of creating that laid back, old-school atmosphere where people can relax and just enjoy the food, the drinks, and the company,” Griner contends.

With all that they have to offer, it’s little wonder that Grayton Seafood Company has people on the hook and ready to be reeled in.

Grayton Seafood Company is located at 50 Uptown Grayton Circle #1, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. For more information about hours and the menu, visit www.graytonseafood.com or call (850) 213-3683.

Satisfy Every Palate and Craving at The HUB

BY TRACEY M. HAWKINS



The lawn at The HUB



Macho Taco



The Charleston Burger

beer, and double-stack burgers with fries for only \$8!

The HUB can also provide space for and cater your own next event or party. A beautiful, screened-in

The HUB is the greatest backyard party of all time. Designed by DAG Architects and Lew Oliver, and unveiled on May 1, 2014, The HUB is a truly unique, festival-style entertainment destination and gathering-place; offering a delicious variety of restaurants, shopping opportunities, and events like outdoor concerts and movies on the lawn and in the central Pavilion. Situated on three acres of beautiful property along the 30-A bike path and located in front of WaterSound Beach and Prominence, The HUB is easily accessible by foot, bike, or golf cart. Here, parents can enjoy adult time with great food, cocktails, conversation, and live music, while children can have fun and freely explore the property and kids' activities.

At The HUB, you'll find food at the center of the daily festival celebrating friends and family, and the array of options will entice and please every palate:

Mile Marker Fifteen offers delicious burgers and sandwiches, dogs, and fresh salads.

Super Freeze will satisfy every craving for sweet, frozen treats with their hard- and soft-serve ice cream and shakes.

Local Smoke is the resident BBQ joint where you will find slow-smoked turkey, sausage, pork, and brisket delights accompanied by classic mac 'n cheese, potato salad, slaw, baked beans, and southern cucumber salad sides.

At **Buddy's Seafood Market**, the 30-A's seafood lovers will find fresh-caught grouper, shrimp, crab cakes, and gumbo.

Macho Taco brings the 30-A a unique, Mexican-inspired, soul food menu with crave-worthy options like

crispy mole wings, pork-belly taquitos, cauliflower taquitos, and frito pie.

CRUST Pizza Oven brings crispy-crust, traditional wood-fired pizzas to the party.

CRUST Po'Boy Shop serves fresh-baked pastries, breakfast sandwiches, and Amavida coffee in the morning, and New Orleans-style po'boys for lunch and dinner.

Dion's Bar and the **MM15 Bar** provide all of the signature cocktails, domestic and craft beers, and wines by the glass or bottle for your nightly entertainment.

Pineapple at The HUB will quench your thirst with fresh pineapple drinks and fruit smoothies.

No day in 30-A would be complete without one, or a few, of **Jack & Diane's New Orleans Style Snowballs**: traditional New Orleans icy treats of finely-shaved ice and cane sugar available in a dazzling assortment of fruity, sweet, and tart flavors.

All of the food and beverage vendors at The HUB are locally-owned and operated businesses and are an integral part of The HUB family and the 30-A culture.

For your entertainment throughout the fall, The HUB will present live music by local artists every Thursday, a DJ Dance Party every Friday, and college and NFL football on the Jumbotron and Pavilion TVs throughout the week. Thursday, September 5 will launch the fall season of live music and "Locals Night" where local patrons can sign up and receive a discount card. The card will secure 20% off, until March 1, 2020 at HUB bars and HUB-operated restaurants every Thursday, one free draft

porch adjacent to the main stage is the perfect spot to book private parties throughout the fall and winter; it even has its own bar and gas fireplace. The porch seats up to 50 comfortably and is ideal for casual gatherings, birthdays, anniversaries, and bridal and baby showers.

The Pavilion, on the other hand, is ideal for larger gatherings. It is screened and heated for cooler weather during the fall and winter.

The HUB can also cater and host your tailgate football game parties.

Although The HUB is closed for regular business on Thanksgiving Day, each year they offer Thanksgiving Dinner pick-up services with convenient pick-up the day before Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving morning after 10am. The Thanksgiving menu features in-house smoked turkey, traditional sides, pies, and more.

During the January and February winter months, The HUB offers fully private parties or buyouts for large rehearsal dinners, annual business employee parties, and the likes. Guests may hire their own bands (The HUB will provide recommendations), and slideshows can be projected on the Jumbotron.

The HUB is also a noted venue for the 30A's Songwriters Festival each year in the winter.

The HUB is located at 24 Hub Lane, WaterSound Beach, Florida, 32461. For more information regarding hours, catering, and special events, call (850) 866-2016, or find The HUB 30A online at www.hub30a.com.

Nanbu Noodle Bar

BY MARY WELCH

When a restaurant doesn't even have a phone number, it has to be pretty confident that word of mouth will get people through the doors.

Turns out, that was right (of course having more than 4,000 people on its mailing list helps). Nanbu Noodle Bar is doing gangbuster business after opening its doors January 2019. Nanbu's owner Nikhil Abuvala, who also owns Roux 30A down the street on Logan Lane, looked at the dining scene and decided a noodle house was missing. "There were a lot of sandwich places and the same beach food fare," he says. "But what was missing was clean epic food that you find in the big cities. I wanted to bring the big city to this beach town. I think the town needs this and I wanted to bring a little big city vibe to 30-A."

Since its opening, the reception has been "absolutely incredible," he says. "There really isn't an Asian restaurant at Grayton Beach and we're in the dead center of Grayton in the art district. People want new food concepts... people have been waiting for this and they're ready for it. We've been packed every night and we're in the middle of the off season."

The cuisine is "Japanese food with a Southern twist," Abuvala says, and includes such items as ginger salad; tuna poke bowl; Shoyu chicken ramen; Assari veggie ramen; and the Nanbu noodle bowl with Kurobuta BBQ pork shoulder, collards, corn, soy marinated egg and a double broth. Prices range from \$4 to \$11 for bites and \$15 to \$18 for poke bowls and ramens.

"This is clean vibrant food. Ramen shops have been in Japan since World War II and it's all over the world," he says. "This isn't a fad. It's like sushi in that you can fill up on it and not feel sick. There's only a few ingredients and it doesn't have the richness of cream or butter. You feel good after eating it. Everyone in college remembers the cheap ramen soup that we lived on. Now this is the real thing."

There is a different dumpling every night. The most popular are the pork belly steamed buns and dumplings, especially eggplant. Of course, ramen bowls are a fan favorite. The ingredients are high quality and locally grown, raised or; in the case of seafood; caught. "Our products are organic but not necessarily certified organic," he says. "I care more about the relationships and where we



Assari Vegetable Ramen Bowl



Daily Selection of Handmade Dumplings



Pork Belly Steamed Buns



get our ingredients. We have strong relationships with our vendors and we know where all our ingredients come from."

Abuvala opened Roux 30A six years ago and it also offers a different dining experience. The 1,200 square feet of space is perfect for events, as well as dining experiences for 34 guests. Roux 30A offers a Dinner Club series where guests sign up and the chefs prepare tasting dinners with cuisine from 35 countries. "We do these world cuisine tastings and food from Asian countries was the most requested. People want Asian food around here and that's what got me thinking about a noodle bar."

Although Abuvala keeps a close watch on both restaurants, at Nanbu Noodle, he has turned the culinary reins over to Albina Shaykhislamova. The restaurant seats 45 people and soon will have outdoor seating for another 24.

In addition to introducing a new cuisine to Grayton Beach, Nanbu brings a hip city vibe as well. "We get

loud," he says with a laugh. "We play 90's hip-hop. Our colors are really cool. The space looks great and there's a very intense vibe, very upbeat, cool, and happy. It was missing here and now we have an Asian restaurant that is hip and fun and that residents will enjoy, and we'll reach the tourists who come here but want something like this because they have it in their hometowns."

Abuvala is thrilled that his concept is being well received so quickly. "I'm really excited and we have an incredible team of people and we're just looking forward to the season."

Nanbu Noodle: 26 Logan Lane, Unit 6 Grafton Beach, FL. 32459. Open Tuesday to Saturday 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.; for more information go to www.nanbunoodlebar.com.



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Pescado: Against the Current

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



Cheese Board

Unparalleled views of the Gulf; elegantly executed plates of freshly-caught seafood and premium steaks; handcrafted cocktails that show skill and panache; and an atmosphere that is both casual and refined, the soothing sounds of waves crashing over the shore, the soft strains of music playing in the background; makes this getaway seem even more of an escape from the world below.

Looking around the space, you'll notice the clientele is all over the age of 18, which ensures the ambiance Pescado wishes to create and maintain: uninterrupted elegance that allows each diner to focus on the food, the views, and the company. "We really wanted it to be adults-only, so that our guests would have the opportunity to have time to themselves and be in an environment that's both casual and upscale at the same time," says Joseph Freer, one of the four partners of Last Call Restaurant Group, the team behind such area restaurants as Southside Slice; Shades Bar and Grill; Shaka Sushi and Noodle Bar.

Building on the childhood experiences of Executive Chef Ken Duenas, a 20-plus-year veteran of the kitchen



Chef's Ceviche



Chef Ken Duenas

Ken also offers a great deal of reference in his dishes to his time growing up in Guam, as well as plates reflective of Asian, Italian, and French fare.

It's a recipe that has served them well; and since opening in spring 2018, the men of Last Call Restaurant Group — Freer, along with Greg Wakeham, Steven Sapp, and, of course, Chef Ken—have seen a steady stream of success, creating a following of clients who have great appreciation for that minimum age requirement as well as for the food.

It seems natural, as Pescado strays from the unexpected to explore dishes that are not only unique, but bold in flavor. Featuring a raw bar that offers not the slightest whiff of the standard offering of oysters, the

menu starts with dishes such as Pepper-Seared Tuna & Blue Crab served with guajillo aioli and avocado mash; Seafood Salad filled with fresh tuna, shrimp, and lobster in a sesame soy sauce; and Steak Tartare livened up with shallots and caperberries, topped off with a quail egg and a finish of jalapeno aioli and truffle oil.

Clearly this is not the run-of-the-mill seaside seafood restaurant, but one that views each ingredient and each plate as medium and art. This is most apparent in bestsellers like the Paella Valenciana: a beautiful Spanish-inspired dish of mussels, clams, shrimp, chicken thighs, and Spanish sausage all brought together in harmony in a flavorfully scented sauce

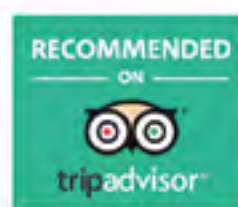
with Calaspara rice. It's a sharable worthy of being selfish with, though with so many other options on the menu to sample, you'll want to save room for another of their signatures. Jetting off to provinces of China, the Cantonese Whole Lobster pairs the sweet succulence of lobster with Yakisoba noodles stir-fried in a piquant garlic-onion sauce, a clear departure from the ever-present plates of lobster linguini that so often claim a place on menus. For those craving meat, the Tomahawk Ribeye is a guest favorite, offering 48 ounces of choice, premium quality steak crusted in rosemary, garlic, and thyme serves with a veal demi-glace. Ideal for sampling a little of this and a little of that, Pescado also offers small plates such as Spiced Lollipop Lamb Chops, Pan-Roasted Pork Belly, Wagyu Sirloin, and Korean BBQ Short Ribs.

Theirs is a restaurant that certainly achieves the vision of what Freer says they had in mind played it safe, it's their determination to swim against the current that has put them at the top.

Pescado Seafood Grill & Rooftop Bar is located at 74 Town Hall Road, Suite 4B, Rosemary Beach, Florida 32413. The restaurant is open Monday - Saturday 4:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.; Sundays, 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m.- 10:30 p.m. Bar hours are 4:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. (Monday - Saturday); 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. (Sundays). For more information, call (850) 213-4600 or visit www.rooftop30a.com.



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Restaurant Paradis

BY SUSAN L. CANNIZZARO



Diver Scallops with Sweet Pea Risotto

Photos courtesy Alissa Aryn Photography



Wasabi Pea Encrusted Ahi Tuna



Lobster Encrusted Grouper

Photo courtesy Todd Douglas LLC

The main menu focus is fresh seafood with items such as lobster encrusted grouper or gulf coast snapper.

When searching for a dining option that offers a unique experience, there is a restaurant in Rosemary Beach that is worth the visit. Fresh caught seafood, locally sourced produce, seasonal menu options, a staff that always makes you feel welcome, and more are all available at Restaurant Paradis.

The co-owners and operators of Restaurant Paradis, Danny and Monica Cosenzi, have a combined total of over 45 years of experience in the restaurant industry. Originally from Massachusetts, Danny moved to Atlanta after college. While working at The Palm Restaurant in Buckhead, he met his future wife Monica, who came from Michigan. Soon after they married, Danny had several career opportunities that relocated the couple to various states across the country. After the births of their son and daughter, they were able to move back to Michigan to be closer to family, where Danny was GM of Hyde Park, a high-end steakhouse. After a few years, Danny was ready for a change and reached out to some of his best friends that had started a partnership called 101 Concepts; and in 2014 he seized the opportunity to own and operate Restaurant Paradis. The couple also owns Back Beach Barbeque in Panama City Beach and 101 Steak in Atlanta.

Monica handles the marketing and social media for Paradis and goes in a few nights a week to visit with guests. She claims Danny is excellent at this part of the business. “Danny is the ultimate host. He knows how to talk to people and I learn everything from him. It was a big change moving from Michigan to Rosemary Beach. We are so blessed at Paradis, we have had the same chef

from day one and most of the same staff; they all stayed when we took over,” she adds.

“This means the world to us to have such dedicated staff. We hang out with these great people on Super Bowl Sunday as we are closed that day. We have our staff holiday party with both of our Paradis and Back Beach Barbeque families, and everyone really looks forward to this event,” adds Danny.

March 2019 will be the 5th year that the Cosenzi family has operated Paradis with the same chef, same menu, and same name. “We feel so fortunate to have some really great people that work with us. Michael Wood is the GM and he has been with us through thick and thin. Mark Eichen is the Executive Chef since the restaurant opened. Donny Sellers is our MVP (who) does pretty much everything and has been there since the beginning. We have 3 amazing bartenders that have been (here) since the beginning and regulars recognize them right away,” says Danny.

The main menu focus is fresh seafood with items such as lobster encrusted grouper or gulf coast snapper; but according to Danny, the cast iron filet cooked in duck fat is the best in 30-A. “We do change the menu seasonally, so you know what you are going to get, but you know it will have a special flair,” he says. “We work

really hard on service and our servers are to be commended on how hard they work and get to know our loyal customers that keep coming back.”

Tammy and Steve Carr are big fans of Restaurant Paradis. “We consider them our beach family. Danny and Monica always greet us warmly and over the years we have gotten to know most of the staff. This is the kind of restaurant we like to frequent but we wouldn’t continue going if the food

was not good. We have tried everything on the menu; however, our favorites are the crab cake appetizer, any of the salads, and the cast iron filet,” says Tammy.

Monica says, “We are known for hosting rehearsal dinners and anniversary parties. We don’t have a private dining area, so guests need to rent the restaurant for the whole night. We recently were voted most romantic/special occasion restaurant in the Best of the Emerald Coast 2018 survey of *Emerald Coast* magazine and we are very proud of that accolade.” In 2019, *Emerald Coast* also awarded Paradis with Best Place for a Date and Best Chef – Mark Eichen.

Restaurant Paradis is located at 82 S. Barrett Square in Rosemary Beach. The hours are Sunday-Thursday 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. and Friday-Saturday 5:00 - 10:00. The early bird special is every night from 5-5:45 p.m. and you receive \$10 off any entrée. Call (850) 534-0400 for reservations or go to Restaurantparadis.com

Shaka Sushi and Noodle Bar

BY MARY WELCH

There's one more place to celebrate a last call. Yes, Last Call Restaurant Group, which includes Shades Bar and Grill, Pescado Rooftop Bar, and Southside Slice, has brought Shaka Sushi and Noodle Bar under their umbrella of excellent restaurants, with outstanding, creative food, and atmosphere. Shaka Sushi, located in the Shoppes @ Inlet, is quickly becoming the place to hang loose and feel the positive vibes.

"We've been working day and night to perfect the recipes, sharpen services, and make Shaka extra beautiful inside and out," says Partner Steven Sapp. "Chef James Sargent, Chef Ken Duenas, and Shaka's culinary team have created a menu that boasts righteous sushi rolls, sashimi and nigiri, small plates and entrees, and of course sake, wine and beer."

The sushi bar is the highlight and focus of the restaurant, whose interior was designed by Nina Freer, exudes a very clean, natural design with beautiful earthy elements. "It's a cool design and Nina did a great job. It's earthy tones with a lively energetic vibe. It's more of a fun occasion place than a date night place. It's sophisticated but doesn't scream I'm at the beach."

Right now, the eatery is only open for dinner, but eventually will host the lunch crowd. They will also slowly roll out other menu items, but currently noodles and sushi rolls are the star. On the menu are such featured rolls as the Pipeline (inside: tuna, Shaka sauce, tempura, green onions; outside: tuna, avocado, samba and soy reduction); or Bonzai (inside: eel, avocado, Shaka sauce; outside: fish salmon, soy reduction). Classic rolls include California Dreamin', Crunchy Shrimp and Not so Philly (smoked salmon, cream cheese).

Right off the bat, the most popular roll is the Maverick, which features tuna, bacon, Shaka sauce, cream cheese, green onions on the inside and avocado, jalapeño, samba and soy reduction on the outside.

When asked what makes a roll work, Sapp offers an unexpected answer. "For me, what makes the roll is the



Below: Teriyaki Chicken Bento Box with Pipeline Sushi Roll



rice. Everyone talks about the ingredients — tuna, crab, avocado — but to me, if the rice isn't perfect, no matter what the ingredients are, it's not the best."

Other menu items include noodle dishes, "featured bowls", and nigiri and sashimi. "We haven't released the rest of the menu, only a few items," says Sapp. "It'll be a few weeks and then we'll have more traditional Asian-inspired cuisine — or more worldly — cuisine, like beef short ribs, poke dishes, and steak appetizer. We love different cuisines and we're always changing our menus. We change them every few months to offer seasonal products or just to freshen things up."

Shaka also has an extensive sake menu and sake cocktails. Prices for a 10-ounce Tokkuri bottle range from \$9 all the way up to \$103. "We have all types of sake. We even have a blueberry and sparkling sake. It's

similar to wine and beer. Some people know a lot about it and some don't, but they want to learn. People come in and want to give it a try. So far, they've enjoyed the experience."

Currently the restaurant seats 70 people inside and out. The courtyard patio's roof actually opens, "and you can see the stars, which is so cool," Sapp says. The sides also come down to protect against wind and rain.

Another bonus is that Shaka Sushi is part of Last Call Restaurant Group's new app (found in App Store and Google Play Store) where guests earn a five percent credit to their loyalty

account with each purchase and can use at any of the eateries.

With an expanded menu, seating and hours on the horizon, it's still not exactly a last call for this esteemed restaurant group. Fluke Oyster Bar in Inlet Beach should open in 2020 right next door.

Shaka Sushi and Noodle Bar, 13625 US HWY 98, Suite 5, Inlet Beach, GA. 32461. Monday through Sunday: 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Call (850) 909-0030 or go to shaka30a.com

Wild Olives

BY KEMPTEN TAYLOR

Located in the heart of the picture perfect town of Rosemary Beach, Florida you will find Wild Olives (Wine – Cheese – Bistro). This wine and cheese shop meets bistro speaks for itself, offering 30-A visitors and locals a variety of retail fine wines, gourmet cheeses, Italian meats, bread, local honey, and a variety of other specialty foods. The full-service bistro is ideal for lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch; with a menu chocked-full of scrumptious sandwiches, flatbreads, burgers, small plates, charcuterie, and poised entrees that will delight even the most discerning palate. “We are all about letting the ingredients shine. We use the best products that we can get our hands on and the quality speaks for itself,” says owner Chris Trovas.

Wild Olives has been a staple on the 30-A dining scene for over 12 years now and this “wine, cheese, bistro” has matured into an exceptional wine shop with a full blown bistro menu. Fine wines are a passion for Trovas so it is no wonder why Wild Olives has become known as “the best little wine shop along 30-A”. Cult, small production, and limited quantity wines are among the bottles that adorn the shelves at Wild Olives. Trovas personally hand-picks all the wines found at Wild Olives. All selections are tasted before bringing them into the shop and he promises customers will not be disappointed with anything he might suggest to enjoy “table side” or to take home. (There is no corkage fee). Wild Olives has a great variety of menu items, including sandwiches, cheese boards, flatbreads, small plates, and salads; and after 5:00 p.m. dinner choices include fish, shrimp, pasta, and delicious steaks.

The restaurant puts a large focus on the wine shop and Trovas is spot on when asked to suggest a wine for dinner or to take to the beach. Wild Olives also has a great happy hour, which includes their celebrated wines by the glass menu. Happy hour is every day 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is very popular. Customers receive a discount

on the by the glass list, as they serve a quartino portion for the same cost of a glass of wine. Bottled beer also is discounted during this time. Friday night wine tasting is very popular and a great way for Trovas and staff to introduce patrons to a new wine, as well as to give tips with pairing food and wine and discussing the different

varietals. Trovas is full of knowledge when wine and food comes together, and tends to always have the perfect suggestion. Ask about his weekly dinner special, as it is always the perfect choice for most customers.

The Wine Room is the perfect spot for a small gathering of four to six people (adults only). This room can be reserved and tempts you as you are surrounded by great wines adorning the walls. As an added perk, Trovas will gladly assist you with your dinner choices and wines to pair.

Wild Olives is also a very active member in the local community. For many years, the restaurant has been involved with Destin Charity Auctions Event, as well as many other children’s charities throughout the Gulf.

Wild Olives is a Bistro and Wine Shop located directly on 30-A in Rosemary Beach. Dine inside the intimate dining room or al fresco on the large outside patio. The wine shop offers beautiful wines to enjoy tableside, to take home, or to the beach. Cheese, honey, crackers, and other wine and food are available.

Table service and takeout are takeout before dinner service begins.

Wild Olives is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., on Sundays for brunch, and is closed on Mondays. For additional information, visit them online at www.wildolivesmarket.info and www.30-awines.com. To contact the Wild Olives team, email them at wildolives@mchsi.com.



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chef profiles

*Chef Edward Reese of
Edward's Fine Foods and Wine*

Alan Baltazar of Destin Ice Market

BY TRACEY M. HAWKINS

The Destin Ice Market is the 30-A's neighborhood market for fresh Gulf seafood, prime meats, gourmet cheeses, deli and prepared foods, fine wines, craft beers, and more. It is the perfect, upscale grocery market catering to locals and tourists alike. Weekly specials are offered on a vast array of vintages in the Market's impressive wine selections. Conveniently located at the Crossings at Inlet Beach, Destin Ice Market 30A is just minutes away from anywhere along 30-A.

Join them each Friday from 4-6pm for a complimentary wine tasting, during which you can sample new vintages every week, paired with complimentary eats. It's the perfect way to unwind after work and begin your weekend!

Destin Ice Market 30A's Chef Alan Baltazar told us about his personal experiences and his own connection to his love for the culinary profession.

From where/whom did your interest in cooking first emerge?

When I was seven or eight years old, I first got my interest in cooking from my dad. Both of my parents cooked a lot of family recipes passed down through the generations, and I was always wanting to learn them.

What inspired you to become a professional chef?

For me, it's always been about putting a smile on the people's faces who are eating my food, and having them remember it years later.

What is your academic background (i.e. did you study the culinary arts formally? And, if so, where/with whom did you study?)

I am a self-taught Chef. I got my first line-cook job over 24 years ago and moved up the ladder very quickly. I've been a Chef now for 20 years.

What are your favorite dishes/meals to prepare?

My favorite meals to make are definitely the mix of Filipino and Polish family recipes from my Dad and Mom. When I am not cooking those, I love to cook the



Chef Alan Baltazar

Are there any other chefs in particular who inspire you?

Some of the Chefs who have inspired me are Matin Yan, Wolfgang Puck, Julia Child, and Jacques Pepin.

What do you like most about cooking for Destin Ice Market 30A?

What I love about the Market is dealing with all of the fresh, local seafood, the freedom to make all kinds of ready-to-eat meals for customers, and knowing that we are putting out the best of the best in food and wine and everything in between. It also doesn't hurt that the Wellborns are the best owners!

What is the greatest compliment you have ever received from a customer?

The greatest compliment for me is from the customers I see outside of the restaurant who comment on their past meals or ask when I am going to make a certain signature dish again.

What are your other interests/hobbies, and how do they relate to your work as a Chef?

My hobbies outside of the kitchen are working on vintage cars and collecting vintage car parts.

For me, it's the thrill of the hunt, just like in the kitchen searching for odd and hard to find ingredients and incorporating them in dishes.

What is your favorite cuisine to eat?

My favorite cuisine to eat is any Oriental food and real, Old World Butchered Meats and Sausages.

What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you in the kitchen?

One of the funniest things happened years ago at a restaurant where we served live lobsters. After the new shipment of live lobsters came in, I told someone to put them all in the walk-in. When I got in the next day, I discovered they had not been stored properly, and the lobsters all got loose and were all over the cooler walking around!

You can try Chef Baltazar's celebrated cooking at the Destin Ice Market 30A daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. They are located at 13063 Hwy. 98 E, Inlet Beach, FL, 32461. You can also find them online at destinicemarket30a.com Phone: (850) 502-4100

Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood

BY KEMPTEN TAYLOR



Executive Chef Lee Guidry

Due to the abundance of seasonal produce and the amount of fresh seafood that comes into season, we'll have some really new and exciting menu options available to our guests and locals.

numerous years to honing his skills through various positions in Nashville, Chicago, and the Florida Panhandle. His passion for cooking stems from his summers spent in the south of Sardinia, Italy, where he learned classic and regional Italian preparations. He also worked with classically trained chefs from Germany, France, and Japan; absorbing the distinct philosophies of each region's cooking techniques.

Prior to joining Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood, Chef Guidry dedicated two years to the Meli Café Group in Chicago, where he designed, executed, and oversaw their first venture into dinner service. He also spent four years as the head chef at SushiSamba Rio in Chicago, where he worked side-by-side with Chef Shige-san, a renowned Sushi Chef in the U.S. Before that, Chef Guidry worked as executive chef at Bound'ry in Nashville, where he designed seasonal menus featuring local products.

In addition to his culinary arts and chef training at Delgado Culinary Institute in New Orleans, Chef Guidry studied Psychology at the University of Southern Alabama in Mobile. He is also continuing his education through the American Culinary Federation to obtain a Certified Executive Chef (CEC) certification, and is a certified foodservice manager in the state of Florida and the city of Chicago. He was voted Top Ten Young Chefs by *Sarasota Magazine* and nominated for Best Chef Chicago in 2012 by Best Chefs America.

Under the leadership of Chef Guidry, Seagar's menu includes filet mignon beef carpaccio, a rich and classic duck cassoulet with puff pastry; pan-roasted grouper with exquisite fried potatoes and roasted beet salad with champagne vinaigrette; seared snapper; and beautiful desserts made in-house. This season the restaurant has

added a selection of Northern East Coast and West Coast oysters along with a trained staff, ready and able to educate guests on the difference. Also new to the menu and recommended by Chef Guidry is the Charcuterie & Cheese Board, featuring house-smoked meats and pate, as well as hand-picked cheeses, house-made pickles, and condiments. "We are always adding new items as we change the menu every season to incorporate the flavors of that season," says Guidry.

Chef Guidry was born and raised in the area, and has a deep appreciation for the bounty of ingredients available from both land and sea. With such a passion for fresh and local ingredients and produce, Chef Guidry takes full advantage of Florida's extended growing season. "When creating new menus, I tend to lean toward clean and fresh flavors. Being near the coast, we have access to an abundance of local and fresh ingredients which are incorporated throughout our menu. Around 99 percent of ingredients we use are local," says Guidry. "We are looking forward to spring at Seagar's. Due to the abundance of seasonal produce and the amount of fresh seafood that comes into season, we'll have some really new and exciting menu options available to our guests and locals."

Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood's seasonally-driven menu, extensive wine list, and continued tradition of table-side services always provides the possibility of surprise to the newcomer or frequent diner of the restaurant.

Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood is open on Tuesday - Saturday 6:00-9:00 p.m. Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood is located in the beachfront Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Miramar Beach, a beachfront address adjacent to Destin, Florida. For reservations, call (850) 622-1500 or visit seagars.com.

The panhandle's longest standing AAA Four-Diamond Restaurant, Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood, has been celebrated as one of the area's top spots for fine dining. Overlooking the emerald green waters of the Gulf, Seagar's is located in the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, which is the largest full-service resort along Northwest Florida. The restaurant has appointed Lee Guidry as the restaurant's new executive chef, whose exceptional menu offerings and attention to detail are sure to keep Seagar's a shining star on the Gulf Coast's dining scene.

A graduate of Delgado Culinary Institute in New Orleans, Executive Chef Lee Guidry has dedicated

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2 Birds Adds to its Nest

BY MARY WELCH

When Taylor and Jenifer Rohrberger opened 2 Birds Coffee + Cafe in Miramar Beach three years ago, they decided any future restaurant openings would be based on “when it felt right. We didn’t know if that meant three months or three years,” says Taylor. “We were open to doing more as long as it fit into our overall brand and mission. It just had to be the right time and the right location.”

Luckily for residents in the 30-A area, the time and location were right, and 2 Birds Coffee + Cafe opened at WaterSound Origins in Inlet Beach.

Taylor says, “We always had the intention of opening a place further east and closer to 30-A but we really wanted to ensure that the place served full-time residents who would enjoy the restaurant, come often and just make it a part of their life. We had conversations with St. Joe and they had the perfect spot.”

The WaterSound Origins location features some lighter, poolside fare, including the honey-sriracha chicken tacos and the grilled shrimp tacos with tzatziki and pickled veggies. “Who doesn’t want tacos while laying around the beach or pool?” he asks. “And if you are into cool, craft beer and natural wine, we have you covered with some great all-day sippers.”

2 Birds is also serious about coffee and espresso drinks quality. “We serve espresso drinks the way they were intended,” he says, “and we are lucky to partner with French Truck Coffee out of New Orleans to get the freshest beans around.”

No matter what you order you’ll notice the small finishing details. “Our goal was to have a restaurant that was simple, yet elegant. In Washington, D.C. we were fortunate to frequent restaurants that served the most delicious dishes we’ve ever tasted. Not because they were whipped up with foams or topped with caviar, but because each dish was sprinkled with delicate, flaky sea salt or finished off with a few drops of really good olive oil or topped with the perfect amount of fresh herbs.”

2 Birds strives to serve tasty dishes in a fun and inviting atmosphere. Flavors are mixed and matched in unexpected ways. Everything from the syrups for coffee drinks to the baked goods are made from scratch.

The team also enjoys putting on monthly dinners that Taylor says are a “bit funky, a bit fancy.” The five-course meal is served at three large communal tables where the cafe presents internationally inspired dishes served with wine, beer, vermouth, and mead. “It’s a great



Cured Salmon Fancy Toast



Chorizo Fancy Toast



Taylor Rohrberger



Chocolate Chip Cookies and Coconut Lemon Cookies

The team also enjoys putting on monthly dinners [...] where the cafe presents internationally inspired dishes served with wine, beer, vermouth, and mead.

evening mood and a lot of fun.” It costs \$80 for dinner; \$45 for drink pairings.

With two locations, Taylor is still able to oversee both kitchens, but says he is lucky to have the assistance of Chef Shane Rexroad, who is a long-time resident and worked for a large number of St. Joe properties. “He is the epitome of a true partner...we are lucky to have him.”

When they aren’t at the cafes, Taylor and Jenifer, who grew up five houses down from each other in Lafayette, Louisiana, enjoy playing with their girls Ellis (5) and Mae (19 months).

“We didn’t date until substantially later, but we ended up in Washington, D.C. I had a corporate job and she was a kindergarten teacher. She had family in this area and my family always vacationed around 30-A. We always thought about moving to the beach and then we just decided to do it,” he says. “Now, we’re just trying to find the time to enjoy it!”

And how did the name come about? Well, it’s so cute it would warm even the coldest of hearts. It seems Jenifer’s family called her J-bird; Taylor’s nickname when playing sports was T-bird. “When we discovered that, everyone started making fun of us, but we kind of liked it. So that’s how we got the name. Cheesy, I know.”

The couple is enjoying the overwhelming, positive response to their second cafe and are happy they are living their dream and sharing it with people.

“We want our place to feel like you are part of our extended family where you can come and be comfortable, cozy and eat great food and have amazing drinks,” he says. “If we don’t do that, we’re missing the mark.”

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Tim Williams of Café Thirty-A

BY RYAN LOFTIS

When doing a job for more than 25 years, there's always a danger it will start to seem stale and repetitive. What keeps Tim Williams, Café Thirty-A's executive chef, inspired? Unpredictability. "In the restaurant industry, every day is different," Williams says. "Each person who walks through the door has a different set of expectations. The challenge adds fuel to the fire. You want to make sure everybody's happy, and not only leaving happy but exceeding expectations. If you can send somebody out going, 'Wow, that's really great, that's more than I was bargaining for,' that's our goal every day."

Originally from Brooklyn, N.Y., Williams didn't always aspire to become a chef. He initially dreamed of working on Wall Street, only to find actually having a job there unsatisfying. It was during a summer vacation to Cape Cod in the early 1980s that he found his true calling. He met and befriended a couple, David and Eileen Gibson, who had just bought an inn with a restaurant. The Gibsons, who had more than 20 years of restaurant experience between them, wanted Williams to work for them. His plan was to be a busboy, but they wanted him in the kitchen. "Once they threw me in there, I realized this is where I need to be," he says. He wanted to attend culinary school, but the Gibsons felt doing so wasn't immediately necessary. "They said, 'Hold on, we'll teach you what we learned there.' It was very hands-on training from some very talented people. I was very fortunate."

Williams returned to college in New York when the summer ended, but his days at the restaurant weren't over: the following spring the Gibsons sent him a plane ticket to come work for them over Easter weekend. That May, the restaurant's menu was changed from German to American. Even the wine would be American, an unheard-of development in Cape Cod at the time. The gamble paid off: following a glowing review in the *Boston Globe* that August, the restaurant's business exploded.

After the Gibsons sold their property, Williams went to work in Vail, Colo., but when his father became ill he returned to New York. He went back to work with David Gibson, this time at a restaurant in Syracuse, N.Y., for a year, when he returned to Cape Cod to work at a fine dining restaurant, spending 2 years there before his future wife told him it was time for him to attend culinary school.

The Culinary Institute of America's Hyde Park, NY, campus was the only school Williams considered. "Going through the core courses was a pretty good reinforcement

the people I had previously worked with knew what they were doing," he says. But the lessons weren't confined to the classroom. "All the instructors at school had a side business going on. I got to learn a lot working on projects they had going on." He learned about building relationships with clients and coworkers, how to upsell to clients, how to determine what clients are looking for. The biggest lesson, however, was "they worked from the heart. It mattered to them." One particularly noteworthy example was a professor turning down what Williams calls a "ridiculous" amount of money for an event where the clients were more concerned about pomp and circumstance than the quality of the food. "That kind of blew me away. But I never forgot it."

That commitment guides Williams' philosophy as a chef. "You can read and be exposed to all kinds of things intellectually, but if it doesn't feel right don't do it. If there's a hesitation, there's a reason for that."

Williams worked at a Mexican restaurant while attending culinary school and continued working there after his 1992 graduation. In 1994, he moved to Atlanta to work for Hilton Hotels as an executive sous chef. He had several jobs over the years, including serving as the corporate executive chef responsible for all menu development for the Miami-based Tango Group, before opening his restaurant Dantanna's in 2003. Williams remains a partner in Dantanna's, which today has two Atlanta locations.

While his time in Atlanta was successful, eventually Williams became ready to move on. His children were grown, his day-to-day involvement was no longer necessary at Dantanna's, and he had grown tired of the Atlanta traffic. He fell in love with 30-A and began visiting the area as often as possible. Williams bought a property in Panama City Beach in 2016 and became a permanent resident in June 2018.

It wouldn't take long to find his new job. Williams had been considering opening a cafe or sandwich shop when an acquaintance forwarded his resume to Café Thirty-A's management. A 90-minute conversation with management inspired him to take the restaurant's executive chef position in July 2018.

Williams believes the ability to manage people and products is essential for being a successful chef. "If I'm not giving the people who work with me what they need to achieve their goals, then I'm not doing my job," he says. As for managing products, "You have to set up a system to make sure to offer the highest quality. Number one is where you purchase from and number



Executive Chef Tim Williams

You want to make sure everybody's happy, and not only leaving happy but exceeding expectations.

two how you handle it. If you take care of it, respect it, cook it properly, and it goes out, you usually don't have any issues."

Café Thirty-A is located at 3899 E. Scenic Highway 30A in Seagrave Beach. For more information call (850) 231-2166 or visit cafethirtya.com.

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