

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
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ISSUE



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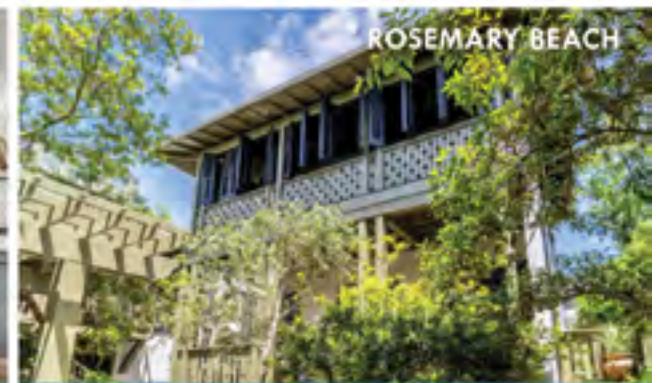
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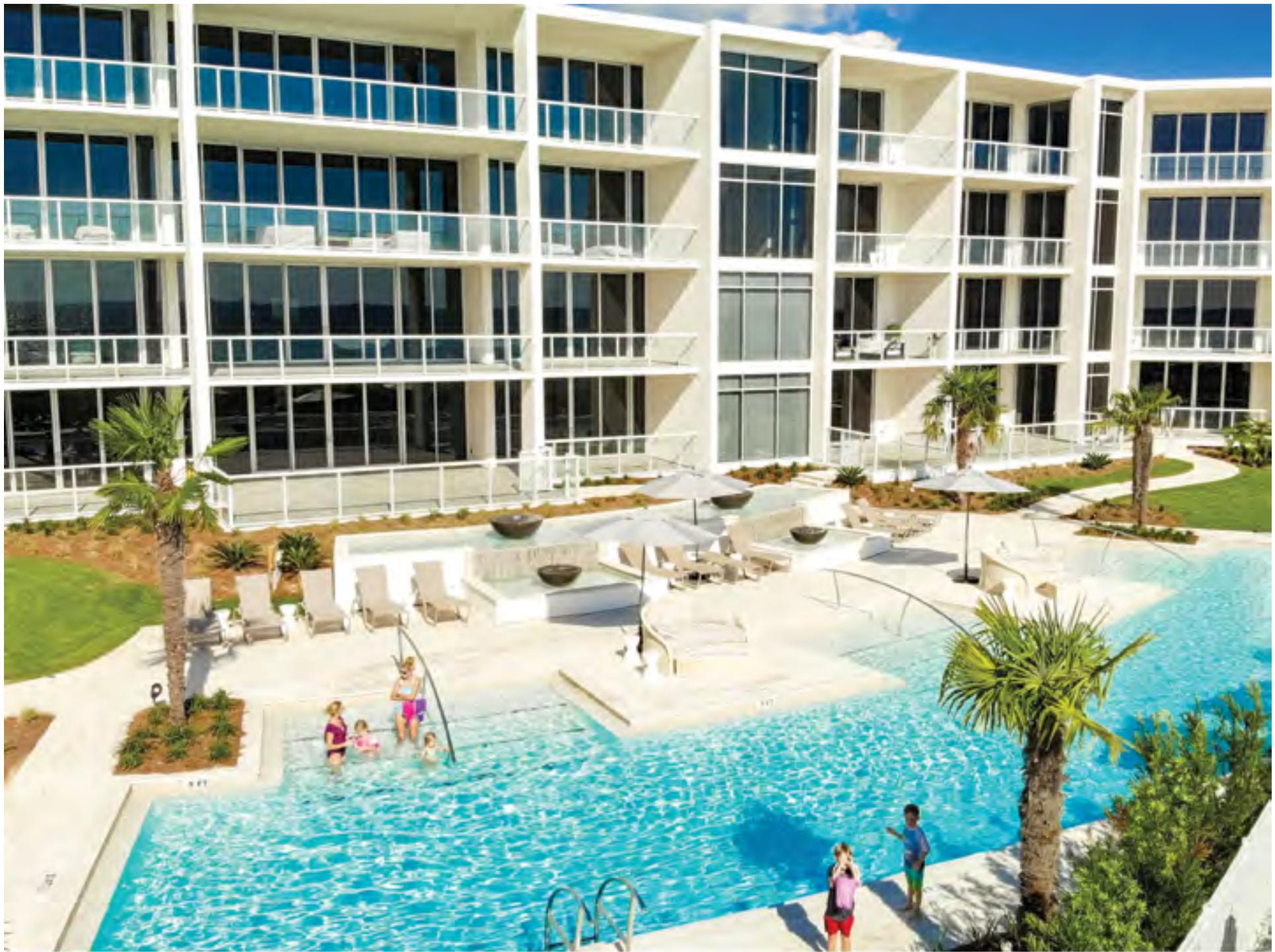
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letter from the publisher

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD.



Abundance is a funny word. It means different things to different folks. But I think it really has a lot to do with gratitude. Gratitude for what we have. Whether it's everything we want, or everything we need, or simply enough.

This past fall, residents of our area were both incredibly lucky and incredibly unlucky. Depending on where your GPS said you were, within a 30 mile click, you

might have had everything to be thankful for, or have lost everything. Read that again. Because it's a mouth full. And it's a very poignant fact about reality as we know it.

As a silver lining person, I want to say that the devastation will bring in its aftermath an even more beautiful and stronger community to our neighbors East. But for the thousands of folks who have spent these past 3 months suffering with incredible loss, that might be a salve that lives more in the world of fantasy than reality.

So, what does this mean to us as we read about food, one of life's most simple and beautiful pleasures and necessities? As we read about the people, places, and things that make 30-A and the surrounding areas so special. Hmm. That's a very good question.

I'd like to think it means that those of us with true abundance, which is most of us if you're reading this now, will use our abundance to help others. Really help. Bring someone a meal. Drive by and check on someone. Or simply click on the link of Hope Panhandle as seen on the front cover of this magazine and make a difference for someone who needs it today. A neighbor. A friend. A victim of Hurricane Michael. Share some of your abundance today. The cool thing is that it will only make you feel more abundant.

Cheers,

Miles K. Neiman

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The Sonder Project was founded through a partnership of three local businesses, 360 Blue, The 30A Company, and YOLO Board who shared a desire to strengthen communities across the world. Now that we see our immediate neighbors suffering so greatly, that world is right next door. We are compelled to act, and we need your help.

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dining

723 Whiskey Bravo: Cool, Casual, Coastal

BY TRACEY M. HAWKINS

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

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

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

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

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

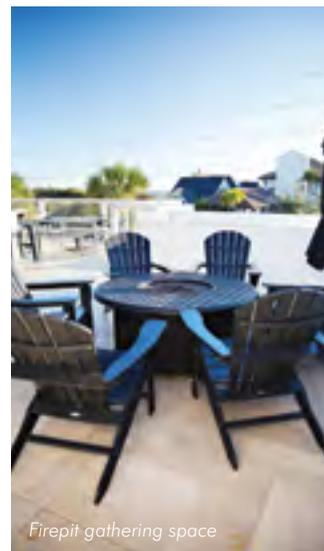


Grilled Local Grouper



Rooftop dining overlooking the Gulf of Mexico

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

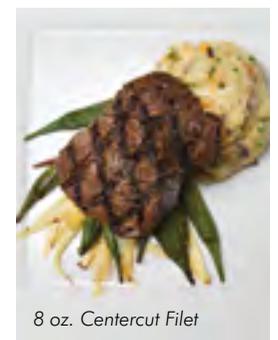


Firepit gathering space

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



Victoria Salad



8 oz. Centercut Filet

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

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

Amavida Coffee

BY MARY WELCH



New Sandestin Market Shops location



Grinding Beans

“We want people to create special moments in our cafe spaces: whether it’s while they have a cup of coffee and connect with friends, or take a break from life’s challenges. We believe there is power in a cup of coffee.”

For Dan and Sally Bailey and the folks at Amavida Coffee and Tea, a cup of coffee is more than just some java. It’s a undertaking to help better the world and have a positive impact on coffee producing communities and workers.

“It’s our mission, passion, and cause to help improve lives where we can; not only for coffee producers and workers, but for our customers and local communities too,” says Jennifer Pawlik, program manager/benefit officer. “We want to be more than a place to get a cup of coffee. We want to be a place of community. We want people to create special moments in our cafe spaces: whether it’s while they have a cup of coffee and connect with friends, or take a break from life’s challenges. We believe there is power in a cup of coffee.”

The Baileys opened a coffee roaster company in 2004 and later a shop in Seacrest Beach, near Grayton Beach; before moving it to Seaside in 2008. New coffee cafes followed at Rosemary Beach, St. Andrews in Panama City, and Miramar Beach. Overall there are about 30 full-time employees and another dozen or so part-time (more during the high season).

And while customers can always get locally made pastries to go along with their morning cup of joe, Amavida also serves Latin-inspired foods at its St. Andrews and Seaside locations. Among the items on these menus are: arepas (stuffed corn cakes), empanadas and plates: chicken burrito, enchilada, torta and popissa mixta. Service is from 11:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Menu items may vary between the two cafes that serve these Latin favorites. Prices are from \$8.55 to \$9.95.

“We also have grab-and-go food and vegetarian and gluten-free options. We want healthy options out there,” Pawlik says. “Most pastries are local and we source local for the kitchen and grab and go where possible. Most beverages for the grab and go are local, like Noli South Kombucha.”

While the cuisine has been a hit, it’s still all about the coffee and the bigger picture. Amavida buys, roasts, sells, and serves a variety of fair-trade coffee from several coffee cooperatives. Among those for sale are coffees from 14 countries, including Rwanda, Colombia, Peru, and Burundi. “We like the model of working directly with

the co-ops and small farmer co-ops because we think we can make a bigger impact,” Pawlik says.

In addition to the specialty coffee they serve in their cafes, Amavida sells it to special grocery stores, coffee houses, and organic markets in 15 states. Locally, it’s available at Ever’man Cooperative Grocery & Cafe in Pensacola and New Leaf Market Co-op in Tallahassee. They provide private label coffees for several area hotels as well.

While there are four locations, each is different. “They reflect the communities that they’re in,” Pawlik says. “The vibe is the same. We want customers to get a feeling of love — loving life and having a good quality of life. We want everyone to be able to come in, do some work or schoolwork or enjoy a cup of coffee with a friends. We want all our cafes to have a friendly, fun vibe.”

However at St. Andrews, it’s a bit “hipper, salty.” Pavlik says, “It’s a laid back vibe, while at Seaside and Rosemary, it’s more light and bright. Seaside is small, quaint where you’ll want to take a cup to go and walk around.”

It’s a similar situation at The Market Shops in Miramar Beach, where there is limited seating. “There’s so much to experience at that shopping center. It’s a hidden gem. We want people to get a cup of coffee or tea and then walk around.”

But whatever the vibe, Amavida wants you to have an experience and carry it forward. “We really hope to inspire people,” she says. “It’s not just ‘hey, look at what we do.’ It’s more of a ‘hey here’s something that we did and we can do more.’ We want to challenge and inspire people to go out and make a difference. It may be as simple as choosing to move away from plastic straws to protect our beautiful beaches and wildlife, or giving back in another way. There are lots of ways to inspire people and make a difference.”

And you thought it was simply a cup of coffee.

Amavida Coffee and Tea: Four locations. Opened various times. www.amavida.com

Blue Mabel Smokehouse & Provisions

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Taking in the creative array of sauces and the unapologetically down home, soul-filled flavors of the comfort food that serves as the backbone for the menu at Blue Mabel Smokehouse & Provisions, it's patently obvious that the mastermind at work in the kitchen has a firm grip on two very important things: the French's undeniably superior technique and reverence for sauce, and the South's veneration of all things comfort. Most specifically in the realm of biscuit making.

It stands to reason, then, that Executive Chef and founding partner Steven Sandy—a Southern boy, of course—trained professionally under the tutelage of French and Southern masters of cuisine, coming to the 30-A community four years ago after serving as Executive Chef at La Jolla in Montgomery, Alabama for 14 years. And as luck would have it, it was his newly adopted community that gave him the chance to shine at his brightest, earning him the position as Executive Chef for Cowgirl Enterprises that later led to his partnership in a new restaurant by visionary owner Nikki Nickerson of the highly acclaimed group of restaurants known far and wide for their farm to table cuisine and unpretentious Southern soul.

A former Texan herself, Nickerson is hardly putting on a show with the concepts of her restaurants. All of her enterprises, scattered throughout 30-A in a way to offer guests all along the beach the chance to tuck into the food that comes from her kitchens—be it at the restaurants themselves or at home, where the pre-prepared takeaway dishes can be popped into the oven. But it is this new location, Blue Mabel, that is a bit of a departure from the rest of her ventures.

“Chef Sandy has a flair for Southern food and sauces; and we've been doing amazing brisket and pulled pork in all of our Cowgirl Kitchen restaurants for awhile, but over the course of working together, we thought that it would be fun to do a casual restaurant with roots in slow-cooked food,” Nickerson explains of the vision behind Blue Mabel, which launched as a to-go outlet in late 2018 with plans to open the fully-realized restaurant in early 2019. “Chef Sandy's sauces and unique condiments will be a driving force to our freestyle use of meats and seafood on the menu, and that's one of the things that we believe Blue Mabel will become known for.”

Blue Mabel is already establishing itself as a presence at its outpost in Blue Mountain Beach, offering a breakfast and lunch menu so flavorful and filled with slow-cooked Southern soul that is, as any good Southerner might

exclaim, “So good it'll make your tongue slap your brain.” Or perhaps, as the vintage-style menus clearly bearing her likeness would state, “My biscuits rock!”

Blue Mabel is, in fact, named for a real person. And given her “cowgirl” Texan roots, it might only be fitting that Nickerson's muse for her new place would be none other than Mabel Strickland, a famous rodeo queen who hit the scene in the 1920s. But why Blue Mabel? “We wanted to honor the beautiful area of Blue Mountain Beach in our name at the same time as referencing Mabel,” explains

Above everything, whatever is created in our kitchen is made with the purpose of being delicious and comforting and something that gives our guests a unique experience.

Nickerson. “It's a special place with beautiful lupine growing wild, which is featured in our logo.”

Aside from those rocking biscuits—which are, it should be noted, made with just the right amount of sage to make them absolutely irresistible and insanely fragrant—the menu is filled with a unique array of dishes that showcases locally sourced meats and seafood in such a way that isn't flashy or so technically constructed as to make it seem rarefied. In fact, everything on the menu is something Mabel herself would readily dig into, from bestsellers like The Dog—a house-made Hunter sausage topped with Creole mustard slaw and house pickles served in a split-top bun—to other guest favorites like The Beef Tacos, featuring Cowgirl's famous brisket topped with charred jalapeños, avocado tomatillo salsa, and ooey-goey fundido cheese. Looking for something a little more off the beaten path? Order the Korean Pork Belly Bites with Watermelon Radish Salsa; the Duck Étouffée; or the Charred Shisito Peppers with furikake mushrooms, shaved Manchego cheese, and an Asian miso sauce.



Chef Steven Sandy

“Above everything, whatever is created in our kitchen is made with the purpose of being delicious and comforting and something that gives our guests a unique experience. We want to be a part of their memory—and to bring people together to share time over their food while they create new memories for themselves,” says Nickerson. And with a queen of rodeo as their inspiration for that, Blue Mabel is fittingly lassoing everyone in.

Blue Mabel Smokehouse & Provisions is located at 2260 West County Highway 30A, Blue Mountain Beach, Florida 32459. For more information, call (850) 744-0040 or visit www.bluemabel.com.

Café Thirty-A

BY MARY WELCH

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sesame Crusted Rare Yellowfin Tuna



martini. There is the Berry Blue ‘Tini, the French Kiss, French Martini, and the Strawberry Lemonade ‘Tini (among others).

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

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

She’s learned a few things since opening such as when she screened in the front porch. It seemed like



a good idea at the time; but not only was it so hot, it attracted yellow flies and just ate up all the waiting diners. “It was bad,” she remembers with a laugh. Instead she went to Plan B; and expanded and enclosed the upstairs deck. Called the Fishbone Bar, it has a funky, casual atmosphere that can be used year-



Maine Lobster in Paradise

round, and offers spectacular Gulf views and a full-service bar. It also can accommodate between 25 to 80 persons for private parties, weddings, and special events. “Best decision I ever made,” she says.

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

Breeze (Smirnoff cranberry, peach schnapps, cranberry, and orange juice).

“There is nothing better than a good cocktail,” she says. Every Tuesday and Thursday there are \$5 ‘tinis at the bar all night. Of course, it’s not one’s every day

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



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Under the Open Skies of Caliza

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Pillowy, handmade potato gnocchi; whisper-thin agnolotti; tender, hand-cut ribbons of pappardelle. These are a few marks of a true technician, the calling card of a master of a craft as old as time itself. And when drawing clear inspiration from the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean, both in menu and in aesthetic, Caliza Restaurant in Alys Beach has achieved a distinct level of excellence.

Not that it isn't clear immediately that every Caliza dish created is a work of art. The colorful sauces and vibrant garnishes adorning the tender, succulent meats; and the delicate drizzles of finishing oils giving the perfect hint of contrast to the tones of the components beneath them, could hardly be considered anything other than visually stunning. But it is far more than the visual appeal that creates a true experience. The taste translates the beauty of it all, exploding with just the right blend of sweet to savory to saltiness to acidity. It's all there in one flawlessly executed plate that seems almost too perfect to destroy with the tines of a fork or the edge of a spoon—though it would hardly be seemly to leave such a display of deliciousness unexplored by the taste buds.

When creating their menu of sharable plates, seasonally inspired soups, salads, and signature entrees, the owners of Alys Beach did something far riskier. Though they do pay homage to contemporary American cuisine, it is the standout signature dishes that set the restaurant apart as a true destination—and escape—for the senses. These dishes bear distinct reference to the Mediterranean lands of Greece, Spain, and Italy, and unique ingredients that are uncommon to Emerald Coast diners used to coastal, beachy fare.

Set overlooking the stunning blue waters of a seemingly endless pool, Caliza's white stucco walls serve as a unique backdrop for dining, its open-air design inspired by the architecture of Greek communal spaces. And with every morsel of meat, every drop of fragrant broth, one is reminded of the true excellence that can be achieved when a master is at work, using the finest ingredients and giving them the chance to shine. Since 2016, Chef Andrew Dzejak has held that role, using his many years of experience to create beautiful plates that stun with their flavor and appearance so that one is left with no question of his skill or his passion. And it is that



passion that transmutes all he does, from starter plate to dessert course and everything in between. “Being able to express my love of food through serving and creating a once in a lifetime experiences for our guests is the very essence of what keeps me inspired,” says Dzejak, who started his career in the pastry kitchens of South Florida but made his break into the savory world in South Carolina, where he attended Johnson & Wales.

Tantalizing the senses with its meaty aroma, the Braised Oxtail is a starter that truly impresses. The tenderness of the beef is perfectly complemented by pillows of potato gnocchi served in a richly flavored reduction of red wine with mushrooms, parsley, and mirepoix and decadent mornay sauce. Showcasing



Above, center: Manjar Blanco Meringue
Bottom: Scallops and Langoustine

locally caught fish in their full glory, the Whole Gulf Fish features an entire fish cooked to perfection and stuffed with a flavorful mixture of cucumber, radishes, pickled red onions, carrots, peanuts, and sweet potato chips in a freshly made ginger soy vinaigrette. For pasta lovers, the Gulf Shrimp Pappardelle nestles plump Gulf shrimp atop a bed of squid ink pappardelle tossed in tomatoey arrabiata sauce filled with the briny pop of capers and the pungency of garlic, anchovies, Pecorino Toscano, and basil. Prime Ribeye is also a favorite here, as respected and revered in its preparation as one could only hope to showcase the full extent of its superiority.

Topping the list of guest favorites, however, are the Tuna Crudo and Grilled Iberico Coppa: two clearly balanced plates whose unexpected combinations of ingredients prove that freshness and seasonality are imperative in creating food that excites the palate. And whether one stops after the last bite of dinner or continues on to dessert, not one opportunity is missed to create a sense of luxury.

Caliza Restaurant is located at 23 Nonesuch Way, Alys Beach, Florida 32413. Open Tuesday- Saturday 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 213-5700 or visit www.calizarestaurant.com.

Edward's Fine Food and Wine

BY MARY WELCH



Local Arugula Salad



Filet of Beef



Classic Tuna Tartare



Capellini Pomodoro



It's coming up to a year since the well-respected Spell Restaurant Group; which includes George's at Alys Beach, La Cocina Mexican Grill and Bar, La Crema Tapas and Chocolate, and Saltwater Grill; purchased local favorite Edward's Fine Food and Wine Restaurant at Rosemary Beach. And much like the menu, little has changed.

"It's not had much of an impact," says General Manager Kristy Boatwright Johnston. "I'm still here and the direction that Edward's has been going on since it opened six years ago is still the same. Everyone is really trying to stay true to the Edward's name in everything that we do. We remain consistent."

That is exactly how the loyal customers like it.

The restaurant, which bills itself as "fine dining in a casual atmosphere", delivers a world-class experience with food that is Southern coastal in direction and noted for its fresh ingredients and creative presentation. "Local seafood is definitely our star," Johnston says. "Since day one crab cakes are always on the menu. Tuna Tartare is a staple and in appetizers, it's the beet salad, which is fantastic. We look for the best ingredients and best quality. We don't skip out on ingredients. We serve a lot of the same dishes but it changes seasonally with the vegetables."

Other "not to be missed" dishes are the grouper ("in some fashion or form"), tuna, and a vegetarian dish: Capellini Pomodoro, which is a simple yet elegant entree featuring roasted tomatoes, garlic, fresh basil, Parmesan cheese, and dried chili. If you aren't in a vegetarian mood, proteins such as shrimp or chicken can be added. And, of course stone ground grits always find a spot on the menu.

"Our customers like us to keep things simple and fresh," Johnston says. "People appreciate we're not trying to overwhelm the dishes and have different flavors in competition with each other. We don't make drastic changes and really, not that many tweaks."

Just about everything is locally sourced except diver scallops ("Obviously we get those from up north but we have to have them on our menu because — well — who doesn't love diver scallops? They're delicious"). Even the tuna is local Gulf tuna.

"I grew up in the south and so did our head chef (Josh Smith). We both understand the importance of fresh, local, and vegetables," she says.

Johnston grew up in Monroeville, AL, picking crops from the family garden and learning how to cook southern food from scratch her grandmother. Johnston attended Auburn University and earned a degree in hotel and restaurant management and then a Court of Masters Sommelier certification.

Head Chef Josh Smith's culinary journey started in Monroe, NC, a small rural farming community near

Charlotte. The family garden put food on the table and he assisted his mother and grandmother in the kitchen, soaking up their generational culinary knowledge and getting hands on training.

The restaurant only serves beer and wine but under Johnston's sommelier hat there is a lot of creativity. "I do a lot of drinks that are made with wine that other places would use liquor instead. Sometimes

people want something other than a glass of wine or a beer. We do a white wine Moscow mule that uses white wine instead of vodka. We have a peach Bellini and a Port of Call that uses port, which is almost like sangria. We are crafting drinks but not with liquor."

While the restaurant has a well-stocked and diverse list of wines, Johnston admits that rosé is becoming a staple with customers today. "Rosé is definitely becoming more popular. It works well with the humidity here. It's not a sweet wine and it's more of the dry side. It pairs really well with a lot of summer dishes."

Edward's keeps up with the local beauty vibe with live music in the courtyard as guitarist Jim Couch and saxophonist Ike Bartley playing cool tunes and set the vibe. On Fridays they show black and white movies.

The restaurant, which doesn't take reservations, seats 80, with 25 indoors. "We don't do a lot of events because, frankly, if it rains and the event has to be indoors, we can only really handle about 25. We don't book events that we can't handle in case of rain. We'll do an occasional rehearsal dinner, but that's about it."

Actually, any dinner at Edward's is a reason to celebrate. The restaurant is a fan favorite not only with locals, but also with tourists. "We have a lot of regulars, but people who visit Rosemary Beach over the years make a point of coming here. We see repeat faces even if they don't live here. I think everyone knows what to expect when they come here — and they like what they get."

Edward's Fine Food and Wine is located at, 66 Main St., Rosemary Beach. Call (850) 231-0550. Hours are every day, 5:00 p.m. to "late". No reservations. www.edwards30a.com

FOOW

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

There's a casual coolness literally breezing through the spaces at FOOW, spilling onto the floors from the massive windows that run along every exterior wall of the expansive, open-plan dining room. And whether you take a seat at one of their outdoor decking tables or stay inside, this is one restaurant where fantastic views are as much a part of the menu as any of the dishes created in the kitchen.

A reincarnation—or reimagining, perhaps—of the restaurant previously known as Fish Out of Water, FOOW officially opened in June 2018 with a new look, a new menu, and a newly refreshed dedication to providing guests with something unique and an atmosphere unlike any other. Quality is their hallmark: an unremitting dedication to the best of the best for every component on the plate, from the fish and seafood of their “Off Shore” offerings and the steaks whose presence grace their “On the Ranch” menu, to the harissa-spiced ketchup served with their duck fat fries. Their intent is to present edible art, creating dishes that celebrate the abundance of fish, seafood, and produce caught in local waters and grown at local farms. The focus is naturally fresh fare from the sea, but there is equal respect given to land-based cuisine, offering beautiful plates whose spotlight shines brightly regardless of its origin from turf or surf.

“The new FOOW was redesigned to create an inviting, relaxed, quality destination for the WaterColor community. We're delighted to offer a setting where visitors and locals alike can enjoy a midday break with family, a fun evening with friends, or a romantic date night over gourmet coastal cuisine and cocktails, alongside excellent service,” says Andrew Czarnecki, Managing Director of Resort Operations for St. Joe Club & Resorts. Czarnecki is not offering false promises of what one might expect to see gracing FOOW's plates. The expertise, creativity, and awareness of the importance of presentation, flavor profiles, and technique are clear in every aspect of the menu.

Chosen for their absolute dedication to their craft, Executive Sous Chef Preetam Pardeshi oversees the culinary programming at FOOW, creating locally sourced Southern cuisine alongside menu-mastermind Chef de Cuisine Christopher Mayhue. A world traveller with quite the pedigree, Mayhue brings his Southern heritage to bear on the plate, marrying his travels with his roots in



Togarashi Seared Tuna Taco



Duckfat Fries



Chef Chris Mayhue

a way that reinterprets the classics and draws greatly on the coastal influences of the Gulf Coast. Playing their own parts in creating the dynamic team at FOOW are WaterColor Inn Executive Chef Brenden Davey and Corporate Executive Chef Todd Rogers; and it has been each of their roles that have driven the re-launch of Fish Out of Water as FOOW to be a major splash well worth the wait and the fanfare.

For a casual lunch, FOOW serves up a selection of salads, sandwiches, buckets, and tacos that put an undeniably unique spin on things. They bait the hook with such options as Togarashi Seared Tacos: an imaginative creation whose duo of white corn tortillas



Buried Treasure & NOLA Beignet Dessert Bowls



play the understated vessel for strips of tuna barely kissed on a flattop and served rare, nestled in a bed of crisp red and green cabbage, topped with zesty avocado-tomato salsa, cilantro crema, a crumble of creamy queso fresco, and a drizzle of fresh-made wasabi-ginger aioli. Paying homage to the south, the Santa Rosa Sweet Tea Fried Chicken features hand-battered chicken breast fried to crispy golden perfection, topped with arugula, tomato, and house-made pickles in a buttery brioche bun slathered with Sweet Tea Bourbon Glaze and Garlic Aioli.

As the sun begins to set, dinner options dive into deeper waters and run further afield, offering entrees for every predilection, be it land or sea. For a true taste of local beauty, Day Boat Line-Caught Grouper offers a freshly caught grilled filet of tender grouper served with sautéed field peas and kale in a brown butter citrus sauce and garnished with green tomato and corn chow-chow.

From the first bite of dinner to that last sweet kiss of one of their decadent, imaginative desserts, FOOW is everything one would wish for in a restaurant so beautifully situated—and diners are diving right in.

Their intent is to present edible art, creating dishes that celebrate the abundance of fish, seafood, and produce caught in local waters and grown at local farms.

FOOW is located at WaterColor Inn, 34 Goldenrod Circle, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. Open daily for lunch 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., dinner service from 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. FOOWBar open daily 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 a.m. with daily Happy Hour from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 534-5050 or visit www.FOOW30A.com.



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An Old Florida with Some New Flavors

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



Appearing at first glance to be a somewhat unimposing lakeside restaurant, Old Florida Fish House is an artful blend of modern and rustic, casual yet refined. It makes sense then, that alongside more classic dishes that include appetizers like Southern-style fried green tomatoes and baskets of tangy, deep fried pickles are artfully prepared sushi rolls that take some of the common rolls and make them far more interesting not only to look at, but also to taste.

Using the rich abundance of seafood mere steps from their scenic back porch, the restaurant has been an area favorite since opening in 2005. But when Jill McDonald and Sandy Thomas took ownership in 2013, they made numerous changes that have taken the popular eatery to whole new levels. Without sacrificing the casual aesthetic, the style is one that injects a bit of cool modernity into an atmosphere of peace and calm—something which comes naturally to the location it enjoys overlooking a coastal dune lake called Eastern Lake, one of Florida’s true and very rare gems. “We wanted to incorporate that old-Florida feel that so many people know and love. Our property is covered with gorgeous old trees, and with the restaurant situated on Eastern Lake, we wanted our customers to feel as though they were transported back in time to a more secluded and idyllic Florida,” McDonald explains.

And they’ve managed to do just that. Extending the spacious interior dining space is an outdoor seating area aptly called The Porch, where countless local musicians and vocal artists come to showcase their talents while guests tuck into great fare or sip on one of the signature cocktails from the bar. From lunch to dinner, there is an



Grouper Fishhouse



Summer Summer Roll

adept understanding of flavors in every dish prepared in the kitchen, whether those dishes are as simple as a wedge salad or as complicated as the

imaginatively named and inventively devised Picasso roll. It’s clear that quality, freshness, and attention to detail are high on the priority list here. Executive Chef Thomas Stukenborg brings his 23 years of experience to the table to create food that showcases seafood at its best, while adding innovative and unexpected twists to some of the Southern classics so widely known and loved.

Freshly caught, local seafood and fish dishes are the anchors, but the modernity of the menu; along with the extensive sushi menu; are a true testament that, in this case, “Old” hardly means obsolete. “Southern food and hospitality are at the very heart and soul of our restaurant, but we have always incorporated a modern feel into our menu with fresh rolled sushi,” says McDonald.

Regardless of whether you come for a casual lunch or something more on the sophisticated side, Old

Florida Fish House has the perfect way to satisfy your hunger. Fried grouper, chargrilled burgers, and fried shrimp are a delicious taste of the classics, while Chef Stukenborg brings his talent to signature entrees like Grouper Fish House: a succulent filet of sautéed grouper, topped by butter poached lump crab meat and sautéed shrimp, resting on a bed of creamy mashed potatoes with rich and tangy lemon beurre blanc sauce. The plates are artfully arranged, precise in their layering of elements and drizzling of sauces to allow each bite to display the play of flavors, all culminating to create the perfect balance. It is both respectful of technique and honoring to the ingredients; and that pairing has been one that has kept Old Florida Fish House from being outmoded by some of the up-and-comings.

They’ve done well in making themselves an event space as well, providing space enough for special occasions of all kinds. And during the season, local artists are featured on the menu, amping up already delicious cuisine and giving it a catch melody that’ll keep you on the hook.

Old Florida Fish House is located at 5235 East Hwy. 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. Open daily for lunch at 11:00 a.m. and serving dinner from 5:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 534-3045 or visit www.oldfloridafishhouse.com

Our property is covered with gorgeous old trees... we wanted our customers to feel as though they were transported back in time to a more secluded and idyllic Florida.

Pescado

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

The Spanish word for fish, Pescado fits the restaurant located at the uppermost point of the “Orleans” building, which affords sweeping views of the Gulf that change with every hour of the day and every turn of the tide. Featuring a menu of seasonally changing featured dishes, small plates, and shareable entrees, the underlying theme of this beautifully designed venue is to create food worthy of that view: food with exquisite flavor and presentation that showcases all that the Gulf has to offer. Whether diners choose to take a table indoors or venture out onto the rooftop patio and bar area, the connection to that famous emerald green water is always in view, that fresh sea air salting every dish and flavoring every bite.



Since opening in early spring of 2018, Pescado Grill and Rooftop Bar has gained wide acclaim across Rosemary Beach, as well as the entire community of South Walton and beyond. As an acclaimed chef whose career has taken him to the kitchens of some of the area’s best restaurants, Executive Chef Ken Duenas has an appreciation for the beauty of the ingredients in his hands as well as the skill set to bring them to life. The menu is respectful of freshness in every aspect, from the array of local seafood, freshly-caught fish and premium proteins, to the colorful sauces drizzled on the plates. Each dish is a work of art, a carefully executed display of what results from focusing creativity, passion, talent, and technique together in cohesion.

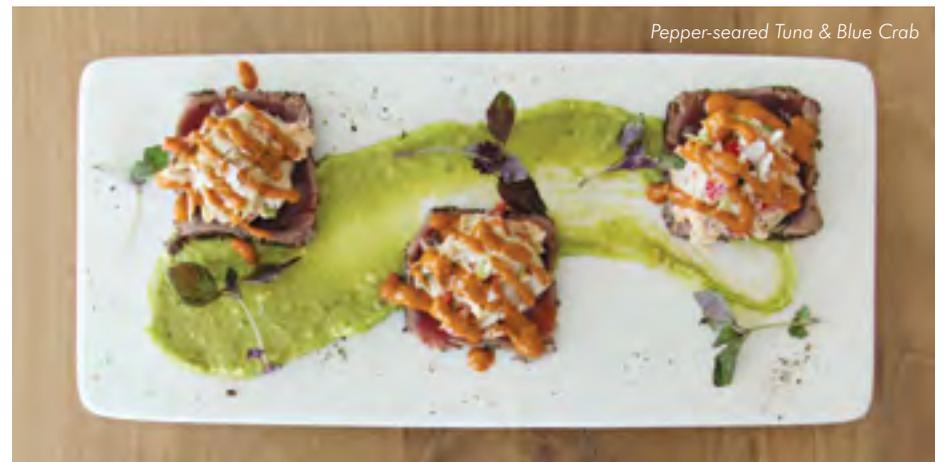
Along with partners Joe Freer, Greg Wakeham, and Steven Sapp, Chef Duenas has created a great following at Pescado, drawing in diners who crave something different—not only in flavor, but also in atmosphere. It is at once fine dining and casual, an achievement that can only be attributed to the location and the decided lack of pretention that could easily pervade in a venue whose menu offers such luxurious cuisine. “We wanted to create the atmosphere of a casual restaurant and really keep an unpretentious attitude,” says Freer. “The best thing about having a restaurant in Rosemary Beach is the whole feel of

Each dish is a work of art, a carefully executed display of what results from focusing creativity, passion, talent, and technique together in cohesion.



offers such options as Steak Tartare, Seafood Salad, and Crudo. For those who love to taste an abundance of the sea and love to do it all family style, the Chef’s Feast features whole grilled fish, plump shrimp, fried pork, smoky chorizo sausage, golden-fried shrimp fritters, clams, and mussels served with red rice and a garnish of pickled cucumbers, chopped red onion, and fresh diced tomato. The Paella Valenciana brings a taste of the Spanish coast, while the Cantonese Whole Lobster wanders over to the kitchens of Asia.

With so much to appeal to the senses, the entire menu is wildly popular with Pescado’s diners; but every bit as popular are the lively libations created by the mixologists behind the bar. Served up with a twist of creativity, each drink shows that the minds behind



the community and getting to meet people from all over the Southeast as well as different parts of the globe. We offer everyone an unforgettable experience because of our fine food, excellent service, and the eclectic menu of amazing craft cocktails.”

The perfect blend of farm-to-table and ocean-to-table, there is dedication to using the best, most fresh ingredients available in season; and that dedication is something that clearly shines through in the taste of each menu item. Uniqueness is certainly an important ingredient as well, evident in such small plates as the Grilled Hamachi Kama: a beautiful dish of grilled yellowtail collar perfectly accented with the smoky saltiness of guanciale and the earthiness of roasted eggplant served with chayote-lime salsa. For refreshing bites that embrace flavor in its original form, the raw bar

the mixing know what makes a great drink—and love to taste the results of their experiments. From the light and bubbly Endless Summer and the sweet Pineapple Express to the spicy kick of Tomorrow’s Pain, there’s a cocktail sure to satisfy every need; and they love to pour it on.

Sweetening things further, Chef Duenas also plays the role of pastry chef, whipping up a daily parade of confections such as cheesecakes and chocolate pot de crème as well as a fresh assortment available according to the season. From starter plate to finishing drop, Pescado is one dining destination that’ll really have you on the hook.

Pescado Grill & Rooftop Bar is located at 74 Town Hall Road, Suite 4B, Rosemary Beach, Florida 32413. The restaurant is open daily 3:00 p.m.- 10:00 p.m. Bar hours are 3:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 213-4600 or visit www.rooftop30a.com.

Restaurant Paradis

BY SUSAN L. CANNIZZARO



Lobster Encrusted Grouper



Key Lime Cheesecake



Gulf Coast Snapper

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Roux 30a: A Rich Roux

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

My idea for the restaurant was always to offer an experience not unlike being at the chef's table, where we create an incredible meal directly in front of you, using the best ingredients.

In this tech society where people's eyes are glued to their screens and their brains are over-stimulated with distractions that take their attention away from the people around them and moments happening right in front of them, it's not everyone who has the guts to open a restaurant where screens are unwelcome and where interaction is required. But such was the concept behind Roux 30a, a farm-to-table; family-style dining destination, where no one leaves a stranger and every flavor is experienced in real time.

Born of the visionary mind—and undeniable gutsiness—of Nikhil Abuvala, Roux 30a focuses on fresh, locally sourced ingredients that culminate into dishes inspired by countless culinary experiences: gained both through personal travel and through time spent under the tutelage of trained masters, whose pedigrees and knowledge of world cuisine can be tasted in every bite. And while his extensive repertoire of international flavor, flawless technical execution, and impressive presentation could easily translate into a menu and an ambience requiring a certain highbrow attitude and dress code to appreciate, it is Abuvala's deepest desire to open the minds and attitudes of the community he calls home. To invite community members to an experience, both of the flavors on the plate and the time spent with the people sharing their table.

"My idea for the restaurant was always to offer an experience not unlike being at the chef's table, where we create an incredible meal directly in front of you, using the best ingredients," explains Abuvala, whose role as owner extends also into that of Executive Chef. "The only seats we have for our guests are at either one of two large community style tables or at the chef's counter, so you have no choice but to sit with strangers. It creates an amazing feeling of intimacy that reminds people of being welcomed into someone's home, and the person next to you could become your next best friend. You just can't find that anywhere else."

A local boy whose roots lie in India, his time spent in the kitchen began too far back to recall: learning to love food as he worked with his grandmother to prepare heritage foods native to their family's culture as he learned the nuances of spice and watched the magic

created with a few simple ingredients and an endless supply of passion and love. After officially beginning his kitchen career in 2002, Abuvala has honed his sixteen years of experience by diving deep to master the cooking styles of Japan, low-country Creole, Indian, and the Mediterranean, as well as what is often referred to as "Modern American" cuisine. Consequently he achieved a kaleidoscopic understanding of each, to create a well-versed and extremely diverse bag of tricks from which to draw the dishes that grace the ever-changing menu for which Roux 30a has become so well-known since opening in 2012.

And while most chefs rely on their guests to determine what suits their particular mood for the meal, Abuvala has created a pre-fixe array of dishes that follows a particular theme and obeys the dictates of the season. "Our menu changes constantly, and the style of menu itself evolves," explains the chef. "Our signature is not necessarily a specific item, but more of the experience itself and people have certainly come to appreciate that."

Making every item from scratch and sourcing only the best ingredients doesn't hurt either. This allows Abuvala to showcase the quality of the meats, fish, seafood, and produce he uses to create his masterpieces. From starter to dessert, each plate is perfection, truly embodying the spirit of the country to which it pays homage. It is this careful study; this love and appreciation of diversity as well as the mastery of the technique required to achieve it; that gives Roux 30a such an edge in an industry where even the "unique" restaurants seem to lack a readily identifiable difference.

True, Abuvala and his team could stop and satisfy themselves with the pride of knowing that they are breaking new ground on the local food scene. But for



Chef Nikhil prepping in the kitchen



The Roux experience



Dining kitchen side

Roux 30a it's not just a matter of lifting your fork to enjoy the food on the plate; it's about lifting your eyes to the people around you and savoring the entire experience, from first bite to last word.

Roux 30a is located at 114 Logan Lane, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. Open Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.; Fridays from 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.; and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 213-0899 or visit www.roux30a.com

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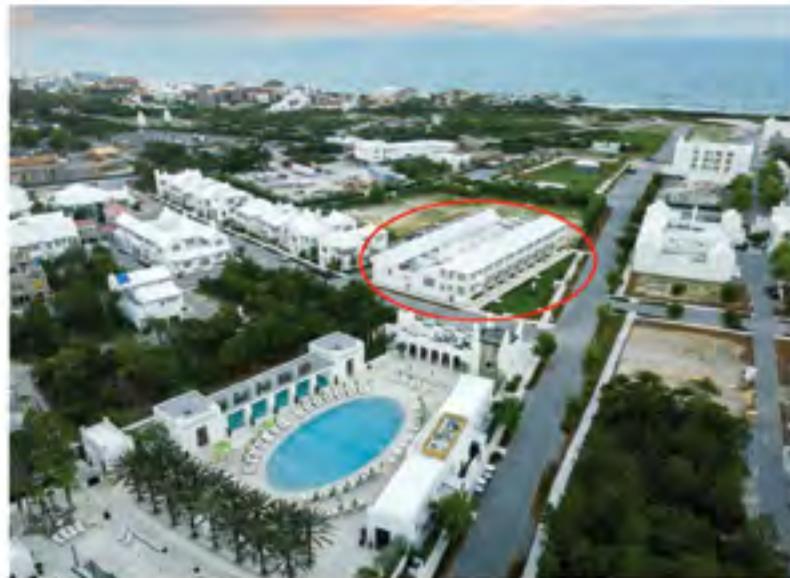
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The Freshest Market

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



Shea Gill, Paul Gill and Cindra Reyba



Wine Accessories



Fresh Produce



There's been an incredible shift in focus over the past few years to higher quality, fresh-from-the-farm ingredients that are locally sourced and free from hormones and harmful chemicals. More and more of us want to know where our food is coming from and that what we're putting into our bodies is truly nourishing. Deeply connecting with that mission, Montgomery, Alabama transplants Paul and Shea Gill partnered with their longtime friend Cindra Reyba—a former farm girl from Indiana, Pennsylvania—to open Thirty-A Filet & Vine, a brand-new marketplace where local farmers, chefs, and food artisans can offer their goods to locals and visitors hungry for quality fresh food.

"Paul, Cindra, and I all really love the 'farm-to-fork' concept that has become so popular these days," Shea explains. "And it's something that we connect with personally in our own lives. Cindra grew up on a farm and knows the benefits of feeding your body quality vegetables, fruits, and meats. As we've spent time coming together to share meals over the years, our families have grown closer enjoying the beauty and flavor of food made using the freshest ingredients."

Officially open since March 1, 2018, Thirty-A Filet & Vine is designed to be more than a marketplace of raw ingredients. It is also a community built of purveyors, chefs, vintners, and craft food makers, creating a more direct connection between customers and the sources of the food they purchase. "Our shop brings local farmers, bakers, and chefs to one spot for the convenience of serving our local residents and vacationers quality foods and wine, and one of the amazing things about this area is that we have so many local farms and talented chefs and bakers right here. Our goal is to highlight all of that



Wagyu Steak



Charcuterie Plate

and bring it to our customers so that they can truly appreciate it and experience it for themselves," Shea goes on.

Offering everything from grass-fed, Angus prime, and Wagyu beef to free-range organic chickens and pork from a farm in Chipley, the meat market at Thirty-A Filet & Vine is truly top quality. For fresh, local produce, Paul's Pick of the Crop offers a colorful array of the season's best, while take and bake entrees created by local chefs Mark Fressell from Crust and Amici's Elliot Bell provide flavorful options for making dinner in a pinch. Choose from specialties like chicken parmesan, eggplant rollatini, lasagna Bolognese, creamed spinach, twice-baked potatoes, and squash casserole, with new dishes on the menu each week. "We're always excited to see what these wonderful chefs are bringing to us, and our customers get a unique opportunity to taste their amazing food, right in the comfort of their own homes and fresh from their own kitchens," Shea continues. Rounding out the options are freshly baked breads from Black Bear Bread Co., fresh salads from Coastal Blue Farms, and a wide selection of premium wines.

Thirty-A Filet & Vine [...] is also a community built of purveyors, chefs, vintners, and craft food makers, creating a more direct connection between customers and the sources of the food they purchase.

As lovers of cooking, family time and fellowship, and foodies, for Reyba and the Gills, Thirty-A Filet & Vine is more about just being a shop—it's about creating an experience and savoring the process. "We want our customers to feel at home when they come shop with us, so we invite them to enjoy a bottle of wine and to share their stories with us. At the end of the day, it's about coming together around the table with family and friends enjoying good food, good wine, and great memories, and our shop gives people a starting place for all of that," says Shea.

"I think one of the things that makes us so passionate about this really stems from our own histories—our families have shared so many meals, laughter, and memories over the years; and we wanted to create a place that would encourage others to share a meal and spend time with their friends and family as they create memories of their own."

In a fast-paced world where face-to-face time is so few and far between and meals together are so often sacrificed to busy schedules, Thirty-A Filet & Vine stands as a reminder of just how good real, home cooked food can taste—and that we should all get back to our simple roots of family, friends, and love.

Thirty-A Filet & Vine is located at 1598 South County Highway 393, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. For more information, call (850) 598-2459 or visit www.thirtyafiletandvine.com.

Coastal Cooking

Tommy Bahama Showcases Finesse and Flavor in New Cookbook

BY SARAH MURPHY ROBERTSON

When you relax with an orchid-adorned, much-earned Mai Tai cocktail, a visit to Tommy Bahama feels like its own mini-vacation, no matter how you've spent your day. Creating an atmosphere of comfort is a key component to their guest experience and their dynamic menus always reflect fresh local cuisine with care taken to highlight each curated ingredient.

This second volume in the Tommy Bahama cookbook series features recipes inspired from cuisine spanning the coastlines of Galveston, Texas to Tampa, Florida. *Flavors of the Southern Coast* is full of recipes you'll want to add to your repertoire. The gorgeous

hours earlier!) and then dressed with tangy lime, a kick from jalapeno, and herbaceous cilantro.

Next was the Grilled Chicken and Mango Salad skillfully layered with ingredients that ensured an adept balance of flavors. Using tender local greens from Mac Farms, punchy feta cheese, sweet blueberries, and toasted almonds and pepitas for a nutty crunch, this salad simply sang. The topping of grilled chicken, and served with a swoon-worthy Jalapeno corn bread, ensured this is no ordinary salad course.

Three entrees were enticingly presented on one plate and picking a favorite would be an impossible task. The Jerk Pork Tenderloin was brined and marinated for thirty

The *Flavors of the Southern Coast* cookbook includes recipes for all these dishes as well as cocktails, such as a Hurricane Punch made with both light and spiced rums, and a sumptuous classic Sazerac. Dessert also punctuated this incredible meal with a signature cocktail – a creamy, tart, Key Lime Martini. It was presented alongside the beloved pie version with a buttery, sweet and salty Pecan Chocolate Bar. Despite full and happy bellies, these desserts were not to be skipped.

And on top of the cookbook: 2018 is Tommy Bahama's 25th anniversary so extra care has been given. Whether you visit the Tommy Bahama restaurant in Grand Boulevard for an evening out, or make these dishes

yourself at home using their beautifully-written cookbook, you must try these well-tested recipes for yourselves. In all honesty, I'd recommend you do both!



Roasted Chicken and Mango Salad



Mai Tai



Scallop Sliders

hardbound cookbook includes considerate instruction and stunning images from photographers Peden+Munk.

In fall 2017, Tommy Bahama in Sandestin hosted an evening to showcase these well-crafted recipes, and to the delight of all the guests the meal was exquisite from start to finish. Executive Chef Jimmy Frantz and his team created an intricate menu and the service was impeccable.

Sourcing local product whenever possible, Tommy Bahama's Sandestin location has access to a diverse selection of incredible seafood. Setting the perfect tone for the symphony of flavors ahead was the meal's start - an amuse-bouche of seafood cocktail. This dish was composed of Pink Shrimp, Lump Blue Crab (caught just

hours leaving it fork-tender. The phrase "Gulf to Table" takes on a whole new meaning when your fresh grouper is caught a mere 50 miles off shore. The blackened fish was perfectly cooked and wowed the table upon first bite. The third entree to round out this plate was their lightly breaded and cheese-stuffed chicken breast topped with a creamy roasted red pepper sauce. This is one of Tommy Bahama's most popular dishes and we could all taste why.

The sides served with these entrees were standouts as well. The Sweet Potato Mofongo was a novel dish for many at our table. Mofongo is a traditional Puerto Rican mash made with fried plantains roasted garlic. This version included sweet potatoes and was unique and sublime.

Tommy Bahama restaurant is open Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. and Sundays 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Located at 525 Grand Boulevard, Sandestin, FL 32550. Contact them at (850) 654-1743.

Wild Olives

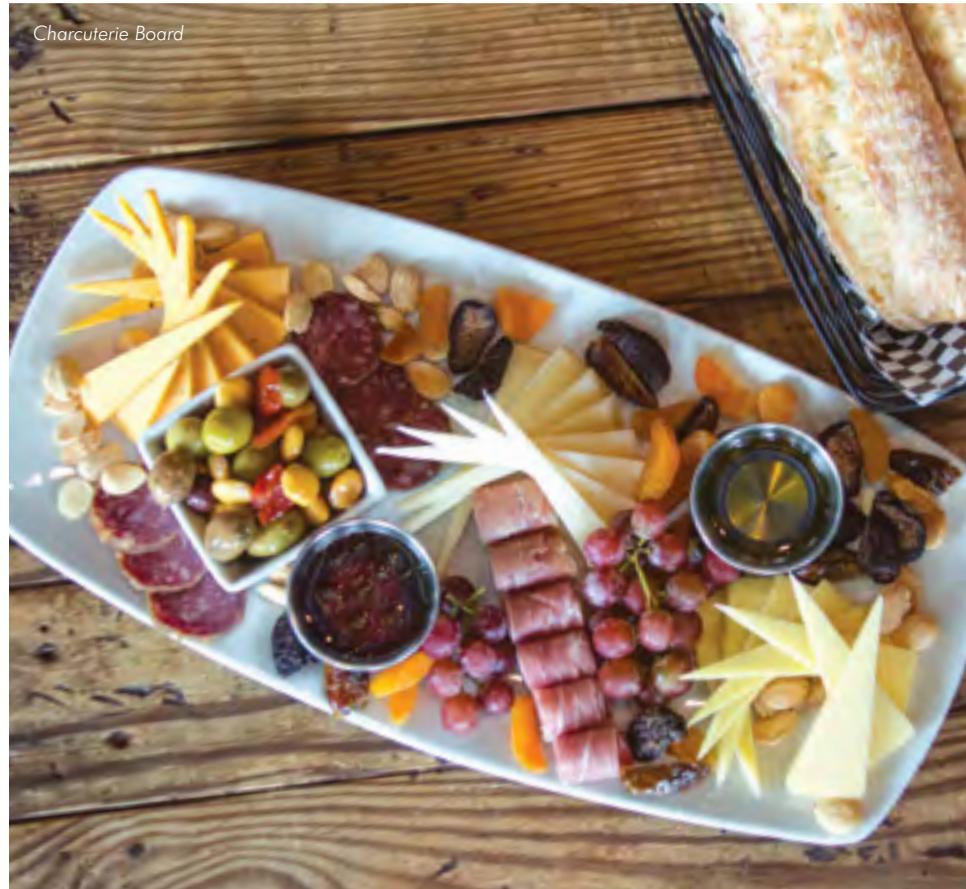
BY KEMPTEN TAYLOR

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

Wild Olives has been a staple on the 30-A dining scene for over 12 years now and this “wine, cheese, bistro” has matured into an exceptional wine shop with a full blown bistro menu. Fine wines are a passion for Trovas so it is no wonder why Wild Olives has become known as “the best little wine shop along 30-A”. Cult, small production, and limited quantity wines are among the bottles that adorn the shelves at Wild Olives. Trovas personally hand-picks all the wines found at Wild Olives.

All selections are tasted before bringing them into the shop and he promises customers will not be disappointed with anything he might suggest to enjoy “table side” or to take home. (There is no corkage fee). Wild Olives has a great variety of menu items, including sandwiches, cheese boards, flatbreads, small plates, and salads; and after 5 pm dinner choices include fish, shrimp, pasta, and delicious steaks.

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



Charcuterie Board

comes together, and tends to always have the perfect suggestion. Ask about his weekly dinner special, as it is always the perfect choice for most customers.

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

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

Wild Olives is a Bistro and Wine Shop located directly on 30-A in Rosemary Beach. Dine inside the intimate dining

room or al fresco on the large outside patio. The wine shop offers beautiful wines to enjoy tableside, to take home, or to the beach. Cheese, honey, crackers, and other wine and food are available. Table service and takeout are takeout before dinner service begins.



The Wild Olives Market



for the same cost of a glass of wine. Bottled beer also is discounted during this time. Friday night wine tasting is very popular and a great way for Trovas and staff to introduce patrons to a new wine, as well as to give tips with pairing food and wine and discussing the different varietals. Trovas is full of knowledge when wine and food

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



chef profiles

Chef Profile: Nikhil Abuvala of Roux 30A

BY SUSAN BENTON

I first met Chef Nikhil Abuvala when he was just twelve. Alongside his Indian grandmother, who was visiting America, he helped prepare an authentic Indian dinner in his home for both of our families. We had received the invitation when my husband and Abuvala's father became acquainted at our son's 8th birthday party, as the pair reminisced about food culture, specifically the Indian cuisine that had captured my husband's taste buds when he was serving as the physician to the ambassador of London so many years ago.

"My love of cooking has been with me as early as I can remember, standing in a chair rolling out fresh Indian flatbreads with my grandmother on a counter too tall for me to reach otherwise. The way she moved about the kitchen, like a general of an army commanding spices and herbs, sparked a passion for food in me that is unmatched," explains Abuvala.

When Abuvala was thirteen, (and after several invitations to dine later), I had the pleasure of seeing Abuvala in his element: not only as a young cook, but as a consummate host and entertainer, skills that came naturally to him as both of his parents excelled in this area.

When Abuvala expressed an interest in sushi making, I mentioned that chef Dan Pettis, a cooking mentor to our children at the Seaside Neighborhood School, had also rolled sushi at an early age under the tutelage of chef Tim Creehan at Beach Walk Café in Destin. Within the month, the forward-thinking teen was in an apprenticeship at the same restaurant.

Upon high school graduation, Abuvala heeded the call that lured him away to attend culinary school in Miami. Once he enrolled though, he felt that he had already mastered many of the skills that were being taught, having garnered a vast amount of knowledge from his upbringing. He craved hands-on experience and found it under the care of Dean James Max, renown for culinary consulting and his award-winning farm to table restaurants. Driven by Max and his chefs de cuisines, Paula DaSilva and Jeremy Ford, Abuvala developed an understanding of the authenticity of food and the respect for eating it.

His passion for food and his love for the Gulf Coast brought Abuvala home to South Walton in the spring of 2013 to open Roux 30A, a cozy and intimate 800-foot space in Grayton Beach. The dynamic chef has created



Chef Nikhil Abuvala

The open-air venue allows Chef Abuvala to create his seaside inspired modern cuisine in the state of the art kitchen, interacting with guests who eagerly await their next presentation.

art kitchen, interacting with guests who eagerly await their next presentation. Roux 30A has already garnered a loyal following that know to check Facebook and Instagram for the next pop-up lunch or dinner, or to reserve a coveted seat at the Around the World-themed monthly feasts where Abuvala highlights cuisines from particular countries on his multi course menu. At the weekly Sunday brunch you might find a Croque Madame: Grayton's own Black Bear Bakery sourdough topped with smoked honey ham, gruyere, cheese, a fried local farm egg, and béchamel sauce.

"I am humbled to be part of this amazing community that I get to call home, and I am excited about the future of Roux 30A," says Abuvala.



Beet-Cured Salmon



World themed feast celebrating Argentina

Roux 30A is located at 114 Logan Lane in Suite 1 A in Grayton Beach. The culinary experience extends beyond the restaurant. Chef Abuvala offers in-home meal preparation, cooking classes, and catering. To learn more visit Roux 30A online at www.roux30a.com, or to make a reservation call (850) 213-0899.

a symbiotic relationship between the local farmers and fisherman on the plates presented, with a menu that is constantly evolving to keep current with seasonal availability.

"We attract a lot of locals. Our dining space is just 34 seats but feels larger as the whole place is an open kitchen. It's a new level of transparency," says Abuvala.

The open-air venue allows Chef Abuvala to create his seaside inspired modern cuisine in the state of the

Susan Benton is a food and travel writer with published articles, recipes, and photography in many local, regional, and national publications. Her website is 30AEATS.com where she writes about the secrets of Gulf Coast food.

Dhiru's Dinners

BY ANNE HUNTER

Dhiru Thadani's father and mother, Ambrit & Gunu, believed that stressful days are forgotten by adding good friends, good food, and good conversation; as the fondest memories are gathered around the dining room table.

An architect and urbanist, Thadani began cooking in Seaside as an artist in the Escape to Create residency program in 2011, the same year that he was a recipient of the Seaside Prize. The artists and wardens would meet for dinner every Wednesday night to share ideas and constructively critique each other's creative projects. Thadani requested that he cook a meal for the group. The following week, the program wardens, Marsha Dowler, Cathy Toole, and Jane Crew were willing sous chefs and a tradition emerged: Thadani would host a dinner for the artists-in-residence in the following years.

In the years to follow, that scrumptious tradition would transform into a coveted invitation to attend one of Thadani's delicious dinners when he visits Seaside to oversee the town's architecture projects. Thadani has always enjoyed the company of individuals who are talented, tolerant, and adept at a skill or craft — sharing an interest in their work process, their struggle to create, be authentic, and sustain a living wage as artisans. "Hosting dinner parties in Seaside is always stimulating, educational, entertaining, and a bonding experience among the local artists. Walton County is one of the few areas that I know of where there is this abundance of creative individuals."

Share your thoughts on art, architecture, and cooking.

Architecture should be evaluated like cooking, in that the ingredients should be local, of high quality, and free of synthetics. The served dish should be visually pleasing, satisfying, pleasurable to taste, and complement the rest of the meal. The creative process of cooking is similar to designing a building; except the satisfaction is more instantaneous. Like a building, you want to use the best natural ingredients, free of synthetics, that have not travelled far. And time-tested method of construction. The dish you make should complement the other dishes



Illustration by Dhiru Thadani

as they cooked intuitively without measurement. I tried to understand the essence of the spice and what an ingredient added to a meal rather than a metric measurement.

What are your favorite dishes to prepare?

I always enjoy preparing Indian food as I constantly miss it. However I am comfortable with several cuisines. More recently I have been concentrating on vegetarian food, widening my repertoire of dishes. I have always enjoyed vegetarian food, more friends are moving toward a vegetarian diet.

What do you enjoy about your Seaside dinners?

We all are guilty of getting complacent about maintaining our friendship as we negotiate the chores of daily life. Friendship is a gift of life. I find myself in the role of instigator of events, as I am happy to have friends over for dinner every night. To be a civil society one must have a social life. Sharing a meal is on top of my list of social activities. Dinner with friends reminds me of my mother and the fabulous dinner parties that she would have. It was always a party when she was around. I remember that local musicians in Bombay would regularly stop by our house when there was a party, to entertain the guests — it was usually late, after hours, as they had jobs performing at the local bistros.

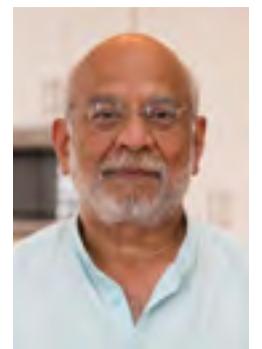
Cooking with fellow architects is no different than making a building — it takes teamwork.

at the meal, just like a building should complement the context that it is placed in and not try to stand out. Unless it is the main dish, similar to the civic building in a neighborhood.

When did you first begin cooking for friends?

A close first cousin, Sabrina, came to visit me when I was in grad school, and she was appalled at my eating habits. (She) took it upon herself to teach me some basic cooking procedures to prepare Indian food. With a few successful dinners I gained interest in preparing my own meals and entertaining in my apartment. And it did wonders for my love life, as the average male was helpless in the kitchen. On my trips back to India, I made it a point to learn one or two new dishes, by watching the house cook prepare meals and taking copious notes

Dhiru A. Thadani is an architect and urbanist and the author of Visions of Seaside. As a design principal and partner, he has completed projects throughout the world. For more information: www.seasideinstitute.org/dhiru-thadani-2011/



A Conversation with Camille Withall, Executive Chef at George's of Alys Beach

BY TRACEY M. HAWKINS

Since 2008, George's at Alys Beach has been crafting and serving a unique regional, coastal menu featuring locally sourced, organic produce, and only the freshest, local seafood. While waiting to begin your delectable meal, you can take a drink up to the beautiful deck and enjoy the glorious view of Alys Beach.

George's Executive Chef Camille Withall grew up learning to cook in Manila, Philippines, and first brought her combined loves of culture, travel, and cuisine to George's as Sous Chef in January 2014. We talked to Camille about her personal experiences and what makes George's special to her.

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

My mom is a great cook, and my family loves to eat. Growing up, we never had a dull meal. I think just being in a loving environment where food is also love fueled my interest in cooking.

What inspired you to become a professional chef?

I've imagined myself before having my own restaurant, and I knew that going to culinary school would be the first step toward achieving that. I've always loved to cook, but I believed that having some professional training would give me the tools I needed to know what I'm really in for.

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

I actually graduated with Bachelor Degrees in Communication and Marketing before I realized I could have a career in the Culinary Arts. A few years after graduating, I learned of the American Hospitality Academy in the Philippines, and I received my diploma from there for Culinary Entrepreneurship. I was also lucky enough to get offered an externship here in Destin, Florida, sponsored by the school. That is how I came to this area and eventually ended up where I am, at George's.

What are your favorite dishes/meals to prepare?

I usually cook Filipino food at home, because I miss it, and my husband loves it too. It reminds me a lot of home

and my family, and it's just always so good and flavorful. I also like to bake. I love sweets, and baking is quite calming.

What is your favorite cuisine to eat?

I don't think I have one favorite cuisine. It always depends on my mood at the moment. Other than Filipino food, I love Italian, Japanese, Indian, Korean, and Thai. I love them all!

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

There's always laughter in the kitchen because of our "isms". But, one time a frog got inside the kitchen and tried to chase me! It was funnier for my coworkers, I think, than it was for me.

Are there any other chefs in particular who inspire you?

In addition to their truly immense talent, I am inspired by Thomas Keller and Jacques Pepin for their culinary finesse, Jose Andres for how he is fully committed to feeding and reaching out to those stricken by natural calamities, and David Chang and Anthony Bourdain for their grit.

What do you like most about cooking for George's?

I like that I get to use any ingredient that inspires me and that are available seasonally. We get to change our menu at least twice a year, so we get to play with different flavors and techniques. We are not confined to one specific cuisine or to the same, specific ingredients all year, every year. And I think our customers appreciate that as well.



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

When a customer tells me the food reminds them of a good memory, or that it's the best they've ever had. Also, one time a customer asked if I have a cookbook and told me I should write one if I haven't yet. That was really sweet!

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

I like to travel when time permits, and that allows me to discover and be inspired by new foods and flavors. I also enjoy entertaining at home with family and friends, and that gives me the opportunity to share my talent with people I love.

Located at 30 Castle Harbour Dr., Alys Beach, FL 32461, George's serves lunch from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and dinner from 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday, closed Sunday. Contact them at (850) 641-0017 or info@georgesatalsbeach.com.

Chef Profile: Lawrence Klang, In Memoriam

BY MARY WELCH

“He was a kind soul with a big talent. He was very thoughtful, and he didn’t speak a lot. He spoke through his food.”

Lawrence Klang spent his life searching for new ideas, places, and friends. But there were two things he didn’t have to search for, because he found them. “He loved me and he loved cooking,” says his wife, Laura Pentel-Klang. “We were the two great loves in his life.” It was that simple. And that perfect.

Chef Klang, who passed away this past March 2018, was an extremely talented chef who could prepare a classic, complicated French dish with ease and then pan fry the fish he caught with his in-laws on the Gulf of Mexico. “He was well-versed in cooking. He was classically trained in French cuisine but that was just the start of his training. My father is a charter boat captain and he loved to go fishing with him. He pursued his passion,” says his wife, an attorney and third generation native of the South Walton area.

Chef Klang, like so many others in the area, divided his time geographically. He was the executive chef of The Blair Hill Inn, in Greenville, Maine; a Relais Chateau property. He oversaw the restaurant from June to October and then returned to the South Walton area, where he worked as a food stylist, consultant, and private chef; and took advantage of any opportunity to be a guest chef around the world. In fact, he was lined up to be a chef at a lodge in Tanzania on Mt. Kilimanjaro for May 2019.

During the couple’s 14 years together, (married 11), he made his mark on some of the area’s best restaurants. He was the chef cuisine at the WaterColor Inn and Resort/St. Joe’s three restaurants: its signature eatery, Fish Out of Water; The Gathering Spot; and IRD. He also worked in restaurants in San Destin and Grayton Beach.

But the world was his oyster (and he knew how to cook it). He studied Asian food: traveled there and studied under a master chef. He trained in Bangkok at David Thompson’s Nahm Restaurant, which at the time was named the number one restaurant in Southeast Asia. He was a guest chef at Restaurant in Bangkok, Thailand and the Kura Kura Restaurant in Oberoi Hotel Bali, where he trained in Indian, Malay, and regional



Indonesian Balinese cookery. Last, but not least, he studied the cuisine of China and Singapore with Chef Alfie Jerome Mossedeg, who is now the executive chef of the five-star Dream Hotel in Phuket, Thailand.

Throughout his career he has held the position of executive chef at four- and five-star properties in the US, and studied gastronomy throughout the world. He was a guest chef at Ciel Blue, a two-star Michelin restaurant in Amsterdam, and was the recipient of the 2008 Lobster Chef of Maine People’s Choice Award. Most recently he participated in the Ramen Challenge at the 2016 Star Chefs conference in New York City and appeared on the Chef’s Kitchen television show and prepared the dinner, “A Maine Noelle” at the James Beard House in NYC.

The late Barbara Bush knew of and appreciated his talent and he participated in preparing her 90th birthday



dinner in Kennebunkport, Maine. He completed a research and development project in Asia in preparation of the opening of a South East Asian inspired property in New England.

After finishing a degree in philosophy from Washington State University and deciding not to go to law school, Chef Klang took off for Europe and received his Grand Diplome from Le Cordon Blue London in 1996. His star quickly rose as restaurant owners, chefs, and customers knew they were in the presence of a culinary genius. He worked in London’s Claridge Hotel and Capital Hotel, as well as Restaurant Jaques Maximin in Vence, France, and Le Bernardin in New York City. Among the chefs he worked beside were Thomas Keller, Jean George Vongerichten, and Emeril Lagasse.

While he pursued his passion for cooking, he took it upon himself to mentor aspiring chefs around the world, many of who came for his celebration of life ceremony in June.

Despite his global adventures, Chef Klang loved Walton County where he doted on his cat, Sage; collected rare and out-of-print cookbooks, and spent time with his family. “He was a kind soul with a big talent,” his wife says. “He poured himself into his work and family. He was very thoughtful, and he didn’t speak a lot. His degree is in philosophy, so he chose his words carefully.”

She adds, “He spoke through his food.”



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Chef Zachary Keaton of Pizza Bar + Trattoria

BY SUSAN BENTON



Chef Zachary Keaton

As a food writer, one of the most exciting things to come across is a hidden gem or talent in the kitchen. That is what I found with Chef Zachary Keaton at Pizza Bar + Trattoria in Seaside. I've been around the South Walton block a few times on the restaurant scene, being a local for over two decades, and watched chefs come and go; but Keaton has been hard at work in the background and has now stepped out of the shadows to shine.

I met with Keaton to try a couple of the new menu items and to pick his brain about how he comes up with his unique take on recipes and specials showcased on the menu that changes seasonally. Placed before me was a bowl of the wood-fired delicate squash with chicory, currants, and pecans; nestled in a bed of whipped ricotta and finished with apple cider vinegar. Unexpected ingredients in a pizza joint, and each bite more flavorful than the last.

And speaking of pizza, the pies are true to Napoli in style and creatively topped. Keaton shared a wood-fired pie with sweet potato, Tuscan kale, fresh mozzarella, and chili that was finished with a drizzle of honey. The farm egg pizza, clam pie, meatballs from grass fed cattle, and house-made pasta dishes that are served in the fall and winter are also noteworthy. As I express my contentment, Keaton states, "We utilize whatever the farmers bring us for the week. The dishes are never planned in advance. It's very organic, what we do here."

At 27 years, Keaton and his kitchen team create drool worthy photos that have become a hit on their Instagram account @PizzaBar_Buds. It has made even the staunchest of food critics take notice. As a result, Chef Keaton will be headlining the 2018 Seeing Red Wine Festival with other noteworthy chefs.

Keaton found his calling in his youth when he worked at the Butterbean Café: a meat and three his grandmother owned in Carrollton, Georgia, where he grew up. "She instilled in me a great work ethic. I prepped food and washed dishes. I knew I wanted to go farther in this industry," Keaton explains.

When time, he departed for Panama City, where he worked as a porter for a local steak house prior to being

hired as a line cook at WaterColor Inn. Here he came under the tutelage of the late Chef Lawrence Klang and Derek Langford, currently the Executive Chef of Firefly, Panama City. Klang, Langford, and Keaton all made the transition to the Bud & Alley's family of restaurants around the same time. Keaton led the wood-fired, handcrafted Neapolitan pizza station while also managing the daily dough and cheese production.

In 2015, Chef Phil McDonald, a local who was well known for his catering business, had gone to New York to stage (be exposed to new techniques and cuisines), and returned to take the reins of Pizza Bar. Keaton says, "Chef McDonald became my mentor and I became his sous chef. He taught me a new style of cooking that I carry with me today. I take really fresh and ingredients in season and elevate them. The idea is not to box yourself in!"

Using purveyors within a 200-mile radius, most closer, Keaton says, "We try to do it all ourselves. We break down the meats, stretch the mozzarella, make 700 + dough rolls a day, our own ice cream, desserts, dressings, you name it!"

For the last two years as Chef de cuisine, Keaton has cooked for and with many James Beard awarded chefs. He is well versed in hosting the finest of wine dinners and is on his way to making his own mark, not only in South Walton, but also on the national stage with his culinary excellence.

Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar + Trattoria is located at 2236 East County Road 30A in Seaside, Florida. They can be reached by phone at (850) 231-3113 or you can visit their website at www.budandalleypizzabar.com. Pizza Bar does offer gluten free and vegan menu options.

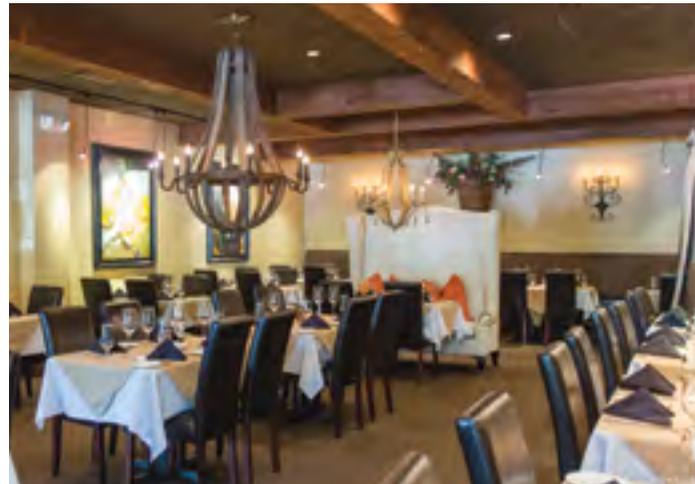
We utilize whatever the farmers bring us for the week. The dishes are never planned in advance.

Chef Profile: Mark Eichin

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



Chef Mark Eichin



Food, for Eichin, is a way to connect, a way to communicate to the soul without words.

Since relocating to the area a decade ago, Eichin's star has been on the rise, hitched firmly to the reputation Restaurant Paradis has gained under his deft hand and exceptional talent as their Executive Chef. Building upon his inherent understanding of flavor combinations, artistic presentation, and flawless technique, Eichin has taken the cuisine at Restaurant Paradis to make it both beautiful, and delicious, a feast for the eyes as much as it is for the taste buds. Most of all, it is

his passion and love of food that has been the secret to his success, his hunger to learn more and to better himself as a chef. "This is a very demanding career, but I love the fact that I'm constantly learning something, each and every day," Eichin says.

That passion keeps him dedicated to his craft, no matter how grueling the day or how many hours he may find himself in the kitchen. "There really is no such thing as a day off when you're a chef!" he laughs. And more than money or acclaim, Eichin finds his greatest reward in watching the next generation of chefs rise under his tutelage. "Training, teaching, mentoring, and watching your employees grow in and out of the kitchen is what motivates me the most," he explains. "It's truly such a beautiful thing to watch firsthand."

With so much talent at play, it might be said that guests at Restaurant Paradis benefit most, having the

opportunity to taste his exceptional fare each time they are seated at one of his tables. From luxurious seafood dishes to tender steaks, Eichin showcases his ingredients at their finest, creating plates that are presented with nothing short of perfection. His high end cuisine has created a following, bringing diners from across the area to experience it for themselves, savoring the food set before them even as they savor the unique, intimate ambiance at Restaurant Paradis.

Cooking high-end cuisine is not the only trick in his bag, however, and sometimes the good chef loves to tap into his more homey side—especially on the rare occasions when he finds himself with some time to relax. "I love making chicken and dumplings on a cold day, when I have time to spend

at home with my amazing lady and relaxing," he says with a knowing smile.

Eichin's greatest aim is creating a full sensory experience for those he serves—regardless of whether it might be a more home-style, "pedestrian" dish or one far more lavish. Food, for Eichin, is a way to connect, a way to communicate to the soul without words. "This is where I've always found my most passion, creating food for people to enjoy and share that they'll always remember."

In his work at Restaurant Paradis, Eichin certainly creates memorable food; but he has also created a family of sorts, bonding with his coworkers and supporting them as they grow both personally and professionally. "We have such a family environment here and it helps strengthen our ability to do what we do and better serve our guests. Each day brings a different experience with many new challenges to conquer, and we all conquer them as a team."

The team at Restaurant Paradis is indeed a strong one—and Chef Eichin is keeping it cooking along.

Restaurant Paradis is located at 82 South Barrett Square Rosemary Beach, Florida 32461. Open daily at 5:00 p.m. For more information, call (850) 534-0400 or visit www.restaurantparadis.com.

Redirecting his plans has been something that has served 35 year-old Mark Eichin well in life—both when he left traditional college to pursue the culinary arts and attend Le Cordon Bleu, and when he and a friend headed out ahead of a hurricane that had its sights set on Orlando, leaving his home behind to seek shelter in South Walton. Having spent much of his childhood cooking in the kitchen with his mother, it was the place he found himself most at home, and so the shift into becoming a chef was a natural one. And much as cooking claimed his heart, so did the community he found on that fateful trip, later calling him to make it his home and leave Orlando for good. "When it had reached that point in my life that I knew Orlando wasn't the place for me, I knew that I wanted to come here," Eichin recalls.



farmer talk

The Honey Hutch: Doing Things the Wright Way

BY SUSAN BENTON



I believe in protecting our planet, and most importantly in giving back through high-impact, sustainable projects aimed at ending extreme poverty and fighting hunger around the world.

There is nothing much like honey: the sweet elixir known around the world for its healing properties like moisturizing skin, boosting energy, and treating allergies and arthritis, to name a few. Harvesting honey is an ancient activity that dates back eight thousand years to the Mesolithic period. The ancient Egyptians used honey as part of their currency, while the Chinese are accredited with originating the art of beekeeping.

Beekeeping also found its way to Destin, where third generation apiarist Amy Wright was born, raised, and began keeping bees when she was in middle school in 1996. Liquid gold struck one Christmas morning when she and her brothers received seven hives from her grandfather, the late Hamilton Harper, who enjoyed beekeeping as a hobby.

Wright says, “The hives were such a wonderful gift from my grandfather, but they were a huge undertaking, a task difficult for teens involved in so many other activities to take on. Fortunately, my father filled in and beekeeping became a beautiful way for the two most important men in my life at the time to bond.”

With 60 years of beekeeping spanning generations, Wright felt the pull to return to the family hobby while in college at Appalachian State University, a campus located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.



Amy Wright

“I spent a lot of time outdoors and with nature, and couldn’t keep my mind off of beekeeping. When my father became hospitalized I rushed home to find the hospital using honey for wound care. It became obvious to me what I needed to do for my career!” says Wright.

Following graduation and a stint traveling to third world countries, Wright returned to the Emerald Coast to launch The Honey Hutch and begin her full-time job as an apiarist. She currently has 70 hives that accommodate thirty to sixty thousand bees each, producing over 500 gallons of honey each year. The honey varieties include Tupelo, Wildflower, Gallberry, Orange Blossom, and Palmetto. Wright also creates and markets lip balm, lotion, candles, and soap made from the beeswax and honey from her hives, adding high quality essential oils like lavender, orange, and lemon.

“I’m proud of our pure raw honey and body care products made from simple, ethically sourced, wholesome ingredients; but I also want The Honey Hutch to be a mission driven company. I believe in protecting our planet, and most importantly in giving back through high-impact, sustainable projects aimed at ending extreme poverty and fighting hunger around the world.”

With that, Wright is a leader in The Sonder Project, a global non-profit charity established by South Walton businesses to help those around the world suffering the most. With the support of The Honey Hutch, The Sonder Project focuses its efforts on projects relating to education, clean drinking water, deworming, and honey bee related agriculture. Wright founded and is the lead of the Project Agriculture arm of The Sonder Project.

In 2015 Wright and The 30A Company partnered to launch the 30A Honey line, the perfect local gift or souvenir; and in 2017 The Honey Hutch was on Oprah’s list of favorite things. Currently, The Honey Hutch is making an appearance on the Anthropologie website and stores showcasing honey, honey flights, and gift sets. The Honey Hutch products can also be purchased in specialty stores and Whole Foods grocery stores across the nation, as well as directly on The Honey Hutch website.

“I want to have a successful sustainable business that provides healthy and natural products to individuals of all ages. My job allows me to do two things that I love, working with my hands and being outdoors. But more than that, it enables me to give back to mother earth and do something for the overall greater good.”

For more information about The Honey Hutch, visit www.thehoneyhutch.com. For more information about The Sonder Project, or to help Bee The Change, visit www.thesonderproject.org.

Caveman's Cupboard

BY MARY WELCH

To Tony DeBlauw, having a meal is more than simply putting food on a plate; it's a lifestyle choice. Well, it's not a choice to eat, but it is a deliberate choice of what he puts into his mouth. "I'm from the Pacific Northwest and the mindset there is pretty pervasive. People want healthy foods. I want good clean food for others and myself. I'm not doing this to get rich, but I didn't see a lot of options when I moved here for the type of food I want, so I decided to do it myself. I'm passionate about it."

DeBlauw puts his passion into two businesses: The Caveman's Cupboard, which is a collection of Paleo-oriented products, such as organic nut butters, bone broths, natural remedies, and healing clays. He also is a partner with George Fisher at Arrowhead Beef, where they offer 100 percent grass fed and finished beef, along with marbled Wagyu beef and Berkshire pork. Co-founded in 2010 in Chipley, Arrowhead Beef is a cooperative of family farms, local processors, and sales representatives.

The Paleo diet advocates lots of fresh lean meats and fish, fruits, vegetables, healthier fats, eggs, and nuts. Forbidden are processed foods, wheat, dairy, refined sugar, corn, and soy.

DeBlauw admits his life is a bit unconventional. He grew up in Montana where, in addition to hunting wild game, his family would buy half a cow and stick it in the freezer. "I thought everyone did that. I found out later, most go to the grocery store." He and his girlfriend traveled a bit and he had a bunch of odd jobs. "It was a personal adventure of finding oneself," he says. He did have one benefit: a co-worker turned him onto the Paleo diet.

His move to the Panhandle also wasn't traditional. "Most people say they visited the Emerald Coast or they heard about it and had to come. They love it and consider it paradise. My girlfriend got a job down here and I didn't have a good enough excuse not to follow her, so I came here."

Not finding enough Paleo products he decided to start making them himself and started with what still is

his most popular product: organic cashew butter. "It was a business borne out of necessity and I just thought I would turn my Paleo lifestyle into a business."

People, DeBlauw believes, want to know the origin of



their food and what it does to their bodies. "There's a lot of misinformation out there. We're providing transparency to benefit the customers. They can make their own decisions, and we think they'll start buying the best options."

He says, especially in this area, that it's an uphill battle. "We can't compete on price but we can compete on quality." Their distinct line is Parthenais cattle, a French breed renowned for being exceptionally lean and tender because the muscle fiber is softer, and free of hormones, antibiotics, and pesticides. "This is a line that you really can't get anywhere else in the United States. We raise our cows. Then we purchased a USDA processing place. We're 100 percent vertically integrated, only of two in the state, where we bred, raise, process, pack, and distribute."

DeBlauw is spreading the word not only in the Panhandle, but throughout the state. "Legitimate meat



producers for the Panhandle are still lacking here. We want restaurants and regular consumers to know that we are a resource for them and they can get excellent local Florida grass-fed beef."

Locally several restaurants are serving Arrowhead Beef. "James Neal at the Pearl in Rosemary Beach is a phenomenal chef. He's spent a lot of time outside this area honing his craft and being exposed to areas that demand these kind of products," he says. Other local eateries include Caliza Restaurant in Alys Beach, and Bud and Alley's Pizza Bar.

Consumers can go to their website and order a variety of cuts of meats, including steaks, hamburgers, and roasts, as well as meat for kabobs, stews and fajitas. They also sell pet food and less traditional parts, such as the tongue, oxtail, bones, liver and heart. DeBlauw is working on a line of jerky.

"Obviously we want to use as much of what we create in as many forms as possible. We are working to diversify our product portfolio and capture more of the market," DeBlauw says. "No one talks about how good bone beef bone broth is today. I would like to see a movement of people again eating organ meats. It's extremely healthy and I think it will be rediscovered. Beef liver is strong in iron and there are ways to package it to make a very delicious meal."

Everything he makes is organically sourced. DeBlauw sells them on his website as well as Saturdays at the farmer's market at Seaside and Sundays at Rosemary Beach.

For more, go to: Tony DeBlauw, Caveman's Cupboard. Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, call (850) 270-8804 or visit www.TheCavemansCupboard.com.

For Arrowhead Beef of Chipley, FL 32428, go to www.arrowheadbeef.com or call (850) 270-8804.



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If you are looking for that unique and "must see" experience while visiting 30A, be sure and stop in to visit the Justin Gaffrey Gallery, home to the artworks of Walton County's premier contemporary artist, Justin Gaffrey. The gallery is unlike any other museum or "white cube" gallery experience you have ever had! Take in the various paintings and sculptures inside and speak to a design associate about commissioning a "made just for you" artwork. Roam the scenic grounds in the outdoor sculpture garden and take advantage of the photo ops for that one of a kind selfie alongside Justin's surrealistic creations. See where this artist began his career in his original studio, or find that perfect piece of original artwork for your home. There is no obligation to buy, and the gallery staff is welcoming and knowledgeable of the artist's history, the body of work, and techniques. The Justin Gaffrey Gallery is located along 30A in Blue Mountain Beach at 21 Blue Gulf Drive and is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm during the summer, and 9 am to 5 pm during the winter months. The Justin Gaffrey Gallery has something to offer for all tastes from contemporary abstract painting and sculpture, to modern still life, landscape, and floral painting, limited edition prints and one of a kind studio relics. For the art lover to the serious connoisseur, a trip to the Justin Gaffrey Gallery is a visit you will want to make each time you come to the beach! Be sure to follow Justin on Facebook and Instagram to see all of his latest creations and gallery events.

"Sunset Over Western Lake" | 48" Wide by 30" Tall | Acrylic On Wood Panel | Justin Gaffrey 2018

Pick of the Crop

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

From the vibrant hues of their rainbow carrots and the golden tones of their butternut squash, to the robust reds of their heirloom tomatoes and the crisp snap of their snap peas, Paul's Pick of the Crop is a purveyor of all things fresh and dirty, harvesting from the fields of their multigenerational farmland as well as those cultivated on the grounds of some of the region's best farms. Taking those locally grown jewels to the Seaside Farmer's Market, Paul Johnson serves as the go-between for grower and consumer, creating a connection that promises purity, sustainability, and ethical sourcing that showcases the many treasures that the wonderful cross-section of the south has to offer.

Week after week, Paul's Pick of the Crop is just as advertised: operating a veritable cornucopia of colors and flavors picked fresh from the vine and plucked right from the tree, so newly dug-up that the dirt still clings to their skins. It's the simplest of concepts, really, but one that too much of the country has lost sight of in this age of chain grocers and brightly-lit superstores where vast aisles of produce have been stocked with the wares of growers thousands of miles away.

"We love having the opportunity to represent these wonderful growers from across the region and bring their product to people at Seaside who would otherwise not have the chance to enjoy them," says Johnson, whose family has been in farming as far back as he can remember. His own return to those roots happened only a decade ago, after he and his wife, Marsha, decided to give up their previous nine-to-fives and get their hands dirty at the Market. Now nine years in, Paul's Pick of the Crop has aligned themselves with farmers and growers spanning the map from Georgia to Northern Alabama and down into Central Florida. "We're still staying regional, but that allows us to be able to source a wider variety of the freshest, most seasonally available product throughout the year," Paul explains.

And that dedication to freshness is certainly palpable. It is clearly evident in the texture, the color, the size, the smell, and—of course—the taste of every last fruit and vegetable. From blueberries to beans and everything in between, Paul's crop definitely makes the top pick as far as market-goers are concerned; so busy have they kept his stalls that the supply is not always able to keep up with the demand. And understandably so, as his process of cutting out the "process" of farms to processing plants to storage containers to shippers mean that whatever you lay



Whatever you lay your hands on each Saturday morning has been freshly picked only within the last few days.

your hands on each Saturday morning has been freshly picked only within the last few days. "People really appreciate that, because they love getting good food," Paul explains. "And realizing that was really what gave us the push to start all of this when we did, because we realized that people had really begun to embrace the idea of fresh, local, organic food, and that we would be able to bring that to them here at Seaside."

Originally both from Alabama, the Johnsons finally made South Walton their permanent home after they started the business, having spent years coming to Seaside at every opportunity to enjoy its beaches, small-

town feel, and friendliness of its people. Now having fully planted themselves here, their small family uses Saturday mornings at Seaside Farmer's Market not only to work, but as a way to spend time together and to enjoy time with other

members of their community. "The people at Seaside are so wonderful, and they've really embraced what we're bringing them here at our little farm stand," he says modestly. "I think that's why we've done well over the years—when you do what you love and you do it well, you do well," he continues, espousing his theory on the secret to success—regardless of what one might be doing.

In Paul's case, doing well means that his crates and tables—once stacked high with bushels and bundles of freshly picked produce of every color—have been emptied, leaving nothing behind but the stray bit of farm dirt as evidence of what was once there. From farm to market, Paul's is one pick worth making—and it's quality with truly home-grown roots.

Paul's Pick of the Crop can be found Saturday mornings from 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Seaside Farmer's Market, 2235 East County Highway 30A, Seaside, Florida 32459. For more information, call (850) 527-7855.

WATSON



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Blake Hunter: Farming the Land and Surf

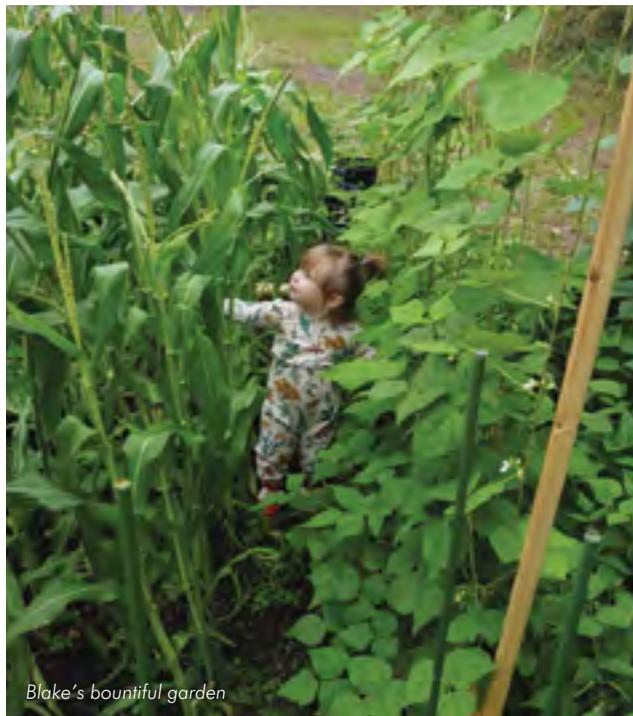
BY SUSAN BENTON

I try to get people involved in learning how to grow what they need to eat, the organic principals, especially the younger generation, it's important.

It's tough to move away from the Gulf Coast when you have grown up along the water's edge, and then try to settle into a new job and life in another city. This is what happened to Blake Hunter and his wife Paige when he took a job in Valdosta, Georgia.

After time, he realized his job in medical sales was not matching up with the couple's life goals, and the lure (pun intended) to come back to the coast was just too strong. In 2014, they put down roots and built their home in Santa Rosa Beach.

Blake and Paige wanted to create a life for themselves living off of the land: growing and farming organic produce in their backyard and on a neighbor's parcel offered nearby. The itch began when Paige's uncle gifted a small homemade planting trellis for two large pots to Blake. It flourished into a sort of therapy for Blake, who now grows for the health benefits and also to teach and show others how to grow their own food. "I try to get people involved in learning how to grow what they need to eat, the organic principals, especially the younger generation, it's important," Blake says, who is currently in horticulture sales working with growers in Florida and in the southeast.



Blake's bountiful garden



Blake at work in the soil

Photos courtesy of Blake Hunter

For his own farming, Blake builds all of the soil from scratch so it's not just potting soil, and he has it down to a science. He tests the soil to make sure it has the right amount of nitrogen and magnesium, for example; not an easy thing to do in our given climate.

With that soil, the Hunters plant heirloom seeds in the spring and fall and receive a bounty of seasonal goodness that includes peppers, kale, spinach, collard and turnip greens, arugula; and in summer some of the finest varietal tomatoes in town, like the Solar Flair and Dark Galaxy. Blake grew fifteen varieties in 2018. Local restaurants, such as Emeril's Coastal Italian, have purchased Blake's tomatoes to showcase on their menu. Others have found him by way of social media and sought out his produce.

With a passion for working the land and for fishing, Blake launched Reel 30A in 2017, a play on words for the lifestyle brand he is creating. "I saw a need for surf fishing

in our community. We eat what we grow and catch. My favorites are Scamp, Pompano and Snowy Grouper. I offer surf fishing rod and reel rentals, and fishing lessons. I have worked with corporations like

The Henderson Beach Resort & Spa, individuals, and families. The rentals include bait, tackle and weights. The client does not need to bring anything. I drop it off and pick it up," Blake explains.

Since their move to South Walton, the couple's family has grown to include two-year old Sloane and a new arrival will soon be making this family a four some. Holding a fashion retail degree from The University of Alabama, in 2018 Paige began working with Erika Powell as a buyer for Urban

Grace Interiors. She is also the founder of the mom blog Momosas, where she shares health tips and recipes.

Blake prepares the family meals using the produce from the garden. He says, "My grandmother was one of the best cooks in Mississippi. I learned how to make her 5-hour Greek style spaghetti. It is simply amazing and she is also what inspired me to grow our own food again!"

For more information follow "The Hunter Home Garden" handle on Instagram to keep up with what's happening in Paige and Blake's backyard, the blog, and to direct message Blake if you're interested in learning about growing or to purchase produce. For surf fishing you can reach out by email at reel30a@gmail.com, or by going to www.Reel30A.com.



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Inside the Lines

It's that time of year when we all promise ourselves that we will do this and this and that better than the year before. What a great bunch of liars we can be—well, most of us! But still, in our pursuit of human perfection it doesn't stop us from making grand plans with the greatest intentions of starting right after the last note of Auld Lang Syne is dropped.

We tennis players go through a myriad of emotions in a match according to what we're doing (or not doing) on the court. Thus it is vitally important that we have some resolutions of our own to ease our self-imposed suffering.

Here are some suggestions:



- When serving I will NOT hit a bad toss. We've all done it. Swiped at a ball three feet from us and rainbowing away to boot. But in our delusion of confidence we think we can overcome the bad toss and ace our opponent so we take a swing. Bad move. Instead we look like we're going to face plant on the court as we lunge for the ball and almost topple like a giant redwood. Then we plant a foot in front of us and then try to act cool like, "Hey that's okay, my second serve will get you; have you seen my kick serve? I'm so good I can afford to waste a few first serves."
- When playing doubles I will NOT get angry or disappointed if my opponent misses an easy shot. You have to be completely honest on this one. It happens all too often. You say things like, "It's okay, we'll get 'em!" But you're thinking, "Hey swatter, did you graduate from badminton last week? You're killing us; get it together!" Be nice, both with words and thoughts. It will pay off in the long run.
- I WILL NOT get cute and try to win the point on the service return. When your opponent is serving like John Isner with an F4 tornado at his back don't go for the winner. Yes, there are times when you can drill a lumbering second serve up the line for a winner but not when the server is bringing the heat. Play it safe and do like the great Brad Gilbert and take the Boa Constrictor approach. Squeeze your opponent little by little each time they exhale until they can no longer take in air. Don't go for it all on one shot.
- I WILL always shuffle back to the middle of the court after each shot. Wow, how many times have we all done this? Make a great shot, watch in amazement as it speeds over the net and you just stand there admiring your shot thinking, "Wow, Hussain Bolt ain't gonna run that one down." Sometimes by way of transcendental meditation I run to the clubhouse and grab a bag of popcorn and sit on the sideline watching in amazement while my shot is hurling through the air. Then Pow!, amazingly the ball comes back with even more pace but it comes back to the opposite side. The side where you are not. It's then that you realize it's time to put down the popcorn, stop being your own spectator and get your feet back on terra firma. Remember, hustle is the name of the game.
- I WILL go for placement over power. Okay macho men you know who I'm talking to here. I do this too, that's how I know. It's our roots coming out from an earlier time. A time when wheels were carved from a block of stone and great beasts were hunted with simple spears. Sometimes we just can't help it. So many times I out powered my opponent in a point only to be beaten by a softer shot put in the exact location that causes excruciating aggravation. You know, the ones that come in low right at your feet or slowly whizz by you as a winner. Why is it that they seem to whisper "nanny nanny boo boo you can't get me" as they pass by with the greatest of ease? Placement is hard to beat.
- When my serve is off I WILL take just a little pace off instead of going for those elusive aces. Sometimes when our serve is off we want to hit the ball even harder. Part of it is frustration and part of it is that we want to overcome those previous missed serves and show our opponent we can bring the heat and deliver the accuracy as well. Instead, take off a little pace or hit a few kickers to get back on track. Hitting second serves on first serves can get you back on track. We all know what a very smart person said about doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

Okay if we can just commit to these few nuggets our game should improve greatly in the new year. But let's not let the promise become a lie. The lies we tell ourselves are the biggest lies of all. So, to thine own self be true and in the new year remember..... watch the ball, bend your knees, next opponent please!



MARTY SHOEMAKER, who is an avid tennis player, teaches tennis to underprivileged kids, is a member of Rosemary Beach Racquet Club and is also a licensed Realtor with Beachy Beach 30A Real Estate.
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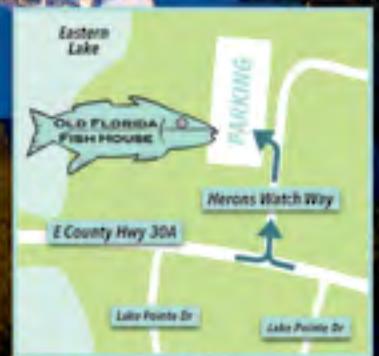


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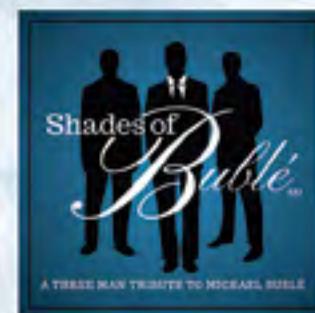
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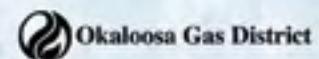
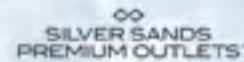
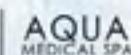
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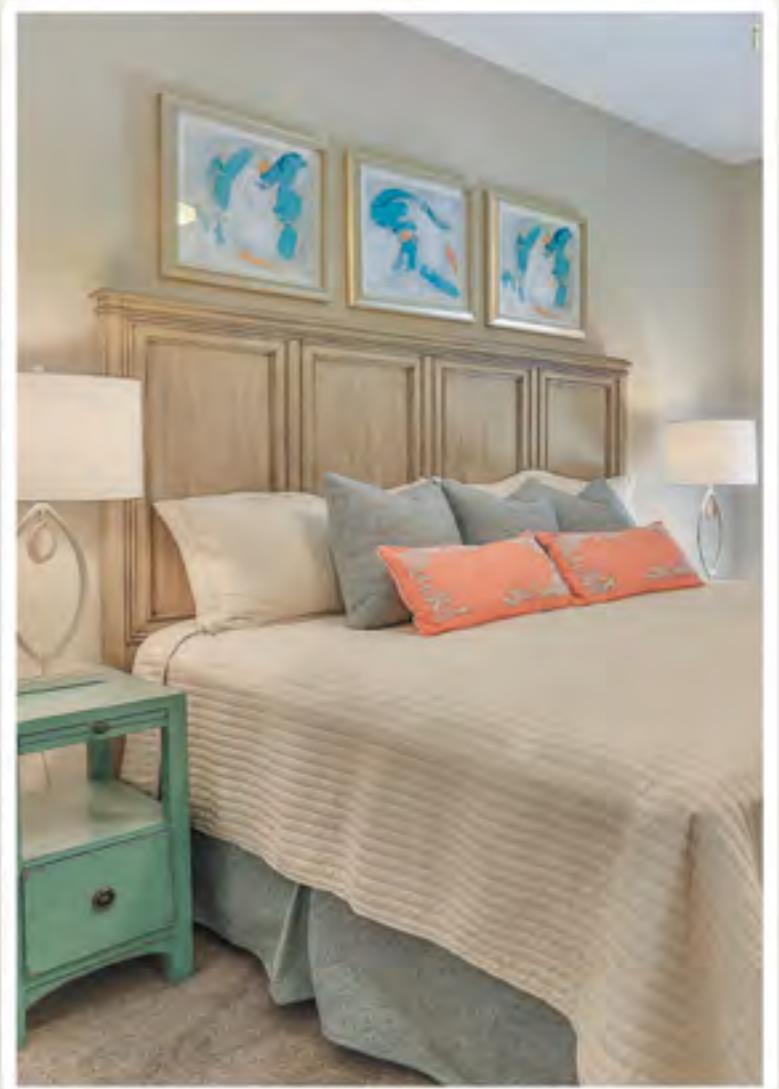
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