

# the thirty-a REVIEW™

a review of 30-A's finest people • places • things

## INSIDE:

The Best Restaurants,  
Chefs, and Sustainable  
Culinary Arts on 30-A

ANNUAL

*Dining*  
ISSUE

Food by  
Scratch Biscuit Kitchen

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They are of each other.*

*– Frank Lloyd Wright*





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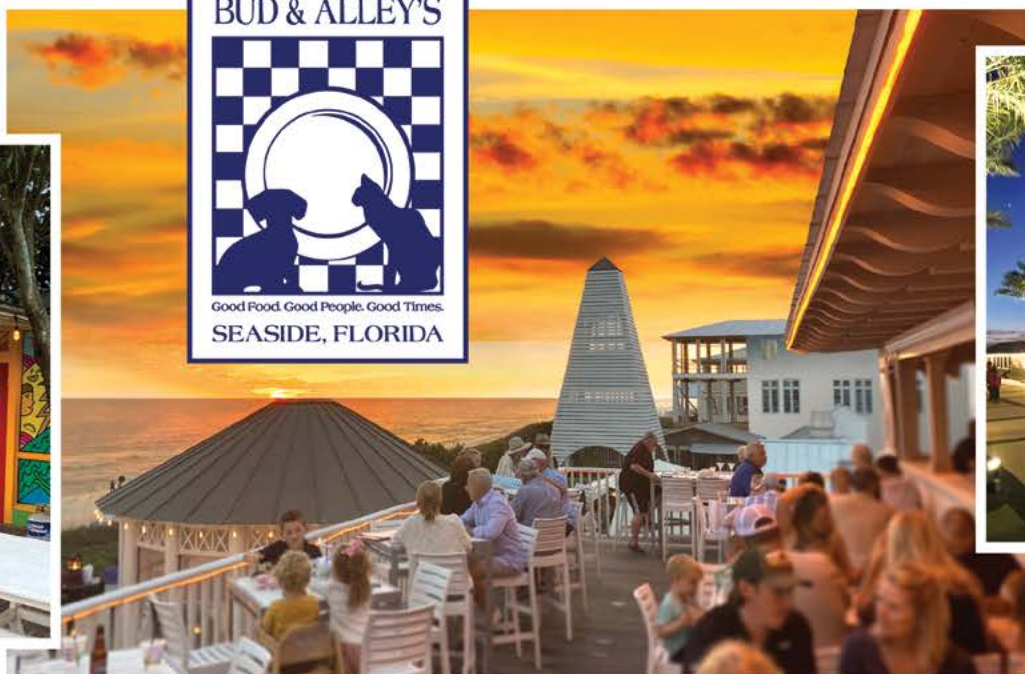
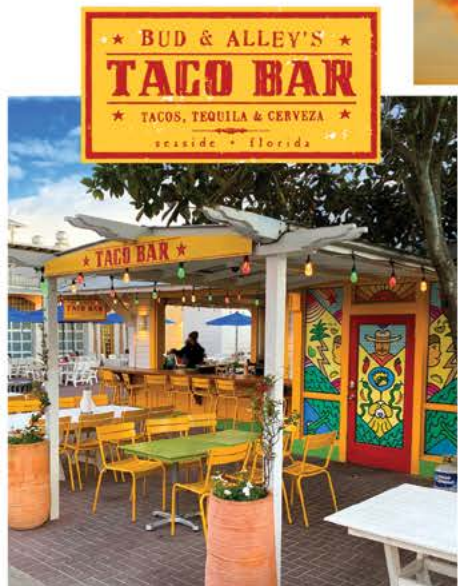
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# letter from the publisher

## BON APPÉTIT



Winter at the beach is a time of rest, respite, and solitude. A time to wind down without the crowds and enjoy life and a different type of beach landscape.

Hence there is no better time to celebrate the area's best eats with our annual dining guide. The chefs and restaurateurs of 30-A and the South Walton area are both mavericks and visionaries. They put the same passion into their concepts and menus that they do in celebrating life.

We invite you to peruse through the pages that follow and try out these lovely establishments that represent some of our favorites. We warn you though, don't read on an empty stomach.

While the stories that follow represent some of our favorites, they are by no means a definitive guide of 30-A's best. There is no way we can include all the gems in this one issue. This is just a starting place for you to explore and a reminder of some of the classics.

Bon appétit,

Miles K. Neiman

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



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## about the cover

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Port St. Joe Biscuit

### **Photography**

Jacqueline Ward

### **Location**

Scratch Biscuit Kitchen



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# dining

## Just Roll with It!

*Blue Mountain Bakery carries on the tradition in Blue Mountain Beach*

BY TESS FARMER

Blue Mountain Bakery is bringing together the community, bringing a sense of pride to both the locals and tourists who enjoy the beaches of Blue Mountain Beach. Formerly named La Loba's Bakery, in 2019 new owners Kyle Swift and Dallin Harris rebranded the mainstay bakery. The business has flourished in the midst of the pandemic, which is in large part due to the vision of Swift and Harris as well as their growing team.

Their goal has and always will be to produce great tasting food using the freshest and quality whole food ingredients available, carrying on from La Loba's. "That part remains, we just felt the new name fits with the energy we're bringing to the vibrant community around Blue Mountain," says Swift.

Popular menu items are the frittatas, quiches, cinnamon rolls with or without frosting, blueberry scones, the savory turkey wraps, the beans, greens and rice bowl, and the famous maple nut granola. Blue Mountain Bakery is also your one-stop-shop for special occasion treats, wedding and birthday cakes, and cupcakes.

With a recent deck expansion to seat more guests, the bakery now offers space for live music and other events. The block parties held throughout the year feature music from local bands and extended bakery hours for dinner and dessert. The success of those events has contributed to the decision to open for dinner starting fall 2021.

"We also want to make it easy for those visiting to catch some live music and grab dinner on their last night in town while also picking up breakfast, so check-out morning is not so stressful," says Swift.

Blue Mountain Bakery also offers take-and-reheat meals for easy at-home dinners as well as holiday catering menus for those looking for gourmet meals in a pinch, which can include breakfast casseroles, meats, vegetables, and side dishes, not to mention the freshly baked rolls, cornbread, olive rolls, and desserts.

The growth of the bakery and catering company has also led to expansion into a new 2,100 square-foot kitchen space just down the road in Santa Rosa Beach.

With a recent deck expansion to seat more guests, the bakery now offers space for live music and other events.

This will free up more room in the small-but-quaint bakery location.

"The bakery is in a great location right on 30-A, and we want to utilize it and make sure people know they are always welcome," says Swift. "Our new motto is *just roll with it*, which is fitting considering current times and also a nod to our famous cinnamon rolls."

Chef Kyle is well-known on 30-A as he has participated in Chef Emeril's Taste of the Race, benefitting Seaside Neighborhood School and the South Walton Fire Department's pancake breakfasts. He was also involved in Hurricane Michael recovery efforts setting up multiple food kitchens within days of the storm hitting, which reignited his passion for catering and serving the community.

"Our goal is to bring the community together," Swift says. "In a time of so much divisiveness, it's truly inspiring to see locals, visitors, friends, and family coming together over the shared love of this beautiful place and food. Forming these connections is what it's all about."

***Blue Mountain Bakery is located in the Highpoint Center next to For The Health Of It and Big Daddy's Bikes in Blue Mountain Beach. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 7:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Orders are accepted online or by calling (850) 257-0400.***



## Getting on Board!

*Local entrepreneur offers gourmet charcuterie boards and boxes*

BY TESS FARMER



Elisabetta Coli



From the banks of a coastal town in central Italy to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico in Florida, Elisabetta Coli has brought her love and appreciation of good food to visitors and locals on 30-A.

Born and raised in Livorno, Italy, Coli spent most of her afternoons growing up with her grandmother cooking and preparing daily meals and the very important family meal every Saturday. “Our friends and family would spend at least four hours around the table together, laughing, talking and just enjoying being in each other’s company,” says Coli. “It was such a part of our culture and community.”

Coli moved to Pensacola when she was 17, where her mother was originally from, and eventually moved east to Santa Rosa Beach three years ago. She planted roots here and in 2020 started her own business—Buon Appetito 30a—creating gourmet charcuterie boards to meet the demands of local charcuterie freaks.

Growing in popularity in America over the years, the popular food craze offers the perfect snack and grazing for meals, parties or special occasions.

Before we get to the here and now, here’s a bit of a history lesson. Charcuterie is derived from the French words for cooked meat. The word was used to describe shops in 15th century France that sold products that were made from pork. However, the practice of salting and smoking meats to preserve them dates back about 6,000 years to ancient Rome.

Many of the common meats considered to be charcuterie include capocollo, salami, and prosciutto. Dry-cured chorizo and mortadella are also regularly-used meats while the cheese is solely based on preference.

Coli says it comes down to what pairs better with the meat on your platter, and she has recommendations if you need assistance deciding. A typical board has a

variety of different cheeses; Bellavitano, aged cheddar, or aged gouda are popular choices. So are cheeses like gruyere or Parmigiano-Reggiano. “There should always be contrasting cheeses so each bite can have a different flavor profile to it,” adds Coli. She sources local ingredients from the Seaside and Rosemary Beach farmers’ markets as well.

“Salty meats such as prosciutto go well with chilled, sparkling wines. That is because they are low in alcohol content, high in acid, and a little sweet to balance out the saltiness. Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Noir would be great choices, too,” she adds. Historically, full-bodied red wines, like Merlot or Cabernet, are commonly paired with charcuterie.

Coli has worked in the restaurant industry for several years and this new endeavor has offered her a creative outlet to express her passion for food and design. “So many people are loving the visual presentation of colors and textures as well as special touches like the bruschetta crostini and the traditional Italian almond cookies I make from scratch called Ricciarelli.”

She also adds homemade spreads and dipping oils to complement the meats and cheeses. Customers keep the boards and they also come with a honey jar, crackers, berries, grapes, dried fruits, nuts, mustard, olives, and pickles. Coli customizes the boards for vegetarian and gluten-free clients, too. A range of sizes are offered as well as a grazing box which serves two to four people.

Customer Chelsea Sepa called Buon Appetito 30a prior to her visit earlier this year. “Elisabetta helped me ask my best friend to be my maid of honor... with cheese! It was the perfect, most personalized ‘proposal’ I could think of, being that I’m a huge charcuterie fan and it’s something often on the table at gatherings,” says Sepa. “As someone who doesn’t live in the area, Elisabetta really went above and beyond in multiple ways to not only personalize my order by including a custom note at my request, but also offered creative touches for making everything extra special. Needless to say, my friend said yes and commented on how delicious and thoughtful certain elements were, especially the dates stuffed with mascarpone, crisp fresh fruit and quality-aged cheddar.”

“I love that I can play as part in bringing together friends and families, especially during this time in the world,” adds Coli. “Community and food is such a part of culture and it’s been so rewarding to offer something special for my customers. Food and snacking always offers a way to celebrate the simple pleasures in life!”

**Find Buon Appetito 30a online at [buonappetito30a.godaddysites.com](http://buonappetito30a.godaddysites.com), or email: to [buonappetito30a@gmail.com](mailto:buonappetito30a@gmail.com) or call (850) 530-6392,**



# Fresh Ingredients + Fresh Salt Air = Fresh Perspective

## *Chiringo offers the best of the beach in Grayton*

BY TESS FARMER

The restaurant and bar blends saltwater staples, elevated proteins, and fresh produce to recreate the bright and bold flavors of easy sunny days by the water.

As Grayton Beach continues to rank as one of the top beaches in America, it's the vibrant community that makes this beach town sought after more with each passing year. Chiringo, a casual beachside restaurant and bar serving a vibrant surf-side cuisine, came on the scene in Grayton in April 2016 and also has a loyal customer following coming back for more year after year.

The name is derived from the Spanish “chiringuito”, meaning the casual, often portable seaside bars in Southern Spain. Owner and founding partner Andy McKoski traveled to Spain to visit some of its coastal bars as inspiration prior to acquiring the space in the heart of Grayton Beach.

Originally from South Florida, McKoski grew up in the restaurant industry and spent much of his college days as a bartender and waiter. Having left the business behind for a life outside of the hospitality industry, McKoski dove back into the restaurant business in 2006, opening a string of successful restaurants throughout the southeast before deciding Grayton Beach was his ultimate destination and relocated to the area in 2015.

Located in the eclectic, soulful center of 30-A in Grayton Beach, Chiringo's laidback vibe, fresh juice cocktails, and elevated “beach food” menu creates a dining experience with a stellar backdrop for lasting memories along the Gulf of Mexico.

The restaurant and bar blends saltwater staples, elevated proteins, and fresh produce to recreate the bright and bold flavors of easy sunny days by the water. “We use fresh fish, fresh juice; we hand-cut all of our



Chiringo Partners: Andy McKoski, Travis Matney and Jenny Toney

2018, called Chiringa, a smaller restaurant serving up the same coastal vibe, drinks, and dishes to those dreaming of returning to days at the beach.

“We want to continue to take the magic of Grayton Beach to other communities across the Southeast and Midwest,” adds McKoski. “The community has grown organically over the years and there's so much value in what that represents; we are proud to become a part of the deep history here and see the potential of bringing the Grayton vibe to our customers back in their home states.”

Both restaurants were operating to-go service during Florida and Georgia's restrictive periods and the operators jumped into quick action to develop a plan to back the staff and implement all guidelines. The restaurants also organized fundraisers to support the community and employees during the pandemic and kept everyone employed.

“As challenging as it was to consider the unknowns at that time, we are reminded how rewarding it is to come through to the other side,” McKoski says.

McKoski, his wife, and young son recently moved back to Atlanta but still get in plenty of visits to Grayton Beach. “The way of life at the beach taught me to slow down and to accept things will happen when they're supposed to happen. We were all reminded of that in the past year, learning to have more patience and knowing that the tide will rise again.”

**Chiringo is located in the heart of Grayton Beach at 63 Hotz Avenue. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. Bar open till 11 p.m. For more information, visit [chiringograyton.com](http://chiringograyton.com) or call (850) 534-4449.**



Food photos by Andy McKoski



Lobster Roll with Fries

fries and tortillas,” says McKoski. “Our goal is to elevate your favorite beach meals—fresh fried shrimp but make it gluten free, hand cut fresh french fries, and all our dips and sauces are made in house. The pizza pie with blackened gulf shrimp features dough and sauce that are also made fresh in house and finished off with a Lil' Chubby ice cream sandwich (which isn't so little).”

With a strong customer base from the Atlanta area on vacation at the beach, McKoski was prompted to open the first sister restaurant in Alpharetta in October

# The Citizen at Alys Beach

BY KEVIN BOYLE

I guess it would be cliché to start an article writing about a cool, new, groundbreaking restaurant concept with “Back in my day...”

Color me cliché then because back in my day, 15 years ago, there were five places to eat: Shades in Inlet, the bar at Borago, Paige Schnell’s house, a Sunday Red Bar burger, or the 2AM Tom Thumb Burrito. I’m not proud of that last one. You could not find a craft cocktail joint or a raw bar where you were not concerned of nicking your elbow on an exposed nail and getting lockjaw.

I also did not want to say, “Boy, times have changed...” in my article.

But boy, times have changed. Enter concepts by multiple chefs and families, including Shirley, McDonald, Nickerson, the Corchis family, and the Freers. Now the dining options in South Walton are matching the growth of our bustling tourist destination.

One by one, these new concepts raise the bar in quality of both the restaurant design and the menu selection.

Last one, I did not want to say, “Well, there’s a new Sheriff in town...” And I won’t say that.

I have always said that this area needs a true whiskey bar or tavern, so I was excited to see the words “seaside tavern” included in the description of the The Citizen restaurant. When you read that, you almost think that the Gorton’s yellow jacket fisherman is going to be the host to greet you as you enter. And I mean that as a compliment.

The entrance, albeit lacking a cartoon captain mascot, is a dramatic one. And that’s just the beginning. “The 3 things that I would say define the restaurant are really the first 3 things you see when you walk through the front door,” describes owner Jeremy Walton. “One, a really large and beautiful bar; two, the Raw Bar; and three, the ten-foot wood burning hearth.

“We wanted to work to build a really nice bar that serves great food. As to what sets it apart, I think is in large part due to the experience and vibe that the



Photos by Julia  
Kate Mace



combination of product, service, and design creates. It was definitely the entirety of my focus in working to design it with our team and our creative partners.”

I can sense from some of you reading this article wondering why I haven’t mentioned what food or drinks they serve. I apologize for the delay.

Highlights of the food menu include the raw bar oysters and ceviche, roasted grouper, house made tagliatelle, and a coconut curry butternut squash soup. If it seems a bit scattered, you’re right. That is exactly the point.

“We wanted to be able to draw inspiration from a variety of cuisines but still be rooted in a sense of place,” Walton says. “A lot of time was spent trying to develop the right mix of offerings and to recognize that in a limited number of options people were going to be looking for different things. Striking a balance between comfort and healthier clean options, as well as people who look for more familiar and classical offerings, as well as more innovative options. We worked to not be perceived as a seafood restaurant or a meat centric restaurant.”

The focus on the beverage service is obvious with Better Together Beverage owner and Alys Beach veteran Christine Tarpey as the mastermind behind the menu.

“Whether it be a shaved ice cocktail or a house-infused spirit, the bar program at The Citizen is built to straddle the line between classic cocktails done really well to curations designed with the adventurous diner in mind,” Tarpey says.

“The wine list continues to walk that line by offering allocated gems from all over the world to innovative natural wine producers who are paving the way in the wine industry. The non-drinkers are also represented by way of the ‘Zero Proof’ portion of the beverage menu, which offers seasonal creations for all to enjoy.”

One more I definitely did not want to end with: “Things were better back in my day...” And I won’t because this kind of growth is delicious for our community. See you at the raw bar!

*Inspired by coastal cuisine from around the world, The Citizen is a seaside tavern located within the town center of Alys Beach. For more information, call (850) 909-0702 or visit CitizenAlys.com. Reservations not currently accepted.*

*Kevin Boyle has been a staple of 30-A and South Walton for over 15 years, establishing himself in the community through performing theater, events, professional consulting, and now as a Real Estate Advisor with Engel & Völkers. He lives with his wife, two children, and a dog, all of whom have more authority than he does.*



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A vibrant advertisement for 'The Candy Bar' in Watercolor, FL. The background is filled with bags of 'Dubble Bubble' candy. In the center is a large, stylized fish-shaped logo with the text 'The Candy Bar' and 'Watercolor, FL'. Surrounding the logo are four photos: a hand holding a colorful candy creation, a group of young women smiling, a young girl holding a large blue cotton candy, and a young boy holding a large blue candy creation. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text 'A SWEET SHOP FOR ALL AGES' and the address '1777E HWY 30A, WATERCOLOR, FL | Instagram: thecandybar30a'. The entire graphic is framed with a black and white filmstrip border.

A SWEET SHOP FOR ALL AGES

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# Fresh Ideas and Fresh Ingredients: LaCo Latin Coastal Kitchen in Seacrest Beach

BY DENISE K. JAMES

Looking for a tasty and unique menu along the 30-A corridor in Seacrest Beach? La Cocina—now known as LaCo—Latin Coastal Kitchen is well worth your time. Featuring fresh ingredients, delicious cocktails, and an atmosphere that will enhance everyday life, LaCo is the perfect spot for lunch, dinner, and now brunch, no matter the season. We caught up with general manager Sarah Hampton to learn more about this iconic restaurant, and our mouths are watering just thinking about our next visit.

## Explain the history of LaCo Latin Coastal Kitchen.

Rick Spell and his daughter and business partner, Christy Spell Terry, were already owners of a successful sports pub in Memphis when they started looking around 30-A to add to the Spell Restaurant Group. In February 2015, they purchased both La Cocina and George's at Alys Beach. The first (La Cocina) renovation took place in 2017, and in 2018 Eric Bartholomew was hired as executive chef and tasked with overhauling the menu. Chef Eric used his years of experience cooking south of the border to upgrade the appetizers, expand the taco selection, and add traditional coastal Latin dishes. In January of 2021, the restaurant underwent its second major renovation. La Cocina was recently rebranded as LaCo, with a new logo to match the elegance of the menu.

## What does it mean to have a Latin and Coastal kitchen?

Chef Eric has utilized his many years of experience with Mexican and Latin cuisine to showcase traditional Latin flavors and put a twist on classic dishes. He strives to create dishes that highlight coastal cuisine, mainly from Mexico but also from Central and South America. We strive to expose guests to flavors and ingredients they may be unfamiliar with. The freshness and precise execution are what makes our food special. We utilize fresh Gulf seafood, locally sourced grass-fed beef from Tall Pines in Bonifay, Florida, and other regional purveyors.

## What is the cocktail program like at LaCo?

Over the past few years, we have been focused on elevating the specialty cocktails available from our bar. Our fresh-made margaritas and the addition of several

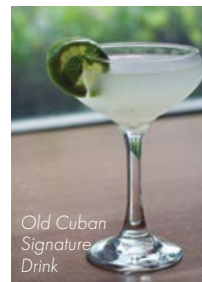


craft cocktails has made all the difference. The key ingredient in our margaritas is fresh lime juice, squeezed daily in the restaurant. Then we add a kiss of agave and your choice of tequila.

We also serve several Latin-inspired cocktails. One of the newer ones is the Old Cuban, made with silver rum, fresh lime juice, fresh mint, orange bitters, and topped with champagne. Our classic Caipirinha is made with cachaça, fresh orange, and lemon and lime juices. Lastly, the Latin Fashion is a play on an Old Fashioned but made with reposado tequila, ancho reyes, smoked chili, and orange bitters.

## What are the most popular menu items that keep customers coming back?

We have a few items that have become favorites. Our local catch of fresh red snapper, served over shishito



fried rice with a habanero citrus glaze, is a crowd pleaser. We also have 10 unique tacos to choose from, including pork belly with pineapple jicama salsa; housemade chorizo with salsa verde, red onion, cotija cheese, and cilantro; and a veggie taco with adobo-roasted shiitake mushrooms, grilled peppers and onions, cotija cheese, charred corn, kale slaw, and salsa macha.

## Share a new dish or drink you are excited about.

This season we added a brunch menu. The lobster avocado toast—made with sourdough toast, avocado, scrambled eggs, lobster, arugula, charred baby heirloom tomatoes, and salsa macha—is my personal favorite. But we have something for everyone, including French toast sticks or a s'mores waffle for the kids.

## Describe the atmosphere at LaCo.

LaCo is located in the heart of Seacrest Beach, and our crowds vary with the seasons of 30-A. During the height of the vacation season, we are busy during peak times, but getting a table is still easy if you plan your visit right. I always encourage guests to arrive when our dining room opens, at 11 a.m. for lunch, or 5 p.m. for dinner to find a table. Our Happy Hour is another great reason to visit. The bar stays open from 3 p.m. until 5, serving a scaled-down menu with great drink specials.

## Any news or future plans you want to share with readers?

We are regularly updating and refreshing our libations, and Chef Eric is always experimenting with new menu items. For example, he recently featured a new ahi tuna taco for “National Taco Day” that was amazing! Stay tuned to our social media for specials, as well as new menu items and cocktails.

To learn more, visit [laco30a.com](http://laco30a.com), or [LaCo 30A on Facebook](#).



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# Lola Coastal Italian

## Certified Master Chef Tom Catherall Brings Coastal Italian Dishes to 30-A

BY TESS FARMER

Freshness and real, whole food ingredients are the cornerstone of all menu items at Lola.

After building an empire of chef-driven restaurants in Atlanta, Tom Catherall planned on a retirement on the Emerald Coast spending his days sport fishing and taking in the slower pace. That turned out to be short lived, because in 2020, just as restaurant operations were being restricted, Catherall was signing a lease on the former Acme Oysters restaurant space in Seacrest Beach.

A certified master chef, Catherall's Here to Serve Restaurants group was the successful hospitality umbrella for 12 unique restaurant concepts. His classic chef-driven restaurant empire thrived in the 90s through 2015 as fun, swanky hot spots where Asian, Spanish, and Southern ingredients came together in fusions of flavor and technique. Cuisine ranged from steak, seafood, and sushi to Spanish tapas, with 15 locations in the Atlanta area, which he operated from 1996 until he sold the group in October 2014.

After his brief retirement, Catherall re-entered the restaurant scene in February 2016. He opened Lola Coastal Italian in June 2020 and outfitted the restaurant to serve fresh gulf seafood and homemade pizza to hungry beachgoers... who returned in droves after the beaches reopened.

His entrepreneurial spirit inspired him to establish TC Brands, a popular, innovative Atlanta hospitality company that established his reputation as a pacesetter among the area's restaurateurs. Now Catherall is bringing his talents to his second home in the Santa Rosa Beach community. He also is the only certified master chef on the gulf and one of 67 in the country.

He's been cooking for 50 years now and has a funny story about how he got started. "Growing up in Newcastle, in northeast England, I wanted to be a motor



Seacrest Entrance



Mural by Leigh Smith Catherall



Grab & Go Bar

mechanic, but my mother would have none of it. She signed me up to be a chef apprentice. It was a four-year program and I worked with some of the best European chefs."

His commitment is to bring chef-inspired menus that are both innovative and fresh, offering some of his best culinary work serving the residents and visitors to the area.

Freshness and real, whole food ingredients are the cornerstone of all menu items at Lola. The pizza dough is made each day from Italian flour, fresh toppings including Italian meats and sauce made with San Marzano tomatoes then cooked in a wood-fired oven. All the seafood is fresh, of course, brought in from local gulf fishermen.

"You won't find salmon here... I have never cooked a frozen fish in my life. If you want good meat, you go to a butcher. It's what I thought everyone did until I came to the States. That's where I saw my first 'meat in a box' and I was not impressed," adds Chef.

"I am happy to say more consumers today are eating with a sustainable focus," he says. "Since the pandemic, most of us have been cooking more than ever at home. My hope is that we learn to forgo processed foods and make good

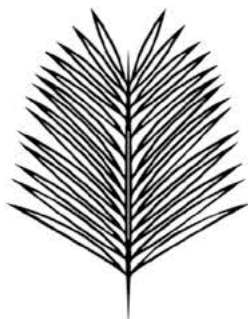
choices like buying fresh fruits and vegetables and visiting local farmer's markets, seafood markets and butcher shops."

Chef Catherall has assembled a top-notch team, including managing partner Andrew Paparella, and Layla Lejla serving up innovative cocktails made with fresh juices. The location also allows the space to host bachelorette parties and private events.

"It's taken off since day one," says Chef. "During spring break week, we were making 130 pizzas a day."

Guests can also choose from grab-and-go items in the cooler case including salads and house made dressings, meatballs, peel and eat shrimp, curry chicken salad, hummus, deviled eggs, and all the charcuterie fixings... not to mention fresh baked key lime pie and tiramisu.

***Lola Coastal Italian is located at 10343 East County Highway 30-A in Seacrest Beach. Open for dinner Monday through Thursday 5-9 p.m. and Friday-Saturday 5-10 p.m. To-go orders accepted by calling (850) 541-9440. Menus available at [lovelola30a.com](http://lovelola30a.com).***



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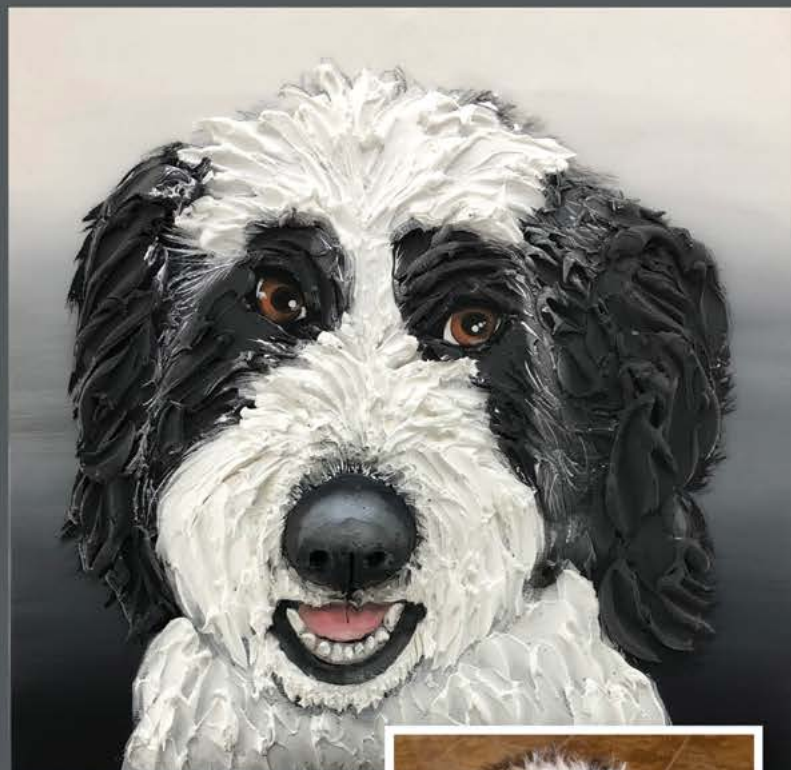
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# Luxury on a Plate

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Offering a sense of luxury unlike any in the local area, Sandestin's new Hotel Effie is the soul of sophistication and class, and that feeling of refinement naturally extends to their signature restaurant, Ovide. Featuring a menu created by Celebrity Chef Hugh Acheson, the food at Ovide clearly shows his love of Southern Gulf fare, his flawless classic French technique, and a bold creativity that has been the hallmark of his long and storied career. Each dish reflects the standard of excellence that the Hotel Effie embodies, heightened with a passion for sustainability and seasonality that explodes with incredible flavor unlike anything else that's crossed your lips.

Open since February 2021, the restaurant has proven to be the culinary gem in Effie's crown, a hotel named for owner and developer Tom Becnel's grandmother, Effie Burns. The picture of hospitality, Effie was a welcoming presence who made every guest feel like part of the family and lavished them with personal attention, always ready with a charming smile that put them immediately at ease. Ovide is an homage to her husband, the namesake of the restaurant, and the perfect way to honor such an impressive man.

An elegant culinary adventure for their guests, Ovide brings together classic Gulf Coast flavors and impeccable classic French technique—both of which are especially important to Georgia native and James Beard Award-winner Chef Acheson, who is the culinary lead for Ovide. "The partnership between Hotel Effie and Chef Acheson to develop the culinary offerings of the hotel has brought both his team and his amazing skills to the table and bar top," says Nogah Winfield, Assistant Director of Marketing at Hotel Effie. "We feel that all of this heightens the travel experience for hotel guests and take them on a culinary journey that they will never forget."

Serving every meal from breakfast to dinner, Ovide proves its range without ever missing a beat. From perfectly cooked eggs—the true test of a chef's prowess—to pancakes and avocado toast, the morning menu is a beautiful array of dishes that proves the saying that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Naturally,

Clockwise from top:  
Burrata Salad, Jumbo  
Lump Crab Toast,  
Eggs Benedict

Photos courtesy  
@ovideff



lunch is more on the casual side, featuring sandwiches and salads as well as entrees and a selection of all-day breakfast items.

Best sellers on the menu include the burrata salad, a fresh ball of soft burrata nestled in beautiful heirloom tomatoes and sweet peaches, drizzled with fresh basil oil vinaigrette. Cooked to perfection, the filet mignon is ten ounces of prime steak accompanied by whipped potato, shiitake mushroom jus, and maître d'hôtel butter. For seafood lovers, the pan roasted red snapper will quickly become a favorite, cooked in a Thai chili emulsion and served over pigeon peas and rice with charred bok choy.

All of Chef Acheson's creations are elevated takes on classics, displaying his respect for the roots of the region

and his creative desire to take these simple dishes to new heights. Effie's signature biscuits, collards, truffle creamed corn, and rice grits all testify to Southern heritage while at the same time making them something more refined. At Ovide, the menu is driven by a respect for sustainability, using seasonal ingredients that provide the highest level of flavor to create something truly remarkable.

Naturally, the dessert menu is every bit as beautiful as one would expect from a restaurant as dedicated to excellence as Ovide. Favorites include decadent pecan pie, moist chocolate cornbread, and luscious crème brûlée.

Executive Chef Lulu Dangerfield has been at Ovide for the past six months, ably leading the staff under her to execute the menu to Chef Acheson's exacting standards. A chef for ten years, Chef Lulu studied culinary arts in Mexico before beginning the career that finally brought her to the Emerald Coast.

Much like the hotel that surrounds it, the interior spaces of Ovide are a designer's dream, featuring a dramatic floral art piece set into the trey ceiling overhead that brings together traditional botanicals with a modern application. Set amidst a stark black background that plays to the dark woodwork and furnishings, the ceiling artwork is almost unexpectedly feminine in an otherwise masculine space.

In addition to the wow-worthy food and bar menus, Ovide also hosts something that one might not expect: live music. Featured every Sunday during brunch, local talent comes to entertain diners while they enjoy their meal.

From unforgettable breakfasts to sophisticated dinners, Ovide is a taste of excellence—and a destination you won't want to miss.

**Located at 1 Grand Sandestin Blvd., Miramar Beach, FL, US 32550. Open daily 7:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m.- 10:00 p.m. for dinner. For more information, call (850) 351-3030 or visit [hoteleffie.com](http://hoteleffie.com).**

# Pazzo Italiano Keeps Local Tradition Alive in Santa Rosa Beach

BY TESS FARMER



Caprese Pasta



Chef Guillermo Dovalina III



Alfonso Pazzo Italiano



Business partners and friends Alfonso Di Bonito and Levente Tischler opened their first restaurant together four years ago in Destin. The success of Pazzo Italiano has been crazy in those few short years, just as the name suggests. The popular Italian restaurant and bar has become a favorite among locals and tourists... so much so that Di Bonito and Tischler expanded with their second location in Santa Rosa Beach.

“We truly are a family run business in every sense, and pride ourselves on quality and commitment to our regular customers and visitors,” says Di Bonito. “We had just begun construction on the second restaurant early in 2020, and for a moment wondered if we should continue once the restrictions on operating restaurants began. We’re glad we forged ahead.”

Since opening in July that year (2020) the restaurant has grown in popularity, and like Destin has many customers who return for the personalized service, authentic Italian dishes, and sophisticated yet comfortable atmosphere.

Santa Rosa Beach local Tracy Miller was happy to come upon Pazzo Italiano in Destin years ago. “Their stylish and welcoming atmosphere was apparent from the moment we entered the door. And being fans for years, our family was so excited when they opened their new location in Santa Rosa Beach,” says Miller. “Both spaces are open, modern, and authentic, and a welcome change.”

Both partners’ families are involved in day-to-day operations of the business, with both wives helping everything seamlessly behind the scenes, as well as

bringing the style and classic design elements to life in the restaurants. “We wanted to create an almost city-like atmosphere where if people feel like dressing up and going out to dinner, they can... at the same time, flip flops are welcome,” adds Di Bonito.

Almost all the staff have been with the restaurant since opening in Destin four years ago, a rarity in a market driven by seasonal tourism, and a testament to the family culture honed by the owners.

Di Bonito is an Italian native and award-winning pizza chef who has been learning, growing, and perfecting his craft since he started working in a bakery in his native Napoli at age 14. His passion for cooking and pride in his work comes from his upbringing, because for Italians food is the centerpiece of human interaction; it’s their language of love.

Tischler’s entrepreneurial spirit led him to Destin from a small town in Romania where he started his career in the restaurant business as a teenager. He always held the vision and dream of opening his own restaurant and met Di Bonito working in a local restaurant after coming to the area in 2004. The two friends are two devoted family men, restaurant lovers and now businessmen, and have been serving and delighting their customers here for over 20 years.

“It’s been our heart and soul. We are passionate about this business and providing the best experience,” says Di Bonito.

“Our menu has been carefully pieced together to bring a combination of favorite Italian staples, some with

more sophisticated flavors and a touch of fun and some new crazy combinations,” he continues. “I’m always open to new ideas from our chef to incorporate seasonal seafood and produce, which along with our traditional staples, keep bringing our regulars back for more.”

“Pazzo’s food is what really sets them apart,” adds Miller. “We can’t visit without enjoying their Vegetali Di Stagione salad, and our son never strays from his favorite, chicken parmigiana. We have enjoyed trying many of their dishes: some of our favorites are the lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, piccata, and their wood-fired pizza is the best in the area.”

With housemade pizza dough, sauces, and pasta, Pazzo Italiano is known for their pizzas, pasta, calzones, salads, homemade desserts, and chef specialties. They only cook their pizza in wood-fired ovens that provide the rich flavor and taste that comes from true artisanal pizza.

“On our most recent visit with our extended family for our son’s birthday, we enjoyed their Nutella calzone, which I am sure we will be required to order on all future visits,” says Miller. “With a fun kid’s menu and an extensive wine, beer, and drink menu, it’s a great fit for the whole family. As locals, we feel lucky to have Pazzo Italiano right down the street and are happy for their continued success.”

***Pazzo Italiano, 111 North Highway 393, Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 213-4581, [www.pazzodestin.com](http://www.pazzodestin.com) for hours and menu details***

# Food is Love

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Grab-and-go, convenient food, and beverages isn't a new concept. It's been around so long that no one can remember when it wasn't...But it definitely hasn't always been healthy. Far from it, in fact. But for Dr. Bart Precourt and his wife, Kelli, the concept of bringing healthy options to the community was one that needed to be explored.

As the owners of Balance Health Studio, a mecca of wellness that includes world-class yoga, top-tier chiropractic care, and functional nutrition, holistic well-being is obviously a way of life for the two self-proclaimed "health nuts" who have been providing nutrition support for nearly 20 years.

It made sense, then, to add another facet to their business; and Prema Organic Café soon became more than just a concept. "The word 'prema' means 'to love', and the idea is simple," Bart explains. "We make the food with love and serve it with love, and our customers—including us—choose healthy food because we love ourselves and reward ourselves with food that nourishes the body."

Opened in summer 2020, in a space right next to Balance, Prema offers fresh cold-pressed juices, smoothies, and grab-and-go dishes created with both health and convenience in mind. The menu is everything anyone hoping to eat clean could dream of: 100% organic, gluten-free, soy-free, and canola oil-free. "Everything is fresh and healthy," says Bart. "Our customers don't even have to ask about what's in it or skip around the menu. We live this way in our personal lives and have been waiting for something like this to come to 30-A; and while we knew it would be hard to hold this standard, so far we are doing it."

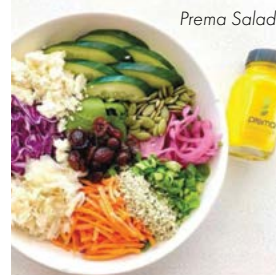
Naturally, the question of taste comes into play for anyone new to the "health food" space. For these uncertain individuals, Prema answers that question with one bite. "Healthy food is the gold standard, and many people are surprised how delicious everything tastes," Bart says. "In fact, many think that everything tastes so good that it couldn't possibly be healthy."



Superfood Salad



Trio of Organic Smoothies



Prema Salad

Photos courtesy Prema Organic Café

Top sellers on the menu include the acai bowl, the Prema salad, the pesto chicken, and their cold-pressed juices. "Apparently, our acai bowl is the best there is—that's the constant feedback we are getting from people who try it," says Bart, whose personal faves are the repair latte with collagen, lucuma, and honey; the celery juice; the ginger shot; and the Prema salad with their famous tuna salad (no mayo).

While the idea of an organic café can be intimidating to newbies, the atmosphere is one that is open, friendly, and incredibly inviting. "It's a different vibe here, and it's contagious!" says Bart. "Good energy, a friendly smile, and amazing food. If you look back into the kitchen, there is a good chance you will see your cold-pressed juice being made just moments before you drink it. There's something about choosing to do some-

thing great for your body that just puts people into great moods. Generally, I feel that all of 30-A has a good vibe, but we bring another level to it...it's fun."

Of course, the healthfulness of their products relies on their ingredients: the freshness, the quality, the way it's been grown. For that reason, Prema has been incredibly selective of their partnering vendors. "Sourcing our ingredients has been a big decision," Bart contends. "They must have organic produce and goods; that has been a bit of a chal-

lenge, yet we are hoping that other restaurants and cafés start requesting organic so that our options in this area increase. We do our best to vet all our vendors, even down to the glass bottles we use for juices. We are doing what we can to 'love' mother earth as well by reducing plastics however possible. We also source locally with some local farmers who provide organic produce and coffee. This is an area we see for big-

time expansion, and vendors are now reaching out to us as the word gets out about the quality of products we use."

While opening during a pandemic was risky, the Precourts knew that people needed what they were offering. "Healthy bodies require healthy foods," Bart says. "Last year gave all of us enough reason to start eating better. Simply put, if our nation ate better, we would be better off. And the cool thing is that it's now easy and delicious."

**Prema Organic Café is located at 3557 East County Highway 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. Open daily from 7:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 213-3023 or visit [prema30a.com](http://prema30a.com).**



Tom Fitzpatrick

Matthew Fitzpatrick

# Tom Fitzpatrick

*Featured 30-A Review Golf Columnist*



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# Scratch Biscuit Kitchen Opens the Doors in WaterColor

BY TESS FARMER



Photos courtesy of Scratch Biscuit Kitchen

There is something nostalgic about a biscuit kitchen. I still dream about the fluffy homemade biscuits doled out through the drive-through window at a long-standing biscuit kitchen in Chapel Hill, North Carolina during my college days. These biscuits would always crumble in your hands making a mess in the car – but always worth it.

It was my delight to learn Scratch Biscuit Kitchen opened in February here on 30-A for locals and visitors to enjoy their fluffy biscuits in the iconic coastal setting of WaterColor, Florida.

As the restaurant's name implies, Scratch Biscuit Kitchen distinguishes itself by serving fluffy, buttery, tender square-shaped biscuits, known as such for the manner in which they're baked. Chef Matt Moore created the menu inspired by Southern breakfast favorites.

The biscuits are available to order individually or by the dozen, with a variety of house-made jams, jellies and gravies, including sausage gravy, pimento cheese, and tomato gravy.

"Scratch is excited to bring a distinct flavor of our Southern coast to 30-A, while honoring a tradition as delicious and fond as grandma's biscuits," Chef Moore says. "The team is enjoying welcoming our locals and visitors alike and we are looking forward to becoming what we hope will be a go-to breakfast and lunch spot in South Walton."

The restaurant's playful breakfast and lunch menu (available for dine-in or to-go, via a designated carry-out

Scratch is excited to bring a distinct flavor of our Southern coast to 30-A, while honoring a tradition as delicious and fond as grandma's biscuits.

window) features a selection of Benny-Style Biscuits, Between-the-Biscuits appetizers, and Not-So-Square Lunch entrees—all in addition to home-cooked style sides, small bites and sweet treats, in addition to a varied selection of sodas, beers, wines, and mimosas.

Local entrepreneur Matt Titus, director of digital media and marketing for SEOM Solutions, says he appreciates another option for breakfast and lunch on 30-A, adding that Scratch makes a great addition to WaterColor. "On my first visit I enjoyed the Nola's Finest biscuit which lived up to its name... I'll be sticking with a good thing and ordering it again when I go back!"

Benny-style biscuits include Nola's Finest, featuring andouille sausage; the Port St. Joe with fried oysters; and the Cold Cured Salmon biscuit, served open-faced with onion, capers, hard-boiled egg, cream cheese, and avocado. The Sweets menu offers a biscuit doughnut

with chocolate gravy, Matt's apple pie, and a bread pudding featuring bourbon vanilla anglaise. They have also perfected the vegan cinnamon roll to meet those dietary needs. Grab your biscuits and cinnamon rolls and hit the beach!

The coffee is always flowing at Scratch Biscuit Kitchen, with daily selections of the restaurant's own signature blend. In fact, coffee enthusiasts can join the "Mug Club" to receive their own Scratch Biscuit Kitchen branded YETI Rambler®, \$1 coffee on every visit and a year's worth of camaraderie and recognition to raise their mugs to.

The kids' menu also aims to please. It offers a mini biscuit, turkey sandwich, scrambled eggs, chicken nuggets, or PB&J all served with apple sauce and juice.

And if you've made it this far without jumping in the car to follow the smell of homemade biscuits, you can visit the restaurant's website for Chef Moore's buttermilk biscuit recipe which he shares in a video tutorial. That may tide you over until your next visit to 30-A.

**Scratch Biscuit Kitchen is located in the WaterColor® Town Center at 1777 E. County Hwy. 30A, Unit #101. Open daily, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m., with counter, indoor and outdoor seating available; online ordering will soon be available. The carry-out window opens at 6:30 a.m. In an effort to seat guests more efficiently, Scratch Biscuit Kitchen does not accept reservations. Learn more at [scratchbk.com](http://scratchbk.com).**

# The Girl's a Souperhero

## 30-A is gaining a tour de force

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT

Souper Jenny by the Sea will be under 800 square feet, with some outdoor communal seating, but will be primarily designed for 30-A lifestyle grab-and-go dining.

In 1996 during the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, resident Jenny Levison took off to travel the world. On the road for 18 months, she learned to cook. Mightily cook. And then she came back ready for action.

“When I returned, most of my collected recipes were soups,” she states. And so a friend suggested a superhero name for the eatery that Levison decided to launch in 1999: Souper Jenny. Fortunately for 30-A, Souper Jenny is heading this way.

As Chef and Owner, Levison opened five neighborhood cafes in metro Atlanta—Souper Jenny in Buckhead, Roswell, Brookhaven, Decatur, and the Westside. She explains her criteria for locations, saying, “I usually pick neighborhoods where I spend time and that offer a wide variety of community.”

At her metro Atlanta neighborhood Souper Jennys, Levison found she basically had two seasons, the cooler months and the warmer months. And no matter the season, Levison’s menu changes daily. In warmer months, Souper Jenny offers fewer hot soups, more salads, and chilled soups. In cooler months, six hot soups appear daily, along with three or four salads and two sandwiches. All of which score high marks with Levison’s patrons, so much so that Souper Jenny’s staff sees people return again and again.

“I think Souper Jenny offers exceptional service from people who genuinely care,” Levison says of her patrons’ loyalty. “I am always amazed to watch my team and how they know our customers better than I do! They get to know their names, their preferences, their families. It’s wonderful to watch.”



Jenny Levison

Photos courtesy of Jenny Levison



Chicken Stew



In addition to serving fabulous food, like any good superhero Levison is committed to giving back to local community. In Atlanta, for example, Souper Jenny is known for its Zadie Project, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that feeds the city’s hungry children. Of the initiative, Levison notes, “I chose the name to honor my father,

Jarvin Levison who is known as Zadie (Yiddish for grandfather). He is my inspiration for cooking and my motivation for getting involved in my community. He also gave me my very first soup recipe, My Dad’s Turkey Chili. In our 18-year history, it is still our most popular soup.”

As founding sponsor of The Zadie Project, for every bowl of My Dad’s Turkey Chili purchased in Atlanta, Souper Jenny has donated a nutritious meal to a family in need.

She adds, “Our servers are full of positive energy and personality, so it’s not uncommon for people to be greeted with singing, smiles, or interpretive dance moves.”

Ever expanding her circle of friends, Levison found 30-A to be a natural fit for Souper Jenny. “30-A is an area that I love, and I’ve spent a lot of time there,” she says, noting that 30-A has a big Atlanta contingent too. “I feel our brand will have a good head start there.”

Souper Jenny in 30-A—in the new Greenway Station project between Seagrove and Rosemary Beach—will be called Souper Jenny by the Sea and will stand out from the Atlanta locations in various ways. “We will focus on a variety of fresh salads, artisan sandwiches, entrees to go, appetizers, and desserts. And of course, there will be soup, but a smaller selection in the summer,” Levison hints. In addition, Souper Jenny by the Sea will be under 800 square feet, with some outdoor communal seating, but will be primarily designed for 30-A lifestyle grab-and-go dining.

When asked how she plans to market her new 30-A location, which is slated to open in early summer 2022, Levison simply smiles, “I’m a big grassroots marketer, so stay tuned for some fun.”

Since Souper Jenny won’t open in 30-A until next summer, Levison is taking this time to soak in what locals will be looking for in anticipation. “If you live in the area, please feel free to email me directly ([souperjenny@aol.com](mailto:souperjenny@aol.com)) and tell me what you’d love to see and what food you are missing in the area,” she says. “I am so excited and I will be there personally next summer to get it all going. We hope to be up and running by Memorial Day weekend.”

Along with the excellent and healthy food that she’s pumped to bring to 30-A, Levison promises to bring another of her superpowers. “I think my biggest success is my incredible team. If you hire correctly, if your people believe in your vision, you’re more than halfway there.”

And she adds, “I truly love what I do and I think it shows in our service and in our food.”

**Connect IG: @followingsouperjenny**



treats



# Ripe for Success

## Nigel's Frozen Bananas

BY DENISE K. JAMES

One night in late 2009, 30-A native Simon Sullivan had a very strange dream. His late father, Nigel, appeared to him and informed him that bananas would play a significant role within his life. Upon waking, Sullivan felt understandably baffled, as well as determined, at what the message might mean... Today, he says that during the years following the vision, he felt like the mystery was always in the background, a quiet hum behind everyday existence.

Fast forward several years, and Sullivan, a professional chef, decided to finally put the dream's meaning to the test and pursue a sweet business idea: selling chocolate-dipped bananas at the local farmers' market. His partner, local photographer Marla Carter, cautioned him that the enterprise may prove too time-consuming for their busy lifestyles. Still, the idea persisted, and by the time late summer 2020 rolled around, Carter and Sullivan; after researching a similar business in Newport Beach; had been sufficiently convinced they might be onto something. So, they named their new venture Nigel's Frozen Bananas and offered a pop-up shop during the holiday season, with a very promising response from the community.

"I grew up here; I went to Seaside Neighborhood School, and as kids, we would always go to Frost Bites," Sullivan says. "Seaside is known for food trucks and innovative food concepts, and this seemed like the perfect place."

Sure enough, the concept took off in a big way over the holiday season, with kids and adults alike going bananas for the freshly dipped fruit topped with all kinds of goodies, from peanuts to cookies. Nigel's Frozen Bananas are coated in a rich, Belgian chocolate—made with coconut oil so it is actually dairy-free—and then "made as healthy or as indulgent as you want them to be," according to Sullivan and Carter.

The topping assortment over the festive winter season included Biscoff butter cookies, Oreos, peanuts, fresh coconut flakes, Reece's Pieces, pretzels, and even a special gingerbread topping. The bananas are frozen,



*Chef Sullivan dips a banana into gourmet, dairy-free chocolate.*

*Photos by Marla Carter*

skewered, and then dipped and topped in front of each individual customer, who of course is able to choose their custom toppings. Ice cream bars are also available, but the couple affirms that most people enthusiastically order the namesake bananas.

"We are definitely going for the retro, beachy nostalgic feel," they explain. "The population is here, and the request is here. The age range is really diverse, from kids to older people, who love the nostalgic vibe. It's honestly marketed for everyone, and everyone has really responded favorably to it. For parents, it's a healthy choice for kids, and for adults, it's something healthier to treat yourself with."

May 2021, Nigel's Frozen Bananas made its debut in a more permanent location, likely to the delight of their raving fans. The new walk-up with outdoor seating



*Nigel's signature Ice Cream Bar*



*Treats the whole family will love.*

is at 124 Quincy Circle, a bustling area of the beach that is known for shops and other services. Nigel's will be the first food item in the plaza, and Sullivan and Carter are looking forward to a busy spring and summer, dipping bananas as well as ice cream bars for scores of locals and tourists, while playing feel-good 1970s music in the background.

Carter's and Sullivan's children, ranging in age from 4 to 17, are eager to get on board with the fun and exciting new business as well, with the older ones volunteering to work and the younger ones hoping to taste-test all the delicious concoctions. As for what Nigel would think about the family's business, Sullivan isn't quite certain, but he has a good feeling about it.

"I think he would say that we're on the right path," he muses. "He would be proud. I'm not sure if this is the mark I was supposed to hit, but when I hit it, I'll know."

It sounds like it's on the right path to us—and we can't wait to sample the yummy new treats at Nigel's Frozen

Bananas, just in time for a Seaside summer.

**To learn more about Nigel's Frozen Bananas and view photos of their mouth-watering treats, visit them on Instagram: @Nigels30A.**

# Panama City Coffee Co.

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

While economic depressions and times of national crises would hardly be the most ideal moment to start a business, it was during the height of the COVID quarantine in 2020 that Daniel Pratt decided to seize the day and launch something he'd been dreaming of: A grassroots company that would "bring life back to the community."

In a way, it all began in October 2018, when Hurricane Michael destroyed the Panama City area and left the surrounding communities feeling broken and lost. Driving around two years later, Pratt was struck by the amount of damage still left behind. It was seeing that devastation, those remaining ravages, that inspired him and soon became an epiphany for something creative in a time when people needed to be given a reason to smile. "I went to sleep with a burden to do something meaningful and woke up with an idea: 'From Panama, For Panama,'" says Pratt. "My grandmother is from the country of Panama; so, I'm familiar with their culture and, most importantly, their delicious COFFEE! I thought that serving fantastic coffee in a brand-new way was exactly what was needed to bring back some of the much-needed life in our communities."

From that idea came the plan for Panama City Coffee Co., using a unique business model that takes the notion of mobility to a whole new level. Rather than setting up shop in a food truck or even a coffee cart, Pratt has done something even more novel: employing bicycles to literally pedal his wares to his customers. "We get our coffee exclusively from Panama, roast it ourselves locally, and then sell the beans online or as nitro cold brew from a bicycle," Pratt explains of his process, which is amazingly simple and focused. "People are always in awe when they first see a bicycle selling nitro coffee!"

A musician by trade, Pratt has long seen a correlation between coffee and music. Having grown up in DC, he saw no end of coffee houses that hosted open mic nights and small hometown concerts. "There was one particular coffee shop called Jammin' Java that always had amazing musical acts come through. I remember thinking that coffee and music go together, hand-in-hand." And while he might not have loved his first sip, he began drinking black coffee at the age of 13. "I forced myself to drink it until I liked it!" he laughs. "I pretty much never looked back after that."



Daniel Pratt

**We get our coffee exclusively from Panama, roast it ourselves locally, and then sell the beans online or as nitro cold brew from a bicycle.**

Sourcing all their beans from major distributors based in the country of Panama, Panama City Coffee Co. has hopes of changing their practices to establish direct and fair trade with the farmers of Panama in the future. "COVID has placed travel restrictions on getting into the country, but we plan that once the borders open back up, we can work directly with the farmers rather than going through the major distributors."

He also envisions brick-and-mortar locations to be somewhere in the future. "I've got lots of ideas," he says with bright eyes full of excitement. "More bikes, coffee shops, wedding catering, airport shops... But sincerely, I just want people to have a meaningful experience any time they encounter the Panama City Coffee Co. brand. The news paints the picture that the world is looking grim and dark, but my experience has been the opposite. People are caring and genuine, generous and servant hearted. I want every person that encounters my company on a bike or in one of my future coffee shops to leave knowing they had a meaningful human interaction, and that the world does, indeed, have good, loving people in it. As long as that is being accomplished, Panama City Coffee Co. will grow in whatever capacity it needs."

Clearly, there's more to this little coffee company than just coffee, and people can sense that. It could well be said to be the secret to his success, even in times such as these. "I think what people love best is the experience they get when they buy coffee from me on the bike," Pratt posits. "I try to genuinely have a meaningful conversation with everyone that comes by. Some days, it can be lonely just sitting on the bike all day. Sometimes, I probably keep people around too long, asking them questions about their life, their kids, their work... But I'm the crazy guy on a bike! I get to ask those questions!"

Serving his coffee with a smile and a genuine interest in his customers, Pratt has brought back something we've all been craving even more than caffeine: Human connection.

**For more information, visit [www.panamacitycoffee.com](http://www.panamacitycoffee.com) or follow them on Facebook.**

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# Small Cakes, Big Flavor

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

There's an old saying that life is short, and dessert should be eaten first. And while some may disagree with the particular wisdom of the adage, the sweet treats offered at Smallcakes Cupcakery prove the prudence of putting that principle into practice. Whether you're hunting down a quick snack to give you a sugar rush or want to indulge in something truly decadent, you'll find it freshly baked and ready to go—and you'll have a hard time just picking one favorite.

Founded in 2007 by cupcake master Jeff Martin, Smallcakes began as a single store in Overland Park, Kansas. Created with the concept of offering, as the company mission statement says, “creative flavors, quality ingredients, and friendly service to provide the finest cupcake experience worthy of returning and recommending,” the company—and its founder—were put to the test on the national stage when Martin appeared on Food Network's hit series *Cupcake Wars* for seasons one, two, and seven. Further attention came from a feature on *The View*, and Martin soon found that his little confectionary was in heavy demand all across the nation.

Naturally, Martin did what all good businessmen do: He capitalized on the popularity of his brand and franchised. Now, the Smallcakes name is proudly displayed at more than 200 locations in the US, as well as Dubai and Saudi Arabia. Even celebrities have had Smallcakes at their events and weddings, and *USA TODAY* named the company in their listing of Top Ten Cupcake Places to try in the country.

Realizing that 30-A needed a touch of sweetness that only his high-quality cupcakes could bring, Martin opened a corporate location in Seacrest Beach. Since the shop opened its doors in 2017, its two bakers have been baking 12 flavors of cupcakes each day, using the best ingredients to achieve the very best product. “People love that we make all of our products fresh every day, and that's something that really makes us stand out,” says Martin. “We have no freezers.”

Except, of course, for the freezers that house the 18 flavors of ice cream that Smallcakes offers alongside their signature treats. From the festive taste of Birthday Cake to the nuttiness of Peanut Butter Cup, the flavors of their scoops are the perfect way to satisfy a craving for ice



With every flavor of cupcake and ice cream they offer, Smallcakes can help can satisfy whatever craving you have, giving your tastebuds an adventure of the sweetest kind.

cream—not even the Chocolate and Vanilla are plain Jane. And while such decadent treats could seem off limits to the nut-free, gluten-free, and dairy-free crowd, Smallcakes offers varieties that are specially made for them.

In fact, the company also offers cupcakes that meet those criteria. For Martin, it was a strategy of inclusion, a

desire to make his creations something that would not only be widely appealing, but also safe for people with special dietary considerations. The result, of course, has been his massive success—and a widespread addiction to his diminutive delights.

Boasting Smallcakes's signature pink buttercream frosting, the Pink Vanilla and Pink Chocolate are great for lovers of the classics, but the menu is really a reflection of Martin's love of creativity. Other signature flavors include Lemon Drop, Chocoholic, Vanilla N Chocolate, “Famous” Red Velvet, and Wedding Cake, as well as a few that take fun and nestle it in a brown fluted wrapper. Filled with buttercream and topped with fudge frosting, the Chocolate Cream is an elevated take on a classic snack cake. For lovers of the chocolate-peanut butter combo, Peanut Butter Cup is chocolate cake topped in peanut butter cream cheese frosting and a sprinkle of peanut butter cup crumbles. Then, of course, there's Hot Fudge Sundae: chocolate cake with buttercream frosting, chopped nuts, hot fudge, and a cherry on top. Topping the charts as best sellers are Cookies and Cream, chocolate cake with cookie buttercream and chocolate cookie crumbles, and Birthday

Cake, a vanilla cake topped with buttercream and a colorful rainbow of sprinkles.

With every flavor of cupcake and ice cream they offer, Smallcakes can help can satisfy whatever craving you have, giving your tastebuds an adventure of the sweetest kind. Each day is a new chance to enjoy life to its fullest—so why not eat dessert first? Whatever your bliss, they have the perfect way to make each and every day just a little bit sweeter. As one can see the moment they arrive, Smallcakes believes in its slogan of “Maybe a Cupcake Will Help?” And who knows—maybe the world would be a better place if we all took a minute to sit and smell the cupcakes. And then eat them.

***Smallcakes Cupcakery and Creamery is located at 10343 East County Hwy 30A, Unit C112, Seacrest Beach, FL 32413. For more information, call (850) 213-4037 or visit [www.smallcakescupcakery.com](http://www.smallcakescupcakery.com).***



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