



My Corner Table



By Leigh Cort

Let's cut loose and discover a new bite in Our Town that we haven't yet discovered. Making a courageous dining decision and dedicating ourselves to breaking out of food stereotypes that we consider comfort food is a very empowering event and easy to strategize in St. Augustine. Cherish the artistry of food. Meet a new chef. Sample a clever signature appetizer that has seemed out of bounds. Research reviews that you might have ignored in the past. Food is an art form and so much more than what we eat. Let new flavors linger on your tongue and yearn for a second helping!

Our food has tales to tell, and we love unveiling the history and tradition of celebrated dishes. Culinary heritage began in St. Augustine from the humble years of street food to royalty's tables of elaborate feasts. Our town has captivated visitors and residents as a permanent settlement dating back 400+ years. Hunting our forests, cultivating our soil and fishing our waterways - wonderful stories of determined people who built our lasting traditions.

From the late 1700s to today, we continue to nurture our Spanish tradition with a treasure chest of recipes and classic cuisine. St. Augustine is proud to dine out, as we see new twists at chef's tables 400 years later. There have been tough culinary 'shoes to fill' since Henry Flagler built the Ponce de Leon Hotel in the middle of our sleepy southern town. Imagine four wintry months of the year playing host to some of the wealthiest people of the Gilded Age (1886-1913) dining on extravagant meals - many of them lasting (or struggling) through eight courses. Today, eating outside the home is still a treat. We splurge on flavors that are more than one single note - especially

When craving the finer things in life with many chefs whose expressive individuality makes us cheer when something new is introduced. St. Augustine is a city of five flags and a symphony of flavors!

Enter the newly opened Saint restaurant. Imagine four centuries of chef's tables that have been set at 44 Avenida Menendez! As early as 1702, the original Espinosa coquina building has undergone many major renovations. Archival stories



Executive Chef Derrick Haggerty, Saint Restaurant

about the intersection of Charlotte and Treasury Streets unveil architectural wonders. One of the oldest homes in the United States, take a tour and peek into this luxurious private dining room. It's a noteworthy spot in American history.

Overlooking the expansive Matanzas River, with the historic Bridge of Lions to the East and historic city rooftops to the West, Saint wastes no time making an impression. It's a 'palace' that unfolds into many stunning spaces. Each corner of the enclosed al fresco garden patio, romantic balconies, intimate stylish dining rooms, Saint's rooftop cabanas within view of fireplace and comfy sofa fire pits - especially the Espinosa dining room with the original coquina walls - all will astound you wherever you choose to dine!

Owners Jeff McCusker and Bob Fleckenstein (River Restaurant Group) had a vision of "...the fabric of historical context in the community that has been through fires, hurricanes, floods every act of God and humanity, but has resiliently remained. It's an incredible feeling to be stewards of this historical structure. We were able to protect its authentic identity and value in perpetuity".

Saint is an ultra-fine restaurant positioned on this authentic property. It's a brilliantly luscious creation with St. Augustine history woven into its story. It oozes with classic and contemporary sophisticated warmth. It's an ode to the charm of another era while making every guest feel relaxed amid the subtle glam. McCusker and Fleckenstein knew that downtown St. Augustine had an opportunity to establish an Italian-inspired restaurant. They curated a menu and designed Saint around the city's romantic and historical beauty.

The pivotal role of Executive Chef Derrick Haggerty pays homage to his made-from-scratch kitchen. He's a 'gentleman chef' whose deeply passionate knowledge of food introduces a menu that emphasizes a combination of dreams and ideas that he makes into reality. Yes, it's very approachable and upscale with a bit of a brushstroke of Mediterranean and Italian.

SAINT

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There's a nice surprise in almost every dish starting with Saint's 'Bread Service' chef-baked daily. It's an irresistible presentation of artisan breads served with a mélange of three spreads: Black Truffle Garlic Butter, Whipped Rosemary Ricotta and Wild Blossom Honey.



Creating the cocktail menu expresses Saint's fun personality of dining or sitting at one of the picturesque bars - casual open-air or at the snazzy 2nd floor grand bar. Trust your instincts and order one of the signatures: Saint Espressotini, The Consigliere, Bourbon & Berries or Gabagool (a blend of Grey Goose Vodka, lemon sorbet and Prosecco 22). Light, refreshing and perfect for lunch through late night, the little spoon takes you into the cocktail's floating sorbet; expand your cocktail footprint into lemon heaven!

Oh, the Peppercorn Filet Mignon Carpaccio! It is so attractive that it's impossible to leave one morsel on the plate, discover a masterpiece of 5-star carpaccio. When served, take a moment and savor the colorful presentation of perfectly paper-thin slices of filet topped with capers, artichoke threads, Grana Padano cheese, sweet balsamic reduction and pickled red onion - topped with baby arugula.



Saint's food and ambience are in synch - offering guests 'fresh, creative and bold' both in the menu and deciding where to sit and enjoy lunch, dinner or anytime. It's amazing how dining trends shape today's tastes and lifestyles. It's nearly impossible to select one of his dishes over another. Each description is tempting and many of the skilled caring servers (when possible) can offer a few photos that are tucked inside their phones!



Chef Derrick's Lobster Arancini can't be compared to any other Italian rice balls that you might recall from dining in the past. A richly dressed appetizer that could be an entrée any day, three large hand-patted rice cakes are topped with cold-water lobster, smoked

Mozzarella, surrounded by light Pomodoro sauce and Harissa aioli. A surprise here? The arancini are Caviar-topped!

"Cooking is my universal language. I've always done cooking - and now my passion is also to teach, train and develop the next generation - creating a team and inspiring them - which is fulfilling in so many ways. I want to be the best operator that I can be".



There is one dish that could steal your heart from lunch to late night. The Amalfi Coast Seafood Cone is piled high with Shrimp, Scallops, Calamari, Loup der Mer and Spicy Tomato Sugo. The faux newsprint is delightfully whimsical. It's a delightful seaside treat where the gorgeous presentation elevates your senses immediately.

In addition to the rich, distinctive menu (take note that you are not going to easily decide during your first visit), the wine list is broad and deep, abundant with Italian selections and affordably priced from New Zealand, Germany, Spain and France by both the glass and by the bottle. Toast the moment at Saint and the true reflection of its history in which it was seeded. You don't have to travel far to savor their waterfront courtyard 'on the Amalfi Coast'. But you will have an experience that provides a unique identity filled with tales to tell of history, outstanding food and friends.

It's a love story to celebrate life in the heart of St. Augustine.