

Chef sampling is
in alphabetical order
by hotel.

GRAND MASTERS *of their plate*

WE ARE PLEASED TO INTRODUCE TO YOU GRAND MASTERS OF THEIR PLATE, where we spotlight the chefs from area resorts who work day in and day out to produce an unforgettable dining experience for their guests. They have spent their lives training, practicing, constructing recipes and then reconstructing them again and again. They enliven the senses and instill an appreciation of excellent cuisine.

BY MICHAEL BOHN

Cesar Fernandez, Executive Chef at Shula's Steak House, inside the Hilton Naples, borrowed a few things from coach Don Shula that have made this restaurant the go-to spot when you're craving the perfect steak. Chef Fernandez gives 100 percent each and every time he enters the kitchen and is highly respected among his team members, much like the legendary coach for whom the franchise is named. That's why people flock to Shula's Steak House, and that's why every steak that leaves its kitchen is done to absolute perfection. It doesn't hurt that Shula's uses only center-cut Black Angus beef, the most expensive and regarded by many as the best beef a restaurant can get.

Located at the Hilton Naples, 5111 Tamiami Trl. N., Naples, FL, 239-430-4999, www.shulasnaples.com

Robert Solis, Chef de Cuisine at BALEEN inside LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort, grew up in an Italian household where Sunday dinner with family wasn't a place you had to be, it was a place you wanted to be.

He worked his way up the culinary and food service ranks while attending culinary school. He externed at the famed Nemaquin Woodlands Resort before moving his family back to North Carolina, where he started with Urban Food Group as a line cook and finished his tenure as a sous chef. He joined Laplaya Beach & Golf Resort in September 2014 as a banquet sous chef and has been working his way up ever since.

Chef Solis' food has quickly become a diversity of the cultures he has lived in, the French Culinary School he attended and the roots he was raised from. It shows in dishes such as Grilled Head-on Prawns with Seared Polenta, Julienne Spring Vegetables and Orange Soy Agrodolce, a play on a southern classic with Italian overtones.

A more whimsical approach would be his Blackened Gulf Grouper, King Crab & Charred Corn Truffle Risotto Cake and Neonata Relish with Champagne Citrus Butter.

Located at 9891 Gulf Shore Dr., Naples, FL, 239-597-3123, www.laplayaresort.com

Justin Hornyak, Executive Chef for HB's On the Gulf, inside Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Resort — The beachfront location of HB's On the Gulf sets the tone for Chef Hornyak's seafood-focused menu. Tropical flavors and island techniques are the cornerstone of his cooking style that features seasonal produce and fresh proteins. His menu incorporates regional seafood, great steaks and brilliantly crafted small plates for those

who seek a light dinner after a day at the beach. A signature of the tropics is the whole roasted fish, which is almost always on Chef Hornyak's menu due to the huge flavor this technique is known to produce. It makes for an enticing presentation, but more importantly, it coddles the subtle flavor of Gulf fish in a way that is absent from grilled or pan-fried fish.

Located at 851 Gulf Shore Blvd. N., Naples, FL, 239-435-4347, www.naplesbeachhotel.com

THEY ENLIVEN
THE SENSES
AND INSTILL AN
APPRECIATION
OF EXCELLENT
CUISINE.



Opposite: Fresh seafood arrives daily at the Naples Grande Beach Resort allowing the creativity of the chefs to shine. Above: Charred Australia Wagyu short rib duo featuring pickled onions, creamed corn and wilted kale at The Grill inside The Ritz-Carlton, Naples.

Bader Ali, Executive Chef for the Naples Grande Beach Resort — Like many of the talented chefs here in Naples, Chef Ali has spent much of his career traveling the world, cooking his heart out for food lovers at some of the finest restaurants and resorts around the globe. His career has taken him from the East Coast of the United States to the Middle and Far Eastern parts of the world. While in the United Arab Emirates, he mastered the many exotic spices used in Middle Eastern cooking, which is evident in the Orange Butter Lobster with apricot harissa found on the menu at The Catch of

the Pelican. While in China he became skilled in the art that is Asian fusion cuisine, which he validates in dishes like his Glazed Pork Belly with Asian BBQ glaze and the Miso Broiled Seabass with shiitake mushrooms, tofu and dashi. His menus are provocative and inspiring, blending Asian, Mediterranean and Spanish flavors into flavor-packed dishes sure to impress even the most seasoned foodies.

Located at 475 Seagate Dr., Naples, FL, 239-597-3232, www.naplesgrande.com

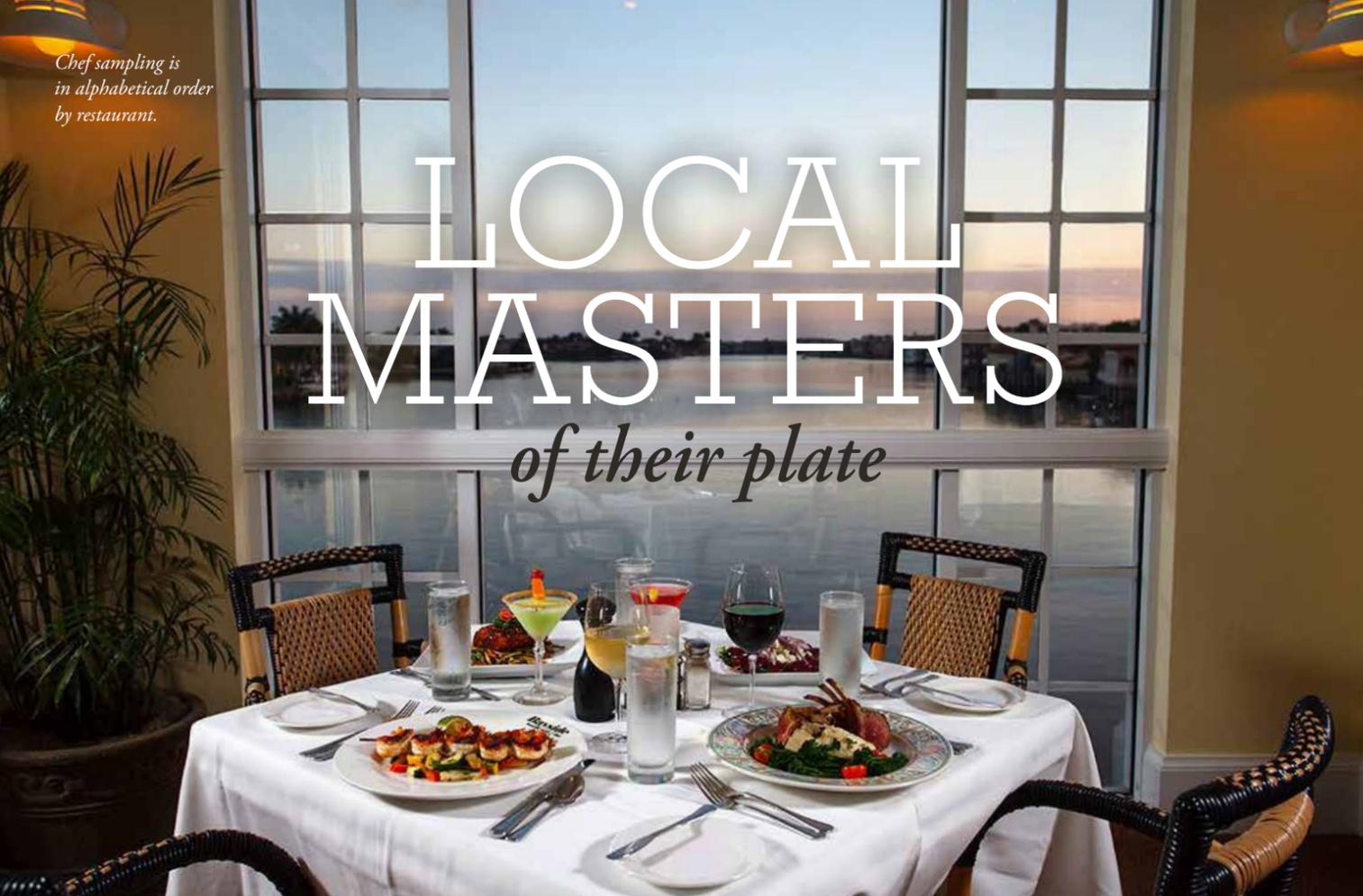
George Fistrovich, Executive Chef at Ritz-Carlton, Naples heads the kitchen at both Ritz-Carlton, Naples properties. His experience is vast, as he has served as executive chef for a number of leading hotels and restaurants, including The Kerry Centre (Beijing), Harrods (London), The Royal Towers at Atlantis (Paradise Island, Bahamas), The Marina-Mandarin Hotel (Singapore) and the Hayman Island Resort (Great Barrier Reef, Australia). The product-driven food you'll see on Chef Fistrovich's menus is largely influenced by the time he spent in France, which is where the now famous farm-to-table movement started. This type of cooking is hands-on and labor intensive, and it carries a quality-first assertiveness. Things that most restaurants order out are made in-house by a small army of chefs. Though not always cost effective, Chef Fistrovich prefers this approach to food because it guarantees the food will retain its integrity, a unique virtue of the farm-to-table philosophy. Meat is butchered on the premises; bread, ice cream, charcuterie and smoked salmon are all items the chef prefers to do in-house. When dining at either of the Ritz-Carlton, Naples properties, expect quality, consistency and flawless execution at each and every one of its nine restaurants.

Located at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, 280 Vanderbilt Beach Rd., Naples, FL; and The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, 2600 Tiburon Dr., Naples, FL, 239-598-6644, www.ritz-carlton.com

Chef sampling is in alphabetical order by restaurant.

LOCAL MASTERS

of their plate



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA HAS AN ECLECTIC MIX OF LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED RESTAURANTS with the finest chefs providing exceptional cuisine.

Concierge's Image is proud to present "Local Masters of Their Plate," in which we highlight many of the area's highly acclaimed local restaurants and their talented chefs.. It is a must to dine local! The experience is unforgettable.

Bon appetit!

BY MICHAEL BOHN

Bayside Seafood Grill & Bar is an amazing two-story restaurant overlooking the beautiful waters of Venetian Bay. Bayside specializes in fresh seafood, steaks, chops and pasta. Every seat is a water view and every dish impeccable. Discover several menus crafted by Executive Chef Abel Gonzalez. His dishes include many American favorites with touches of Asian, Cuban and South American influence. Chef Gonzalez works closely with Naples culinary icon Chef Tony Ridgway every summer to develop new dishes for the restaurant's menus. Favorites include the crispy mahi-mahi dredged in flour, buttermilk and a mixture of panko, coconut and macadamia nuts, flash-fried and finished in the oven. Another standout is the pistachio yellowtail snapper served with a Louisiana-style dirty rice, topped with mango salsa and pistachio nuts roasted in butter.

Bayside delivers live music six nights a week, with musicians on the Upper Deck and Downstairs Café. The 25-year-old locally owned restaurant recently expanded its private dining space in order to accommodate more diners seeking a picturesque backdrop to their memorable events.

Located at the Village on Venetian Bay, 4270 Gulf Shore Blvd. N., Naples, 239-649-5552, baysideseafoodgrillandbar.com

For nearly three decades, **Ristorante Ciao** has served Neapolitans outstanding Ital-

Above: Water views enhance an already impressive dining experience at Bayside Seafood Grill and Bar.



BLEU PROVENCE & BLEU CELLAR

Award Winning French Restaurant & Retail Wine Store
1234 8th St. S., Naples, FL 34102 | 239. 261. 8239 | BleuProvenceNaples.com



WE DON'T JUST SAY FRESH.
WE OWN IT.

THE FRESHEST
FLORIDA
STONE CRAB
IS HERE!

FROM OUR OWN FISHERIES
TO YOUR FORK IN HOURS.
FEATURING
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
NIGHTLY.

Here's to hospitality.

NAPLES
698 4th Ave. South
239 530 3131



www.trulucks.com

TRULUCK'S
SEAFOOD • STEAK • CRAB HOUSE



Braised veal shank Osso Buco served with saffron risotto is a signature dish at Ristorante Ciao.

ian fare, making it one of the few constants amidst the changing Downtown Naples scene. Rated "Excellent" by Zagat and located one block from glamorous 5th Avenue, Ciao is warm and inviting; a place where guests "can hear themselves think" and known for its "understated elegance." Service is smart and staff are gracious. Menu — lunch, dinner and beverage — connote an equally elegant experience of food and wine.

"For me, being an Italian chef is more than heritage or training. It's a daily opportunity to explore, learn, and create shared experiences for people of all walks of life."

-CHEF FIANFRANCO LORETI

Executive Chef Gianfranco Loreti, a native Italian and master of his craft, emphasizes the use of fresh and seasonal ingredients and prepares a variety of timeless culinary traditions — Asparagi in Camicia, Osso Buco and Tiramisu — from Northern and Central Italy.

A hand-selected list of over 90 Italian wines and at least 16 options by the glass further distinguish Ciao from neighboring Italian eateries. In fact, Loreti has been known to offer a selection of wines much like he does with daily specials.

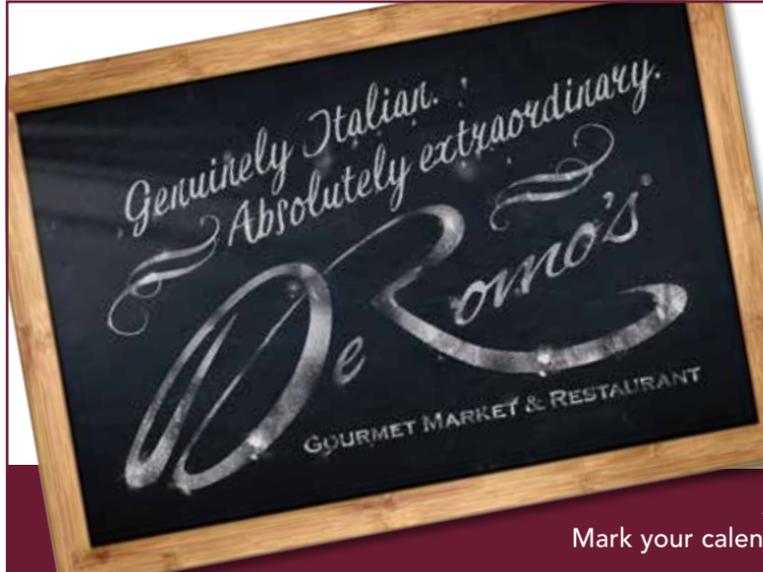
"For me, being an Italian chef is more than heritage or training," says Loreti. "It's a daily opportunity to explore, learn, and create shared experiences for people of all walks of life." At Ciao, experience the joy of classic Italian dining.

Located at 845 4th Ave. S., Naples, 239-330-4904, ristoranteciao.com

DaRuMa Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Lounge has been a staple in North Naples since it was opened by the Chang family in 1989. At DaRuMa you will enjoy delicious Japanese cuisine prepared at a Teppan-style cooking table by one of the fun and talented chefs, or you can choose traditional dining in the sushi lounge.

No matter which style of dining you prefer, you will enjoy freshly made classic Japanese favorites such as teriyaki steak, filet mignon, chicken, seafood, tempura, sashimi, sushi, makimono and so much more. The sushi lounge also provides live piano music five nights a week. DaRuMa, where the entertainment is always included!

Located at 241 Center St. N., Naples, 239-591-1200, darumarestaurant.com



Explore DeRomo's authentically modern Italian cuisine, from freshly invented creations to traditional favorites. You and DeRomo's are the perfect pairing for any occasion.



JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT WINE TASTING!
Mark your calendar: Wednesday, March 29 from 5 to 8 pm.

- Open Kitchen • Wine Room • Private Dining Room
- Patio Café • Indoor-Outdoor Bar
- Gourmet Market • Banquet Room • Catering

- ★★★★☆ FOOD
- ★★★★☆ ATMOSPHERE
- ★★★★☆ SERVICE — Jean Le Boeuf, *The News-Press*

Lunch: Mon–Sun 11 am–3 pm | Dinner: Mon–Sat 3 pm–10 pm, Sun 3 pm–9 pm



DeRomos.com | 239.325.3583

26811 South Bay Drive, Suites 140 & 148

Bonita Springs, Florida 34134





INCA'S

Kitchen

FINE PERUVIAN CUISINE





PAVILION PLAZA

8955 TAMIAMI TRAIL N., NAPLES

(239) 631-5954

WWW.INCASKITCHENS.COM



Left: Sushi Thai's Lobster Roll is a 6 oz. lobster tail with dual presentation. Below: Miso-glazed Chilean sea bass is served with crab fried rice and chilled cucumber slaw, a signature item at Truluck's.

something special. Favorites include the beer-steamed pink Gulf shrimp from Fort Myers Beach, the Florida red grouper from his very own fishing fleet and Apalachicola oysters (known by oyster aficionados for their vibrant flavor profile and silky but firm consistency) from the productive waters of Apalachicola Bay just southwest of Tallahassee.

Located at 1302 5th Ave. S., Naples, 239-206-8846, kellysfishhousediningroom.com

Tony Ridgway, Chef Owner of **Ridgway Bar and Grill**, is a dedicated food enthusiast who has spent his life serving others and loving every minute of it. The first-class service and opulent ambiance create for a real sense of place when dining here, making this restaurant a favorite for Floridians and vacationers alike. The menu is a combination of fine dining and Contemporary American fare that is a real breath of fresh air, considering how many seafood-focused restaurants exist in Naples.

Kelly's Fish House, just south of the Gordon River Bridge, is the oldest continuously run restaurant in Naples. It is a quintessential Olde Naples restaurant where fresh seafood and simple preparation take center stage. Current owner Kelly Ellis — son of Kelly McGill (Mama Kelly), who bought the restaurant in 1971 from the Combs family — watches the day-to-day operations like a hawk, maintaining the remarkable integrity that made it a Naples landmark. What makes Kelly's Fish House a winner is its own fishing fleet that brings in ice-packed fresh fish seven days a week.

Kelly's dedication to finding the Gulf's bounty and keeping it fresh all the way to your table makes this restaurant



Experience...
DaRuMa
for yourself

HIBACHI | SUSHI LOUNGE | PIANO BAR | TRADITIONAL DINING
Enjoy superb Japanese cuisine that is fun, fascinating and delicious. Choose either our traditional service or Teppan-style (hibachi table) cooking at your table by wonderfully dexterous and expertly trained chefs.

NAPLES: 241 Center St. N. at Vanderbilt Beach Rd. | 239.591.1200
FORT MYERS: 13499 South Cleveland Ave. | 239.344.0037 • **SARASOTA:** 5459 Fruitville Rd. | 941.342.6600
www.DaRuMaRestaurant.com

Spanky's
RESTAURANT & BAR

When you walk into Spanky's you're a part of the "Gang"!

Under New Ownership Since 2015! We look forward to meeting you!
- Ted and Emily Monty

A Naples landmark since 1984 known for its Southern charm and family atmosphere. Offering certified Braveheart beef and local fresh seafood at an exceptional value, Spanky's stands alone from the crowd by giving you a dining experience among hundreds of antiques and collectibles, vintage signs and gas pumps—featuring our extravagant soup and salad bar in the back of a 1924 Ford Model T!

OUTDOOR DINING AVAILABLE
FULL BAR WITH HAPPY HOUR DAILY:
Our Regulars call it the Naples version of Cheers!

1550 Airport Rd. N., Naples, FL 34104
239.643.1559
www.SpankysNaples.com

Certain dishes like the steak tartare get elevated to a level that will certainly exceed any you've had in the past. What makes it so amazing? The steak in this dish is hand chopped, as opposed to being whizzed up in a food processor. The delicate preparation and finesse it receives make all the difference when creating a dish with so few ingredients.

This painstaking type of preparation is the calling card for Ridgway Bar and Grill and is repeated in each of its recipes. Other favorites include the lump crab and avocado with gazpacho salsa, mussels served with fresh focaccia bread and the BLT on toasted ciabatta bread. All breads and desserts are hand made and baked fresh daily at Tony's Off Third Wine & Pastry Shop next door.

Located at 1300 3rd St. S., Naples, 239-262-5500, ridgway-barandgrill.com

Sushi Thai is at the pinnacle of the sushi game. The fish is top notch and fresh as you can possibly get due to the experience of head Chef Suji, or as they say in Japan, Cutting Board One. Of course, to end up with a fresh fish, you must start with a fresh fish. To ensure the best product, Suji and owner Todd Boonya use a particular vendor for each fish species: Tuna comes from the tuna guy, salmon comes from the salmon guy, etc. This careful selection guarantees the freshest and most flavorful sushi. Suji and his apprentice Toto Kakabutra (Cutting



Board Two) are capable of creating more than 300 different variations of sushi. Although each sushi chef's food will taste slightly different, the chefs at Sushi Thai's four locations are knowledgeable with their craft and offer up a proper sushi experience.

Located at 7935 Airport Pulling Rd. N., Naples, 239-514-1125, 869 103rd Ave. N., Naples, 239-592-7575, 898 5th Ave. S., Naples, 239-430-7575, 25301 Tamiami Tr. S., Bonita Springs, 239-992-5600, sushithaitoo.com

Trulucks Executive Chef David O'Donnell possesses a charismatic spirit and a true passion for culinary arts. His seemingly limitless energy and fierce drive to become a true master of his craft are what set this young man apart from his Naples colleagues. He possesses the grit needed to work in such a competitive industry. He thrives under the immense pressure that builds as the restaurant fills and the kitchen becomes a symphony of clinking pans and jargon-laced commands. Originally a Naples native, Chef O'Donnell returned to the Paradise Coast after spending eight years in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he learned from some of the most talented chefs, including Jim Alexander, executive chef of Zebra Restaurant. His cooking style is edgy and attention to detail excessive. Must-try dishes at Trulucks are the Blackened Grouper Pontchartrain smothered with crawfish tails, shrimp and blue crab in a spicy piquant Creole sauce, and the Miso-glazed Seabass served with the house special crab fried rice and cucumber slaw.

Located at 698 4th Ave. S., Naples, 239-530-3131, trulucks.com Executive Chef Gary Minter, brings his lifetime of experience to **Vergina**, on Naples' luxurious Fifth Avenue. The menu at this Italian-focused eatery is sure to move you, with its fresh seafood, steaks and chops and, of course, classic Italian favorites like the Veal Marsala: pan-seared veal scaloppini in extra virgin olive oil with mushrooms, marsala wine and thyme. Pasta dishes are "decked to the gills" — or claws, you might say; for example, the Pappardelle ai Crostacei — fresh rose-

Vergina offers authentic Mediterranean cuisine with strong emphasis on Italian, including Scallops Capesante.



Watermark Grille's dining room combines elegance and warmth.

mary pappardelle pasta with lobster meat, crab meat and shrimp sautéed with butter and brandy; or the Ravioli Ca-

cio e Pere — ravioli stuffed with pear and cacio cheese, butter, walnuts, sage and vino cotto. Other favorites include the Filet Mignon — pan seared Wagyu filet from local butcher Jimmy P's, with balsamic glaze and Gorgonzola; and Branzino alla Vergina — Mediterranean sea bass crusted with Parmesan, sundried tomato and olive tapenade, served over rosemary pappardelle and spinach arrachera sauce. Last but certainly not least is the Scallops a la Nicoise: pan-seared large, dry-packed scallops with lemon pesto and prosciutto, served with creamy Parmesan risotto.

Located at 700 5th Ave. S., Naples, 239-659-7008, vergina-restaurant.com

In a semi-circular building along Naples' Tamiami Trail, the **Watermark Grille** stands out from strip malls and storefronts.

Owned and operated by the Malo family, the Watermark opened in 1998. It offers both standard American fare, such as steak and seafood, and signature items like chicken livers sautéed in oregano and onion and Saganaki, a Greek dish made with kasseri cheese and ouzo, served flaming. A wide variety of pasta and chicken dishes are available as well.

From their experience operating other restaurants, the Malos knew they wanted a setting that combined elegance and warmth. The unique curved building they had designed features lots of glass and light, enhancing dark wood furnishings and colorful fabrics, as well as fountains and waterfalls.

The Watermark Grille prides itself on delicious, high-quality food and attentive service with a family-friendly ambiance. Children 12 and younger are welcomed with their own menu. From June through September, diners can enjoy Lobstermania: a live Maine lobster weighing at least one and a quarter pound, served with a vegetable and potato for \$25.99.

Located at 11280 Tamiami Trl. N., Naples, 239-596-1400, watermarkgrille.com



The DEEP LAGOON Promise
FRESH FISH DELIVERED DAILY

• NOW ACCEPTING RESERVATIONS •
CALL TODAY OR DOWNLOAD THE

OPEN TABLE APP

DEEPLAGOON.COM
239-631-6266
10395 TAMIAMI TRAIL N., NAPLES, FL 34108



Wharf Tavern RESTAURANT & LOBSTER HOUSE

909 10th St. S., Suite 106, Naples • www.wharftavernnaples.com

Authentic New England Seafood prepared and served by Native New Englanders... fresh Maine lobsters, Cape Cod clams, cold-water fishes fresh off the docks of New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard, and much more—flown in fresh daily and prepared using traditional New England recipes.



239.331.4053
RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED



LAMORAGA
INTERNATIONAL CUISINE + TAPAS

A GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE!

Lamoraga combines Spanish dishes with an international and modern twist.

LA MORAGA
INTERNATIONAL CUISINE + TAPAS

3936 Tamiami Trail North | Naples | (239) 331 3669
WWW.LAMORAGARESTAURANT.COM



bha! bha! Persian Bistro Celebrates 20 Years

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Michael Mir recalls that Naples was a "meat and potatoes" town when he opened bha! bha! Persian Bistro in 1997.

"There were steak places and a couple of Chinese restaurants, but that was the extent of ethnic dining," he says.

Though some people weren't sure his concept would be successful, Mir was confident. "People I met seemed well-traveled, and it appeared as they may appreciate a more elevated cuisine with cutting edge."

Both owner and executive chef, Mir says his basic formula has stayed solid through the years: Bring an infusion and innovative approach to classic dishes. What has changed over the 20 years, he says, is that people have developed more sophisticated palates and a willingness to try popular ethnic food.

"Around 2008, when other ethnic restaurants opened locally, diners were courageous enough to try various levels of spices," he says. "And when I moved bha! bha! Bistro to Fifth Avenue in 2014, our clientele embraced a more cosmopolitan sense of adventure. We became more global. We can now offer dishes from the rest of the Middle East and Mediterranean. After all, the whole region was once the Persian Empire."

Best known for its lamb dishes, such as the signature eggplant and shitake mushroom lamb shank, the popular are the Lamb Bademjune and the Ghormeh Sabzi lamb shank are two dishes that take Mir back to his grandmother's table. "I could smell her cooking as I would be exiting the school bus not far from the house."

The one dish he says "we dare not take off the menu" is Plum Lamb with butternut squash and pomegranate sauce.

To keep up with the times, bha! bha! now offers dietary adherent and lighter fares such as Mango Garlic Shrimp, Fresh Florida Snapper Rashti, Pomegranate Salmon with lentils and more.

Located at 865 5th Ave. S., Naples, 239-594-5557,
bhabhabistro.com



SAKURA
Hawaiian Grill

Aloha & Komo Mai!

We invite you to experience the only authentic Hawaiian cuisine in Naples—A taste of paradise awaits you!

3375 Pine Ridge Rd #106, Naples, FL
239.280.5536 | www.sakuranaples.com



Steak, Lobster and Waterfront Dining On the Menu at T-Michaels

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

When you want great food, great service and a great water view, T-Michaels Steak & Lobster offers it all.

Located waterside in the Village on Venetian Bay, the restaurant

specializes in USDA Prime steaks, whole Maine lobsters and fresh seafood. Daily specials highlight locally caught fish chosen that day by Owner and General Manager Ty Ernst, who lives on Florida's east coast and drives his selections across Alligator Alley each day.

"I hand-pick our fresh fish before the company even delivers to high-end places in Miami," Ernst says of the firm he has patronized for 25 years. "I'll sample the oysters and get blue point over beavertail because they're better that day."

While T-Michaels always offers black grouper and yellowtail snapper, Ernst will select hog snapper, pumpkin swordfish and snowy grouper when they are in season. "We try to introduce people to fish they've never heard of."

He also purchases local produce whenever possible, to support local growers and to offer the freshest ingredients.

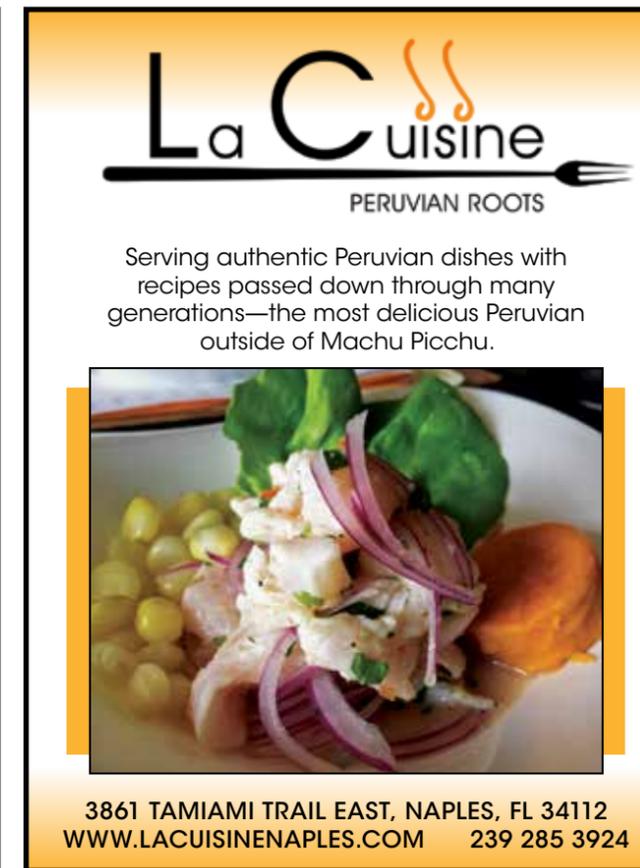
The menu changes twice a year. Typical entrees include filet mignon, New York strip steak, slow roasted prime rib, bone-in rib eye, Beef Wellington, rack of lamb, twin lobster tails, miso sea bass, Scottish salmon, and Maryland jumbo lump crab cake. Vegetarian offerings may include stuffed butternut squash and vegan sweet potato ravioli.

The wine list features bottles from around the globe.

Lunch, served January through March only, includes reasonably priced salads, burgers and sandwiches. "It's not your typical steakhouse menu," Ernst says. "It's almost like a different restaurant."

The large dining room can accommodate groups of up to 160 who want to dine together. There is also a lounge with an adjacent cozy, open-air atrium.

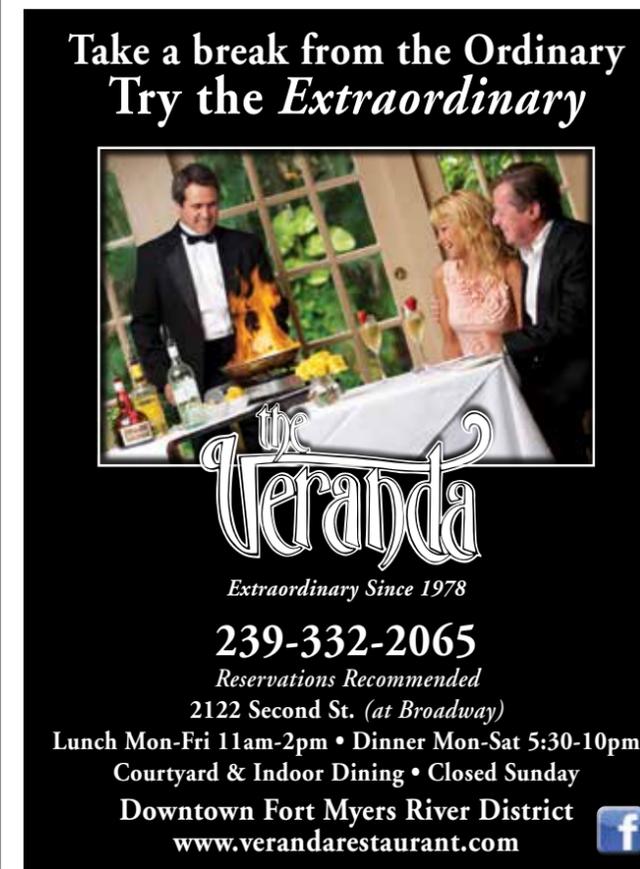
4050 Gulf Shore Blvd North, Naples, FL 34103, 239-261-0622
t-michaels.com, info@t-michaels.com



La Cuisine
PERUVIAN ROOTS

Serving authentic Peruvian dishes with recipes passed down through many generations—the most delicious Peruvian outside of Machu Picchu.

3861 TAMIAMI TRAIL EAST, NAPLES, FL 34112
WWW.LACUISINENAPLES.COM 239 285 3924



Take a break from the Ordinary Try the Extraordinary

the Veranda
Extraordinary Since 1978

239-332-2065
Reservations Recommended
2122 Second St. (at Broadway)

Lunch Mon-Fri 11am-2pm • Dinner Mon-Sat 5:30-10pm
Courtyard & Indoor Dining • Closed Sunday
Downtown Fort Myers River District
www.verandarestaurant.com

SELECTING A WINE THAT COMPLEMENTS A MEAL

is more than just picking a known name from a wine list. Local sommeliers give great thought to the wine lists they create based on their restaurant's menu.

"A lot of wines taste good but don't necessarily have a strong acid component, which cuts through the fat content in a dish," says Dave Mattern, beverage director at Truluck's.

Truluck's offers about 60 wines by the glass, and, Mattern says, "it's fun to discover something new and even try a variety of glasses throughout your meal."



Togarashi seared rare tuna with buckwheat soba noodles and a yuzu-chili butter sauce at Ridgway Bar & Grill.

Local Sommeliers Encourage 'Discovery' in Wine and Food Pairings

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

He recommends pairing a white burgundy like Vincent Girardin Pouilly-Fuisse with stone crabs, which he says "is like having one hand in heaven."

With oysters, Mattern likes wines from wineries located near the sea because "they tend to have a briny component." One of his favorites is Chateau de la Ragotiere Muscadet.

Trujillo's Cabernet pairs very well with a New York strip, he says, while he likes Blandy's Terrantez 1976 Madeira with carrot cake.

Jacques Cariot likes to visit wineries, meet the growers and discover the natural environment in which the vines grow for the wines he selects for Bleu Provence, the restaurant he and his wife own.

"Seventy percent of the wines I choose are because they have a soul, a

uniqueness, and come from specific culture that has been built for centuries," he says.

While he also carries brand names that guests will be familiar with, Cariot takes care to offer wines with freshness, acidity and balance.

In his restaurant, he likes a late harvest wine like a Sauternes with blue cheese, and a high acidity and mineral

white like Chablis with oysters. With Wagyu short ribs, he likes a Châteauneuf du Pape with a lot of grenache in the blend.

For one of signature dishes — Loup de Mer (Mediterranean sea bass) — he recommends pairing with a Clos Sainte Magdeleine Cassis white from Provence.

Sukie Honeycutt has the pleasure of selecting wines for two restaurants she co-owns: Ridgway Bar and Grill and Bayside Seafood Grill and Bar.

In her wine-by-the-glass programs, she offers some recognizable wines complemented by more eclectic wines that customers are less familiar with.

At Ridgway, she likes to pair the spicy pan-seared grouper and shrimp with a Riccitelli Malbec from Argentina or a California pinot noir such as Brewer Clifton Sta. Rita Hills.

The restaurant's most popular dish — sautéed yellowtail snapper piccata — benefits from a citrusy and buttery chardonnay. One of her favorites is Hartford Court Russian River Chardonnay.

At Bayside, she goes against a traditional Chardonnay match with the chicken penne entrée, suggesting a Sancerre or a lighter-styled red like a Spanish Garnacha to balance the weight of the roasted garlic cream and cheese sauce.

With Bayside's steaks, including the filet mignon, she likes a full-bodied Cabernet such as Honig Napa Cabernet Sauvignon.

Sukie also presents monthly wine tastings at Tony's Off Third, featuring a broad and thoughtfully selected range of wines. Events require reservations.

2017 Concierge's Image WINE TASTING TOUR WITH FOOD PAIRINGS

A BLEU PROVENCE (ad on page 33)
1234 8th St. S., Naples, 239-261-8239

Red Right Bank Bordeaux: fruit scents and flavors of cassis, blackberry, dark cherry, vanilla, black cherry, coffee bean, spice and licorice, often concentrated, powerful, firm and tannic. Pair with **Duck Leg Confit** with an orange and Grand Marnier demi-glace, served with shallots confit and sweet potato gratin.

White Cassis: full-bodied, herb-scented white wine with nerve and a coastal salinity as well as Mediterranean scents of anise, yellow flowers, citrus and peach. Pair with **Loup de Mer:** Mediterranean sea bass grilled a la plancha, with a lemon caper sauce.

Southern Red Côtes du Rhône: medium- to full-bodied wine, wild and chewy with notes of leather, spicy garrigue and smoky, black fruit. Pair with **Wagyu short ribs** braised in red wine reduction, with mashed potatoes, sautéed mushrooms, baby carrots and toasted brioche.

B DEROMO'S GOURMET MARKET AND RESTAURANT (ad on page 35)
Promenade Shopping Center,
26811 South Bay Dr., Suites 140 & 148,
Bonita Springs, 239-325-3583

Suavia Soave Classico: fresh aromas of apple, pear and almond balance clean minerality and a hint of fresh herb. Pair with **Mare Azzuro:** Italian seafood salad made with diced red onion and celery tossed with salmoriglio and extra virgin olive oil served on a bed of baby mixed greens.

Carpineto Chianti Classico Riserva: elegant, full, harmonious and persistent with suggestions of vanilla and raspberry.

Pair with **Pollo alla Cuomo:** chicken breast lightly sautéed then baked with layers of Prosciutto di Parma, ricotta cheese, breaded eggplant and our house-made mozzarella cheese, in a pink tomato basil sauce.

Caparzo Brunello di Montalcino: full and penetrating aromas of wild berries. Pair with **Vitello Schantinella:** veal medallions, sea scallops, jumbo shrimps and golden roasted shallots with a basil sherry cream sauce over creamy risotto.

C LA CUISINE PERUVIAN RESTAURANT (ad on page 41)
3861 Tamiami Trail E., Naples, 239-285-3924

Malbec, Les Comtes Cahors (France): concentrated bouquet with ripe red fruit. Well-structured with rich tannins. Long, full aftertaste. Pair with **Tacu-Tacu:** grilled lamb chops, mixed rice and beans, plantains, fried egg and avocado.

Chardonnay, James Bryant Hill (Central Coast California): crisp and refreshing with aromas of green apple and citrus. Bright tropical fruit flavors with a touch of vanilla lead into a long finish. Pair with **Arroz con Mariscos:** fruits of the sea on Peruvian-style paella.

Sauvignon Blanc, Lazo (Central Valley, Chile): highly aromatic with citrus fruits, green apple, crisp pear, and/or tangy pineapple. Pair with **Ceviche:** corvina or seafood, lime juice, sweet potato and corn.



D LAMORAGA (ad on page 40)
3936 Tamiami Trail N., Naples, 239-331-3669

Izadi Reserva, Tempranillo (Rioja, Spain): rich and aromatic intensity and a nice balance of red fruit, liquorice and spices, with hints of smoke. Elegant and round on the palate, full of floral and ripe fruit notes. Pair with **Lamoraga Paella:** traditional Spanish saffron rice prepared with a selection of fresh seafood and chorizo.

Licia, Albariño (Rias Baixas, Spain): intense and layered aromas of grapefruit, candied lemons, quince jelly, fresh herbs, green apples and a streak of minerality. Full-bodied and well-balanced. Pair with **Basil-Wrapped Shrimp:** brick dough, basil-wrapped shrimp with an orange-ginger-chili sauce.

Viña Zorzal, Graciano (Navarra, Spain): robust, earthy red with hints of the blueberry flavour, available by the bottle only. Pair with **Red Pepper Roll:** pounded pork tenderloin roll stuffed with bacon, roasted red peppers and chipotle aioli or **Mushroom Roll:** pounded pork tenderloin roll stuffed with a mushroom ragout, topped with Parmesan cheese and pesto.

E BAYSIDE SEAFOOD GRILL AND BAR (ad on page 53)
The Village Shops on Venetian Bay,
4270 Gulf Shore Blvd. N., Naples, 239-649-5552

F RIDGWAY BAR AND GRILL (ad on page 47)
1300 3rd St. S., Naples, 239-262-5500

G TRULUCK'S (ad on page 33)
698 4th Ave. S., Naples, 239-530-3131



Stone crab claws at Truluck's pair perfectly with a white Burgundy.