



# Foodie





Whether you long for adventure, cultural discovery, or fabulous food, these destinations close to home will surprise and delight



MIAMI HEAT

The Magic City sizzles at the forefront of America's restaurant scene

By Paul Rubio



A "Once Upon a Time in Mexico" whimsical storybook setting comes to life at **Serena** (serenamiami.com). The Oaxacan-inspired rooftop garden dazzles with colorful clusters of design-forward tables and couches, cloaked in lush foliage and buzzing with beautiful people. A shared plates menu—crafted by the

> masterminds behind Wynwood's Coyo Taco—impresses with flavor-rich aguachiles, tostadas, quesadillas, and huaraches. Within this set of excellence, the best of the best includes the uni and crab tostada, the Maine diver scallops aguachile verde, and the squash blossom quesadilla.

Nightlife sophistication peaks at **MILA** (milarestaurant.com), a vibe-heavy restaurant, bar, and lounge inviting the city's tastiest eye candy to sip on next-level cocktails by award-winning duo Jennifer Le Nechet and Mido Yahi, nibble on MediterrAsian cuisine, delight in multi-sensory entertainment, show off the latest fashion trends, stand, pose, flirt, and party.

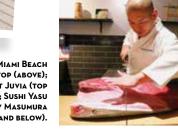


### Locals' Favorite

With dreamy views of the Atlantic and an inviting openair design, The Ocean Grill at The Setai, Miami Beach (thesetaihotels.com) is idyllic for languid lunches, sunset martinis, and memorable dinners. Loyalists can't get enough of the ambience, the Mediterranean-inspired menu (underscored by a highly addicting black truffle pizza and a woodgrilled whole branzino), and the exquisite presentations. (For Instagram gold, order and photograph the salmon carpaccio, artistically surrounded by grated boiled egg, chives, minced red onions, and edible flowers, topped with caviar and crème fraiche.)

In a city where being new is everything, Juvia Miami Beach (juviamiami.com) flaunts a winning recipe for keeping timeless

The rooftop restaurant, which has been wowing Magic City A-listers since 2012, still ticks all the boxes: splashy design, sweeping views, cool vibe, great service, and remarkable gastronomy that combines French, Japanese, and Peruvian cooking styles. Dishes that keep us coming back include the sweet and savory Perigord truffle ceviche, the pancakesized spicy tuna crispy rice, and the melt-in-your-mouth Chilean sea bass en papillote.









**HIDDEN GEM** 

AMONG THE FLASH OF THE MIAMI DESIGN DISTRICT. TUCKED IN THE FAR COR-NER OF THE MIA MARKET FOOD HALL, LIES THE **UNASSUMING BUT AMAZING** SUSHI YASU TANAKA BY MA-SUMURA (MIAMARKET.COM). HERE, THE HYPER-TALENT-**ED CHEF YASU PREPARES** NIGIRI-FOCUSED SUSHI BY HAND AT HIS MICRO-RESTAURANT AND DELIVERS A TEN-COURSE OMAKASE THAT'S BOTH AUTHENTIC AND AFFORDABLE (\$59).

# THE RITZ-CARLTON,

## WHERE TO STAY

Following a three-year, \$90 million renovation, The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach (ritzcarlton.com) returns with a fresh approach to Miami tropical chic and new amenities aplenty. This includes the stunning Lapidus Bar, a design-forward take on a 1950s cocktail bar, and Fuego y Mar restaurant, whose menu reflects Miami's diverse Latin American influences, from Cuban to Colombian. Start with the roasted sweet plantains and esquites (Mexican street corn) before moving on to a sofrito-laced seafood rice or a chimichurri-topped Wagyu steak with sides like tostones and yucca fries.

Also sporting a new look is **W South Beach** (marriott. com). The all-suite hotel was reimagined with beach house-

style millwork and furnishings in coral and teal. Enjoy a DJ-led pool scene by day, cocktails at outdoor tropical bar Irma's at sunset, and elevated Chinese cuisine at Mr. Chow come nightfall, a feast for all the senses.

TAKE IT HOME A FAVORITE SPIRIT AMONG MIAMI MIXOLOGISTS, COCONUT CARTEL SPECIAL (COCONUTCARTEL.CO) IS THE CREATION OF YOUNG LOCAL ENTREPRE-GUATEMALAN DARK RUM IS AGED IN AMERICAN WHITE OAK BARRELS FOR UP TO 12 YEARS, INFUSED WITH FRESH COCONUT WATER FROM EL SALVADOR, AND DISTRIBUTED OUT OF MIAMI. IT'S AVAILABLE AT LOCAL RETAILERS, INCLUDING TOTAL WINE & MORE.

### SERENA ROOFTOP GARDEN RESTAU-RANT (TOP): UNI AND CRAB TOSTADA AT SERENA (ABOVE): INTERIOR OF MILA IN SOUTH BEACH (RIGHT)

60 PALM BEACH ILLUSTRATED



EXPECT FRESH GULF SEAFOOD AND DRINKS WITH A VIEW IN FLORIDA'S PANHANDLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE TOWN OF SOUTH WALTON, WHERE THE CULINARY SCENE RANGES FROM UPSCALE TO BREEZY, TOES-IN-THE-SAND SPOTS.



Discover sublime southern Gulf cuisine across the beach towns of South Walton (visitsouthwalton.com) and Destin

By Paul Rubio



### **Hot Spot**

In the heart of Alys
Beach, a pictureperfect beach town
defined by its striking all-white
layout, lies the hottest table in the
Panhandle: **The Citizen** (citize
nalys.com). This design-forward
coastal tavern specializes in
flavorful preparations of Gulf-totable riches with an Instagramworthy cocktail menu to match.

Order the Andiamo!! (a tableside-prepared, vodka-spiked Aperol spritz over Japanese shaved ice), and feast on a Thai-style Gulf tuna poke, spicy and citrusy Gulf shrimp, potato agnolotti with kale pecan pesto, and local roasted grouper prepared in a savory lemonthyme sauce with tomato, capers, and bacon.



The Florida Panhandle solidifies its status as a foodie destination with the opening of **Ovide** (hoteleffie. com), the latest plot point by multiple James Beard Award-winning chef Hugh Acheson. At his chic

Sandestin restaurant, the acclaimed chef, author, and TV personality wows with eclectic preparations of local seafood and produce, including dishes like snapper crudo in ponzu with charred scallions, pan roasted red snapper in Thai chili emulsion, and wild mushroom bucatini with smoked breadcrumbs. Expect perfection in every bite.

Chef Jim Shirley is another

household name thanks to an impressive nine restaurants, the latest of which is the toes-in-the-sand **North Beach Social** (northbeach. social) in Santa Rosa Beach. Order oysters, fried crab claws, and a slice of pecan pie-stuffed cheesecake (yep!) from the counter and eat the day away planted on a beachfront bench.

For something slightly more formal, head across the street to **The Bay** (baysouthwalton.com), also on the water but with sit-down service, artisan cocktails, and an even greater selection of Shirley's southern Gulf Coast dishes, including his famous grouper-and-pestotopped goat cheese ravioli (an unlikely combo that proves epic).

TAKE IT HOME FAMILY-RUN DISTILLERY 98 (DISTILLERY98.COM) IN SANTA ROSA BEACH PRODUCES THE REGION'S FAVORITE LOCAVORE SPIRIT: DUNE LAKER VODKA. IT'S MADE IN SMALL BATCHES FROM LOCALLY GROWN CORN, FILTERED THROUGH OYSTER SHELLS, HAND-BOTTLED ON SITE, AND HITS THE PALATE REMARKABLY SOFT AND SMOOTH. YOU CAN PICK UP THE GRAIN-TO-GLASS GREATNESS CURBSIDE AT THE DISTILLERY OR AT MOST NON-CHAIN LIQUOR STORES IN THE PANHANDLE.



# WHERE TO STAY

Opened in February 2021, Hotel Effie (hoteleffie.com) is a modern 250-room hotel within Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, a 2.400acre destination resort that includes four championship golf courses, a 123-slip marina and a sprawling pedestrian village brimming with retailers and restaurants. The new property is home to the aforementioned Ovide restaurant and the only rooftop pool on Florida's Emerald Coast.

Slightly further east in

Destin, The Henderson (hendersonbeachresort.com) captures the essence of old Florida with a design that recalls stately seaside manors of yore. For fun in the sun, the 178-key property offers immediate access to the pristine white-sand beaches of Henderson State Park plus a duo of swimming pools—one for adults only, and one geared to families (complete with a lazy river). Book a Gulf-view room to maximize sunset views or head up to the rooftop bar to watch the sun's stunning descent.



HENDERSON BEACH RESORT

### Locals' Favorite

**FOOW** (foow30a.com), short for Fish Out of Water, is a regional institution in the blink-and-you-might-miss-it town of Watercolor. Ogle the white sands and emerald hues of the Gulf shore while enjoying buckets of Gulf shrimp (blackened, grilled, or fried), Wagyu beef-blend burgers, or surf and turf with your choice of fixings.

Still, ask anyone across South Walton their favorite spot in town and you'll get the same answer: **The Red Bar** (theredbar.com), a legendary restaurant, bar, and



live music venue in Grayton Beach. Come for the jazz band and the strong drinks; stay for the all-welcoming vibe, kitschy decor, colorful bar flies, and delicious jumbo crab cakes.

ECLECTIC AND FUNKY, THE RED BAR (LEFT) IS A HOT SPOT FOR DRINKS AND LIVE MUSIC. THE RED BAR JAZZ BAND PLAYS ALMOST



### **BAR SCENE**

IN ALYS BEACH, BEGIN
OR CAP THE EVENING AT
COCKTAIL LOUNGE NEAT
(ALYSBEACH.COM/NEAT),
WHICH DEBUTS NEW
SPECIALTY COCKTAILS
MONTHLY. A HIGHLIGHT
FROM APRIL'S MENU INCLUDED THE "CRIME OF
PASSION," AN ENTICING
BLEND OF DARK RUM, AMARO,
BITTERS, LIME JUICE, AND PASSION FRUIT JUICE.



### or a treat-yourself moment—book the Chef's Table at **Primrose** in Destin (henderson beachresort.com). Watch the magic unfold inside

**Experiences** 

For a special occasion-

beachresort.com). Watch the magic unfold inside the kitchen as celebrated chef Gary Palm prepares a multi-course dinner that showcases both his

talent and the region's finest ingredients. A recent meal to remember included wine-paired presentations of driftwood smoked salmon, lobster in citrus paste and butter, and scallops atop root vegetables followed by a decadent chocolate-blackberry dome dessert.

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