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## annual dining issue

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# letter from the publisher

## FAMILY, FRIENDS & THE BEACH



Dining out with friends and family is one of the cornerstones of making memories during the holidays. The hospitality, delicious food, laughter and conviviality combine to create a vibe that lightens our load and lifts our soul.

In the pages that follow, you will find our annual recap of the dining and culinary recommendations from the year prior. This is by no means an all encompassing recommendation but rather a small sampling of the culinary wonders of our community.

We hope you enjoy reading about these culinary gems and we encourage you to explore 30-A and the surrounding areas for yourself. The chefs and restaurateurs of the Emerald Coast are world class. And the diversity and selection will keep you coming back for more.

Until next issue...

Bon appetite,

Sincerely,

Miles K. Neiman

View the entire publication online at [www.ThirtyAReview.com](http://www.ThirtyAReview.com)



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## about the cover

**Pictured**  
Seager's Prime Steaks & Seafood



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## Elevated Asian Kitchen

*Aja offers an upscale dining experience at 30Avenue*

BY TESS FARMER



*Fresh sea urchin topped with caviar*

“Chef Ito’s delectable sushi creations could be described as edible art and are not to be missed.”

The newest restaurant from renowned restaurateur and chef Tom Catherall is quickly becoming one of the top spots for sushi and places to be seen in and around 30-A. Boasting a swanky interior and delectable Asian-inspired dishes, Aja offers an upscale dining experience with something for all palates.

The magnificence of the space reflects the attention to detail and quality of food and hand-crafted beverages served fresh each day, including an array of sake. Aja (pronounced “Asia”) is the second 30-A area restaurant from Master Chef Catherall since he came out of retirement after moving to the area in 2016.

Catherall was one of the defining and influential forces of the Atlanta restaurant scene for over three decades.

A certified master chef, Catherall’s Here to Serve Restaurants group was the successful hospitality umbrella for 12 unique restaurant concepts, from steak, seafood and sushi to Spanish tapas, with 15 locations in the Atlanta area, which operated from 1996 until Catherall sold the group in October 2014.

With chef-inspired menus that are both innovative and always fresh, Catherall brought his offering to the 30-A community with the opening of Lola’s Coastal Italian in Seacrest Beach in 2020.

With the continued success of Lola’s, Catherall and his business partner David Richard, Sr., an entrepreneur and foodie from New Orleans, opened Aja on New Year’s Eve this year. Guests visiting from Atlanta especially recognize the Catherall name and the restaurant has been buzzing with patrons checking out his newest spot inside 30Avenue in Inlet Beach.

For Aja, Catherall recruited one of Atlanta’s top sushi chefs, Fuyuhiko Ito, of Japan, who uses sushi-grade fish sourced directly from his home country as well as New Zealand and the Caribbean. Chef Ito’s delectable sushi creations could be described as edible art and are not to be missed.

Leslie Brothers, Catherall’s fiancée, has been instrumental in bringing the vision of the restaurant’s cozy, posh atmosphere to life. Brothers worked closely with local designer Marisol Gullo to create a sophisticated yet whimsical ambiance.

From glistening glass tile with gold-plated grout and lighting fixtures that glow and reflect off all the mirrored surfaces, it truly feels like fine dining in the city with the relaxed comfort of being just steps off the beach. Light, airy, whimsical interiors balanced with moody shades of navy and pops of color make a night out at Aja an experience to enjoy with all the senses.

The Aja team is a close-knit family, with Catherall’s nephews Jordan and Jack joining him in the kitchen. Already establishing their careers as the next generation of culinary greats, some of their popular dishes include the hot chili seafood with fresh Gulf shrimp, scallops, calamari and jalapeño peppers tossed in a house-made chili sauce on top of a bed of stir-fry noodles; and the Char Siu pork belly ramen in Vietnamese broth with bok choy, egg and shiitake mushrooms. Finish the meal off with a ginger crème brûlée or tempura fried banana.

Delicacies like the rare, wild-caught Tyee Ora King Salmon are available. Tyee means “Chief” in the local language of British Columbia where these salmon were originally found. Tyee is rare among salmon weighing no less than 30 pounds and yet, for such a large fish, the flavors are remarkably delicate.

Happy hour specials are available on the patio from 4 until 6 p.m. seven days a week and includes craft cocktails, beer and small plates like the popular chicken and shrimp dumplings, made in-house each day and Chef Ito’s California Roll. The patio offers outdoor seating with a server and also a walk-up window for additional bar service. Aja also caters to the late-night crowd with upbeat techno music and drinks.

Chef Catherall has brought another culinary gem to the 30-A community and locals and visitors are welcome to savor the fine flavors and classy coastal atmosphere.

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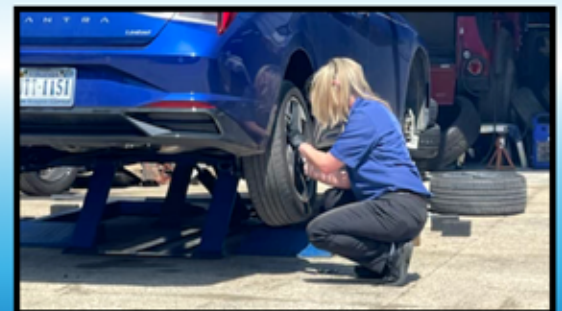
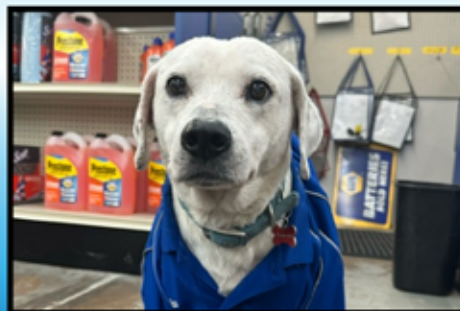
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# Delicious food with a sense of place

## *Southern comfort meets fine dining at Óvide*

BY TESS FARMER

Nestled within the luxurious Hotel Effie at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Óvide Restaurant is a hidden culinary gem that offers an unforgettable dining experience. From the moment you step through its doors, you're transported to a world of elegance and gastronomic delight.

The restaurant offers an elegant culinary adventure where the rich tapestry of Gulf Coast flavors and cherished southern culinary traditions come together in perfect harmony. At Óvide, each dish is thoughtfully crafted with a dedication to sustainability and seasonality that gives each bite wonderful flavor.

Architectural Digest highlighted Hotel Effie in a recent article outlining upscale, high-design hotels across the world led by females. Sara Becnel led the hotel's overall conception and design effort. Her vision for all the unique design and architectural accents was to make the experience inviting and accommodating, especially to female travelers. The hotel is named for Becnel's great grandmother, who was the ultimate Southern hostess, while the restaurant Óvide pays homage to her great grandfather, Effie's husband.

Guests will immediately be struck by the restaurant's upscale and inviting atmosphere. The restaurant boasts modern and stylish decor, with warm lighting and sweeping ceiling artwork that sets the mood for an intimate dining experience. The attentive and friendly staff are knowledgeable about the menu and can provide recommendations or answer any questions.

The menu is updated seasonally featuring the freshest local seafood combining cherished flavors of the Gulf Coast. A range of eclectic appetizers including beef tartare, crispy pork ribs with benne seed BBQ sauce, honey and cilantro; fresh greens and salads, and a raw bar selection of oysters, shrimp cocktail, and smoked fish dip. Popular entrees include the Berkshire pork chop with stone-ground grits, peach chutney and herbs. The fresh fish selections are hard to beat, coming right out of the Gulf of Mexico.

While seafood takes center stage, the menu also pays



*Delicious pork ribs at Óvide.*



*The Óvide provides an intimate setting for Gulf Coast flavors.*

homage to Southern cuisine traditions. Dishes like shrimp and grits, jambalaya and fried chicken are lovingly crafted to satisfy Southern cravings. The flavors are rich yet not too heavy. Complement your meal with a selection of unique craft cocktails inspired by coastal living and made with locally-sourced spirits and fresh ingredients.

Óvide's wine list is extensive and well-curated. Whether you're a wine connoisseur or just looking for a perfect pairing, you'll find something special here.

It's a place where you can celebrate a special occasion or simply indulge in a memorable dining experience. The meticulous attention to detail and the dedication to providing a truly exceptional culinary journey make Óvide

The restaurant boasts modern and stylish decor, with warm lighting and sweeping ceiling artwork that sets the mood for an intimate dining experience.

a must-visit when staying at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. Locals will also appreciate this gem tucked within the elegant atmosphere Hotel Effie provides. The restaurant offers specials for locals and guests throughout the year. The rooftop bar makes the perfect setting for taking in the sunset.

For moments that beg to be marked with a celebration at a

truly special place, Óvide is also available for private events. Birthdays, rehearsal dinners and special events are made more memorable at Óvide and its sophisticated and welcoming spirit.

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# A dining experience that engages the senses

## Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood celebrates 25 years

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood is celebrating 25 years in Northwest Florida and over two decades as the only AAA Four Diamond Steakhouse in the area. As the restaurant continues to showcase prime beef and fresh seafood, Executive Chef Fleetwood Covington challenges himself to provide a dining experience that engages the senses and instills a sense of nostalgia for his guests.

Before Covington stepped onto the culinary scene, he was a concert pianist playing for folks along the French Riviera.

"I was only supposed to be visiting for a few days and ended up being there for four or five years," he says. Covington was exposed to a plethora of different foods during his time overseas.

"I saw fine dining at its peak while in Europe," he said.

Originally from South Carolina, Covington moved to Florida as a teen. Late into his twenties, he chose to step away from the piano career he'd spent the early part of his life curating.

"I went through a phase where I questioned what my next chapter was going to be," he said. It was happenstance that Covington chose to enjoy an evening dining at Seagar's around that time.

"There was nowhere else in the Panhandle like it," he recalls. From his musician's perspective, the restaurant moved like an orchestra.

Not long after that experience, he began working part-time at Seagar's rolling pasta.

"I'd never cooked professionally, but I wanted to learn and I wanted a hands-on experience," he said.

After mastering handcrafted pasta, Covington moved on to the fundamentals of baking under the direction of the Seagar's executive chef.

"I continued to learn and master each element of the line and observed how professional cooks act and move around the kitchen," he says.

A lead cook position soon followed.

"The chefs at the time were extremely hard on me. Fine dining is a very territorial space, especially with the restaurant's AAA status and the pedigree of the team. I was definitely the black sheep, but I was getting closer to the creative core of the restaurant," he said.

Having observed some great chefs, he decided the culinary world is what he wanted to be a part of long term.

"Food is a language. Being a chef, you articulate your

narrative about who you are and what you stand for through your food and your knowledge of it," he said. In 2021, Covington was promoted to chef de cuisine as Seagar's began searching for a new executive chef.

Covington had the gift of vision, along with passion and drive to take on the role. "I wanted that executive chef role, and I wanted to prove myself to ownership. So I'd come in at seven in the morning and work with our culinary leadership team," he says. "The chef at the time gave me a lot of freedom, and I went wild. Once we were published in Forbes, I could feel my feet lift off the ground."

Soon he achieved his goal of being named executive chef the restaurant, a position he continues to prove himself "worthy" of daily.

Abetted by what he calls "the best culinary team the restaurant has ever had," Covington feels a responsibility to be a mentor to his staff. He also puts an emphasis on providing a philanthropic service for the local community. Seagar's is proud to partner with nonprofits like the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, Food For Thought Inc. and Sinfonia Gulf Coast, among others. Covington describes his vision for the restaurant's future.

"Right now, Michelin (of the highly-coveted Michelin Star fame) only services Miami, Tampa and Orlando, but it's slowly moving northwest," he said.

While he has a Michelin Star in his sights, he also hopes for a James Beard Award.

"That's a big one for us. There's no geographical restriction, and we're running after that," he said.

He believes it is his duty to the restaurant to continue to grow it "as ruthlessly and as fast as I can."

This includes looking to the top chefs in New York,



A sampling of Seagar's Holiday Menu. Michael Booini

Chicago and Atlanta for inspiration and relationships. Covington recently attended a dinner at Buckhead restaurant Atlas with a Michelin Star chef.

"The kind of energy those guys give off is infectious. I want to have conversations with people who are setting trends, and I left that dinner beyond inspired," he said.

While Seagar's is renowned for their steaks, the executive chef champions its seafood as well.

"We live in one of the best destinations for snapper, grouper and cobia, and I love that," he says. "Fall and winter are big for me. When creating a menu, I visualize everything two dimensionally and then ask myself, 'How can I elevate this?' As a chef, you're not just curating a menu, you're curating an experience."

With hundreds of restaurants in the area, Covington sets himself apart by exploring beyond having a great meal.

"I want the food to say something with the colors and aromas. What does it feel like? You hone in on an ingredient, for example, hickory. What pairs best with hickory? Eventually, a dish is built, and by the end of the process a full menu unfolds," he said. "I think what we're doing is working, and we're going to keep doing it."

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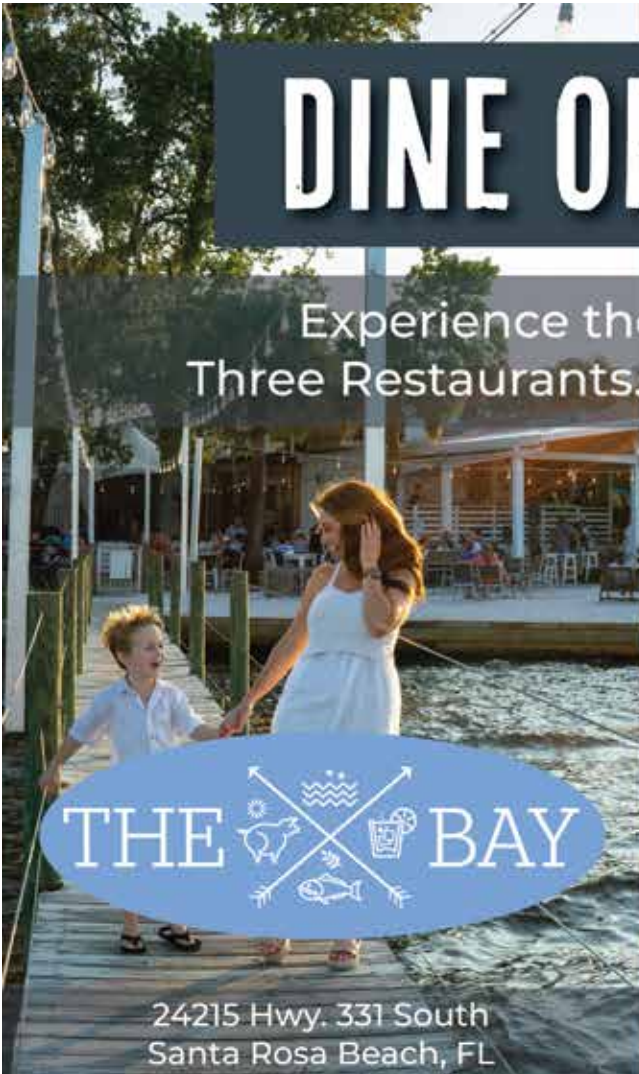
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# Expanding the F&B family

## Spell Restaurant Group acquires Shades Bar & Grill and Shaka Sushi

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Somehow, Spell Restaurant Group co-owner Christy Spell Terry finds a few minutes during her busy day to chat. She and her father, Rick Spell, have just added longtime local favorite Shades Bar & Grill, on the east end of 30A, and Inlet Beach's Shaka Sushi to the family.

"This year, we're focusing on learning the two new restaurants," she says. "Shades is a 30-year-old business, and it's a huge honor to be entrusted to take that over and continue what they've built. It's such a fun place, one of the first we frequented when we came to the area."

While sushi is a new venture, chef James Sargent has a storied reputation. "What I like about our restaurant group is that we're so diverse," Christy said. The ultimate goal of Spell Restaurant Group is to "enhance what's already there with successful restaurants," Christy said. "The team members already on board know things inside and out and we're eager to bring them into our family and take care of them."

Their varied restaurant portfolio includes LaCo in Seacrest Beach ([laco30a.com](http://laco30a.com)), originally a Tex-Mex eatery and now a Latin-inspired restaurant with a coastal twist. Here you'll find specialty dishes prepared from scratch using the freshest ingredients available. LaCo is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and offers brunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily. Happy hour is every day from 3 to 5 p.m.

The father-daughter duo started in the restaurant business in 2004 buying the Brookhaven Pub & Grill—an elevated sports bar—in Memphis. "It was a sort of side thing," Christy says. "I was a corporate accountant and my dad was in the finance world." The original owner was called back to military duty in Iraq and wanted to sell the restaurant. Christy hired a manager to run Brookhaven, and she handled the accounting and admin duties.

In 2011, she made the full-time leap into food and beverage. Three years later, she and Rick learned that LaCo and George's at Alys Beach were for sale. "After that, it kind of snowballed," says Christy. Today, the Spell Restaurant Group also includes Saltwater Grill (Panama City Beach), La Crema Tapas & Chocolate (Rosemary Beach), Edward's (Rosemary Beach), and two Babalu® locations in Memphis. "The business here is booming," she said. And here they are, expanding once again.

Today, Christy is bouncing around to each local restaurant, while her dad Rick, who still lives in Memphis, oversees those spots.



"It's a huge honor to be entrusted to take over and continue what they've built."

No matter which restaurant location, Christy says it's the people—both employees and guests—who got her into her current career. She loves being part of celebrations and vacations. She also enjoys watching the Spell staff grow.

"We've got people in their 20s who started working (for us) in their teens. We promote from within. It's fun to watch cooks become chefs, servers becoming bartenders and then managers," she said. One of Spell's longest tenured employees started working at Brookhaven 20 years ago and now manages George's. A lot of couples work together—happily, mind you—in her restaurants.

The restaurant group's local eateries include:

**Saltwater Grill** ([saltwatergrillpcb.com](http://saltwatergrillpcb.com)), renowned for their seafood, steaks, and martinis. The restaurant is open from 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 4 to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Happy hour and early bird specials are offered daily.

**Edward's** ([edwards30a.com](http://edwards30a.com)), which offers fine dining in a comfortable setting. "We are at the beach after all," the website muses. Edward's is open daily for dinner at 5 p.m., offers Sunday brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and lunch Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Daily specials include select wines for \$8 by the glass from 5 to 6 p.m. The restaurant received an Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator in 2020.

**George's** ([georgesatalsbeach.com](http://georgesatalsbeach.com)) walks the fine line between coastal and casual. "We buy from local vendors and farmers and offer local daily catches," says Christy. The Alys Beach favorite is open daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 to 9 p.m.

**La Crema Tapas & Chocolate**, open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, is "the place to go for your chocolate fix," says Christy. You'll also find small plate dining, a full liquor bar, and to-go drinks. "The desserts are my favorite part of it. They have some great crab Rangoon and chocolate fondue at La Crema."

Christy's to-go order? La Co's tacos, the lobster quesadilla at George's and the chicken or steak at Edward's.

The biggest key to the Spell's success is the management team, according to Christy. "We've been really blessed with the managers we've hired. We make sure they have the tools to be successful, and that we're not skimping on things. They have the resources and staff they need," she said. Christy's typical day begins "whenever the phone starts ringing," she laughs. She spends her day out in the restaurants keeping an eye on HR, IT, and marketing needs. You won't find her cooking, though.

"I leave that to the professionals," she says.

**Learn more about the restaurants at [www.spellrestaurantgroup.com](http://www.spellrestaurantgroup.com).**



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# Memorable meals, memorable views

## *Pescado Seafood Grill & Rooftop Bar has something for everyone*

BY TESS FARMER

Designed by Smith Hanes of Atlanta, Pescado is one of Rosemary's hottest award-winning spots to visit, especially for sunset views over the Gulf of Mexico with live music in the courtyard daily at 6 p.m.

The restaurant is also a great start to your day, with brunch offered Wednesday through Sunday.

The design and decor incorporates subtle coastal colors, clean lines and soft lighting to create a space that invites and complements the elements and the scenery of the Emerald Coast.

We sat down with General Manager Holly Wright to find out what new additions are being offered by Pescado.

In 2020, Pescado opened The Courtyard at Pescado to serve guests on the ground floor of the 'Orleans' building. With only so much space in the rooftop restaurant, it only made sense to extend services to the quaint street-level space in Rosemary. The Courtyard is based on the vibrant feel and musical heritage of New Orleans where visitors will experience a touch of refinement while enjoying handcrafted cocktails and small bites while taking in the nightly music shows.

The restaurant recently expanded into full-service catering and events, bringing the quality, fresh and innovative food and beverage options Pescado is known for, anywhere. Pescado hosts all types of events and occasions, from birthday parties and anniversaries to the special day of the brides and grooms who choose Rosemary Beach to say their vows. The Rooftop and The Courtyard make for spectacular locations to live out the most memorable experiences with the added bonus of the Gulf of Mexico serving as the backdrop.

"Wedding season has become very busy for us, as such we're now offering everything from event planning, floral design and off-site catering all through Pescado," said Wright.

Other new additions are its handcrafted cocktail and charcuterie classes, which have been very popular with bachelorette parties and groups visiting the beach looking for a memorable, fun experience together.

"The cocktail classes have been a big hit with our



Views and Food from Pescado

guests since we released the interactive group experience in Rosemary," added Wright.

In the dining room, Chef Brendan Wakeham and Chef Brandon Brown continue to keep the food eclectic with thoughtfully-sourced ingredients and innovative pairings. They go out of their way to secure unique offerings not commonly found in the area.

The Chef's Feast features whole grilled fish, chimichurri, vegetable melange, clams, mussels, shrimp and pickled red onions. The clams and mussels appetizer is served in a coconut curry broth with cherry tomato, ginger and basil, along with a warm baguette.

The seafood is mouth-watering and definitely a specialty, but there's more than just seafood. There's something for everyone on the menu, which also features the finest cuts of meat, fresh greens and exquisite cheese boards.

"Pescado aims to create a shareable experience and being 18 years and over for dinner service is the perfect location for a date night or friends night out," said

Wright. "The rooftop books fast but there are now more ways to enjoy the Pescado experience."

The Courtyard at Pescado is based on the vibrant feel and musical heritage of New Orleans, where visitors will experience a touch of refinement while enjoying handcrafted cocktails and small bites while taking in the nightly music shows.

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# Between the Biscuit

*Scratch Biscuit Kitchen creates a charming café for the whole family*

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON



There are plenty of options as to what you can stack between these fluffy, buttery, tender squares that'll remind you of the ones Grandma used to make.



In less than three years, Scratch Biscuit Kitchen has become a go-to for foodies in WaterColor, with unique and affordable dishes and a cool vibe.

This year, Scratch brought a new restaurant manager on board.

"She's a former executive chef, and that's exactly what we were looking for," says Jeremy Smith, Director of Restaurants for WaterColor. Smith also oversees Fish Out of Water, Gather Kitchen and Beach Cow, among others.

Scratch overhauled its menu in April, expanding upon the most popular menu items.

"We added a lot of new things," says Smith. "Previously, there were a lot of different biscuit-style sandwiches with names like Down Home and Deep South, which was a little confusing to some of the customers. We took some of the most popular ones and added on to them."

New menu items include the Biscuit Burger (also available as a sandwich) and Director of Culinary Blaine Wilkinson's "Grub Bowls," already wildly popular with the Scratch clientele.

"Absolutely charming, perfectly-priced and delightfully delicious," raves Emily D. from Houston, Texas.

Smith zeroes in on the restaurant's affordability and convenience as the most appealing qualities. "Whether you're by yourself or with your family, you can get

breakfast quickly," he says. "We're trying to create an affordable \$12 lunch. A main course, dessert and beverage between noon and 2 p.m. A fresh, hot, quick and easy meal with locals and workers in the area in mind."

Stay tuned as the restaurant is in the process of expanding its outside dining area and recently began selling its signature whole bean coffee. Scratch is constantly revamping its retail merchandise—mugs, apparel and signs with clever and funny sayings. You can get your very own Scratch mug and membership into the "Mug Club" for \$35.99. The "perks" include unlimited coffee for a dollar a pop.

Scratch offers dine-in, outdoor seating and in-store pickup. "Online ordering is very helpful and convenient," Smith says. "It's an awesome tool for people who want to grab and go for the whole family."

For those dining in, the menu includes mimosas, domestic and imported beer, as well as Scratch's personal blend of coffee. On the sweet side of the house, try the French Toast Sticks, Toffee Biscuit Pudding or Griddle Cakes (seven to choose from). A kids' menu and gluten-free offerings are available.

Other menu highlights include N'awlins shrimp (or andouille sausage) and grits and "Good for Ya!" dishes like housemade granola and yogurt boats, smoked salmon and avocado toast and seasonal farm fresh fruit.

And, of course, their made-from-scratch biscuits. There are plenty of options as to what you can stack between these "fluffy, buttery, tender squares that'll remind you of the ones Grandma used to make"—fried chicken, breakfast favorites, even angus beef burgers. Biscuits and muffins can also be purchased (and enjoyed) by the dozen and half-dozen.

You can salivate over the entire menu at Scratch's website and even view a short step-by-step biscuit tutorial.

Through August, enjoy live entertainment on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The lineup includes Kyle LaMonica, Otha Allen, Brett Stafford Smith, Joey Shaling, Christon Birge and Weston Hines.

***Scratch Biscuit Kitchen, located at 1777 Scenic Highway 30A Suite 120 in the WaterColor Town Center, is open daily from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (6:30 a.m. for carryout orders). Call 850-231-6550, visit [scratchbk.com](http://scratchbk.com) and follow on Facebook and Instagram @scratchbiscuitkitchen***



# The Summer Kitchen Cafe

## A rich history, serving a new generation in Rosemary Beach

BY TESS FARMER

The Summer Kitchen Cafe dates back to the development of the town of Rosemary Beach itself. Way back when, a “summer kitchen” was an outbuilding where all the household cooking was done in an effort to keep the heat out of the main house.

Chef James Dillon and his wife Miriam opened the cafe in 1999 and it only seemed appropriate to name the first restaurant in Rosemary Beach The Summer Kitchen. They invited the surrounding community in for a bite to help keep the heat out of their own kitchen.

The concept of a summer kitchen has historical roots in the Mediterranean and coastal regions, where it was common to have a separate kitchen space outdoors to prepare meals during the warmer months.

The Summer Kitchen was the first restaurant and commercial business in Rosemary Beach. The master-planned coastal community was developed by the Rosemary Beach Land Company in the early 1990s, with construction starting in 1995.

“Our humble beginnings took place in a little red sandwich shack,” said Dillon. “We’ve occupied four locations in Rosemary since that time.”

Each variation of the restaurant offered the same casual and comfortable setting with delectable, fresh food. Over the years, the kitchen offered breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Today you can find the Summer Kitchen nestled in below the Rosemary Beach Inn, one of the most iconic buildings in the town of Rosemary Beach, which is also owned and operated by the couple.

The Summer Kitchen, the Rosemary Beach Inn—as well as the Dillons themselves—are notable staples in the community. The building’s design reflects the town’s emphasis on New Urbanism, which promotes walkability, community interaction and architectural harmony.

James recounts each variation of the Summer Kitchen and its impact in the town, recalling fondly the years when it was located on Barrett Square.

The cafe has always been and will continue to be an “everyone welcome” kind of place where families, couples and even dogs are welcome. At that point in its history, it had also become a gathering place for students at the nearby O’hana Institute.

“The courtyard in that location offered the perfect



their teenage years with the Dillons, serving as mentors and offering guidance in entrepreneurship.

The Summer Kitchen has always been a space where locals and visitors can come together, fostering a sense of community and connection. Serving as a focal point for socializing, gathering and enjoying outdoor meals, enhancing the community’s overall liveliness and camaraderie.

“That sure was a special time and now we’ve loved the new venture of running the Inn and welcoming visitors for more than a meal,” said Miriam Dillon. “This is another wonderful opportunity to get to know our guests and offering them the warm hospitality our community is known for.”

One of the many perks of staying at the Inn is a complimentary breakfast at the Summer Kitchen Cafe, putting visitors right in the heart of the central square of Rosemary Beach, known as the Western Green.

Over the years, the Summer Kitchen has become a popular gathering spot for residents and a focal point of community events in Rosemary Beach. The Dillons have created an easygoing and friendly place, with a menu that

has everything from bacon and eggs to kale salads. Sourcing fresh, seasonal ingredients is also a cornerstone of the food at the cafe.

“The Summer Kitchen Cafe continues to serve as a symbol of the community spirit and outdoor lifestyle embraced in Rosemary Beach”

Today, the Summer Kitchen Cafe continues to serve as a symbol of the community spirit and outdoor lifestyle embraced in Rosemary Beach. Both the cafe and now the Rosemary Beach Inn stand as a testament to the town’s commitment to thoughtful architecture and creating spaces that foster community connections.

**The Summer Kitchen Cafe**  
**Open daily from 7:30 till 3 p.m.**  
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## Gather 'Round

*Bayfront restaurant Farm & Fire offers unique flavor profiles and a focus on community*

BY TESS FARMER



Owned and operated by Jim Shirley and his team of restaurateurs, Farm & Fire has evolved over the years into its current combination of rustic charm, modern design and communal atmosphere, all while serving up some of the most unique flavor profiles in South Walton.

Farm & Fire's sister restaurants include North Beach Social, which is a more casual eatery downstairs and The Bay South Walton, located across the street.

All three restaurants are positioned on the banks of the Choctawhatchee Bay, offering stunning sunset views to the backdrop of food shared with family and friends.

Farm & Fire has created an inviting and comfortable space where guests can enjoy a memorable dining experience while immersing in the beauty of the surrounding area. The restaurant also plans a calendar of seasonal events to include live music from local and regional musicians featuring new genres of music in addition to local favorites.

New this fall is a classic movie night series featuring family favorite classic film titles, which will be played on a large screen inside the restaurant. Another event that's taken off in popularity are the video game tournaments hosted at the restaurant.

"These events have been a great success so far and we've been excited to see so many locals and visitors coming together to enjoy a meal and a favorite activity," said Madison Shirley, vice president for Shirley Enterprises, who also happens to be the daughter of Chef Jim Shirley.

"Farm & Fire is truly the epitome of a friendly meeting place where people and ideas come together to

foster community and connection," she said. "We pride ourselves on our connection to the local community and strive to be a cornerstone of support and

reliability to our people — it's the foundation of our company's mission."

Inspired by the unique meeting places found in every culture (izakayas, pubs, taverns, tapas bars, watering holes), the Shirley team strives to craft a diverse menu and dining experience that is high-quality, yet approachable. Meant to be shared among friends, the rotating menu of seasonal items pairs with a carefully-curated selection of dynamic cocktails, craft beer, wine, sake, whiskeys and more.

The restaurant also pays homage to its bayfront location. Large windows allow natural light to flood the space, offering expansive views of the beautiful bay sunsets.

The menu options are as creative as they are mouth-watering, with farm features including the Wagyu burger with roasted shiitake mushroom, Tabasco onion rings, little gem lettuce, pecan bacon and American cheese, to fresh gulf seafood like the pan-seared redfish with house fried rice.

Items on the menu combine Asian flavors with fresh, quality ingredients from local farms and the Gulf of Mexico. The menu updates with the seasons, but customer favorites remain staples, include handmade pork dumplings pan-seared and steamed with spicy soy and ginger dipping sauce; roasted garlic and rosemary chicken wings served with

As has been the case with each one of Shirley's restaurant concepts in South Walton, Farm & Fire continues the tradition of quality service and simple, flavorful and fresh food bringing together friends and families to make lasting memories.

onions, peppers and Romano cheese; and the freshest poke bowl around with sashimi-grade tuna cut into cubes and seasoned with spicy soy over wakame seaweed salad, steamed seasoned rice and avocado.

The sushi options are some of the freshest in South Walton and the wood-fired pizza is a favorite among locals and visitors alike.

An insider tip is to order your pizzas upstairs at Farm & Fire to enjoy down on the banks of the bay while the kids play with the oversized games and toys.

As has been the case with each one of Shirley's restaurant concepts in South Walton, Farm & Fire continues the tradition of quality service and simple, flavorful and fresh food bringing together friends and families to make lasting memories.

**Farm & Fire South Walton**

**24200 US-331**

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**[www.farmandfiresouthwalton.com](http://www.farmandfiresouthwalton.com)**

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# A Symphony of Architecture and Design

## Indulge in beachfront luxury in Seagrove Beach

BY BOBBY PARKER

Nestled on the pristine sands of the Emerald Coast stands a new construction beachfront sanctuary that is more than a home; it's a harmonious blend of architectural brilliance and interior design mastery. Geoff Chick, the visionary architect, and Ashley Gilbreath, the celebrated interior designer, have joined forces to create a coastal masterpiece that redefines luxury living in the heart of Seagrove Beach on 30A.

Geoff Chick, a Cornell University graduate, found his inspiration in the unparalleled quality of life along the Florida Panhandle. Frustrated by the cookie-cutter nature of mainstream housing, he founded Geoff Chick & Associates in 2001, driven by a commitment to intimate collaboration and personalized design. As a registered architect in Florida and a proud member of the American Institute of Architects, Chick seamlessly merges established vernacular forms with a modern aesthetic. His creations, including this beachfront haven, reflect a deep understanding of local building traditions and a profound sense of scale.

The exterior of this four-story architectural marvel is a testament to Chick's meticulous craftsmanship. Set on a sprawling 0.6-acre lot, the home features three spacious garage spaces and a heated saltwater pool that beckons with its shimmering allure against the backdrop of the Gulf. Expansive terraces mirror the vastness of the surrounding seascape, providing the perfect setting for open-air dining under the starlit sky. This is refined living against the stunning canvas of Seagrove Beach.

Step through the grand entrance into an interior that transcends the ordinary. With 7,911 square feet of elegantly-designed living space, the home unfolds over four stories, revealing eight exquisitely-appointed bedrooms and eleven lavish bathrooms. The interiors, curated by Ashley Gilbreath, are a symphony of comfort and sophistication, marrying timeless elegance with modern convenience.



Stunning views and clean, modern interiors are the hallmark of Geoff Chick.



outdoor living coalesce, inviting residents to bask in the soothing rhythm of the crashing waves. Ascend to the third floor, where the primary bedroom awaits with panoramic views of the Gulf, providing a private retreat amidst the azure expanse.

Ashley Gilbreath, a Southern-based luminary, has infused the property with her meticulous touch. Featured in distinguished publications such as *Southern Living* and *Veranda*, Gilbreath's designs embody thoughtful and patient craftsmanship. A graduate of Auburn University and the New York School of Interior Design, Gilbreath's impact on the design world is undeniable. The fully-furnished property, boasting a nearly \$1 million interior design budget, stands as a testament to her ability to infuse homes with casual elegance and a sense of everyday celebration.

For Gilbreath, every moment within the home should be wrapped in a feeling of joy, comfort and

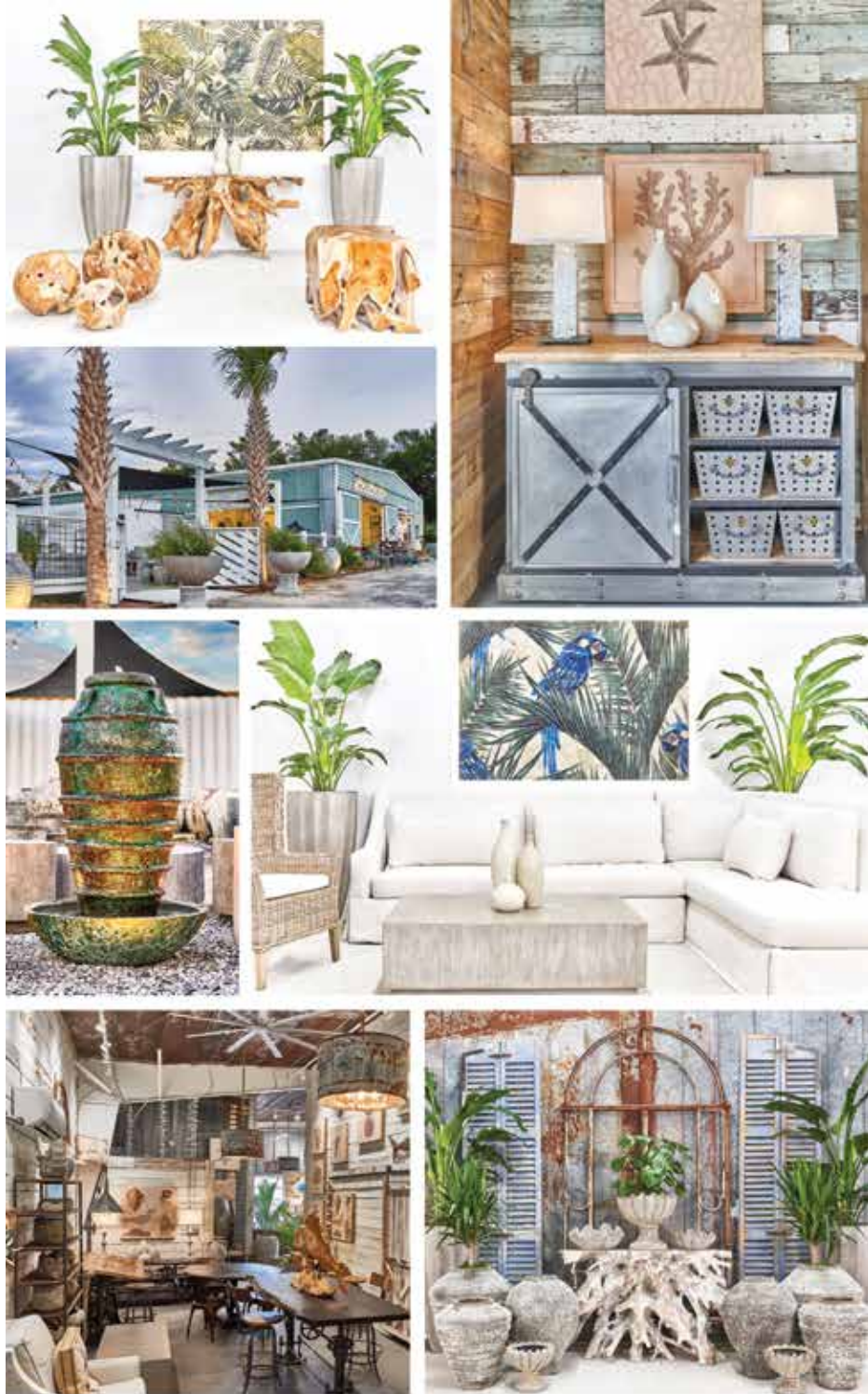
The second floor hosts a grand kitchen and main living room, seamlessly connected to the Gulf-front heated saltwater pool and outdoor kitchen. This intentional design creates a space where indoor and

beauty. The details, from plush interiors to sweeping vistas that frame each room, reflect an unwavering commitment to uncompromising quality. This beachfront haven isn't just a home; it's the start of a new coastal legacy where every moment becomes a treasured memory in the making.

Geoff Chick and Ashley Gilbreath have created more than a residence; they've crafted an immersive experience, a symphony of coastal opulence that invites residents to savor the beauty of the Gulf and indulge in the luxuries of refined living. This is not merely a beachfront home; it's a masterpiece where architecture and design converge to create a lifestyle of uncompromising quality and leisure. Every corner of this coastal sanctuary tells a story, inviting you to immerse yourself in the luxurious narrative of a home that transcends the ordinary, embracing the extraordinary in every detail.

**71 Chivas Lane is exclusively listed by Allen Adams and Ryan DeVore of 850 Properties - a boutique real estate brokerage based in Blue Mountain Beach specializing in the luxury home market spanning from Destin to St. George Island. For more information, visit [850Properties.com](http://850Properties.com) or call Allen Adams at (850) 855-6140**





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