



Eclectic Meets Eloquent

BY ELEANORE OSBORNE
PHOTOS BY NIGEL COOK

You're sitting on the outdoor deck of the Grille at Riverview, a wide, sociable terrace spun gracefully out along the water. Boats are tied nearby, their lines tapping, as a flight of pelicans passes overhead. If sitting is something you are good at, there is no better place. Especially when Sesame Seared Ahi Tuna is sitting on the plate in front of you, and a cool Napa Chardonnay is in your glass.

For the past 12 years, the Grille at Riverview in

Co-owner Beau Robertson, right, and Executive Chef T.J. Wiggins, with several dishes at the Grille at Riverview in New Smyrna Beach. "Our guiding principle here is quality food, fresh made in-house with fresh ingredients," said Robertson. "We make our desserts from scratch and all of our soups and salad dressings. There is a lot of pride in it."

New Smyrna Beach has been the centrifugal force in the lives of Roby Robertson and his son, Beau. "I grew up watching my dad run upscale restaurants on the mainland and in Hawaii," said Beau, and later around the world. Beau inherited the hospitality gene, earned a degree,

HUNGRY GOURMET: GRILLE AT RIVERVIEW

and then, during the Christmas Eve 2000 bombings in Jakarta, his father decided it was time to come back to the states. He landed at his sister's home in Orlando and began looking for what to do next.

Shortly afterward, he called Beau in Denver, telling him he'd found a waterfront restaurant that was for sale. With his dad and himself both city boys, Beau immediately thought, New Orleans? Miami? No, in New Smyrna Beach.



Where? “Neither of us had any clue what or where that was. My dad told me to come have a look, and once we saw the sheer beauty and uniqueness and elegance of the establishment, that was it.” And, oh! those sunsets.

Together with Executive Chef T. J. Wiggins, it has all come together. What’s on the menu? Beau describes it as eclectic. “Our guiding principle here is quality food, fresh made in-house with fresh ingredients. We make our desserts from scratch and all of our soups and salad dressings. There is a lot of pride in it.”

CHANGE OF PACE PLACE

Sunday Brunch, from the menu, features a DIY Bloody Mary bar and music, and includes breakfast favorites such as Country Style Eggs Benedict, \$14.50, or lunch-ier selections, such as the Grille’s Crab Cakes, made with blue lump and claw crabmeat, with sides, \$14.75.

For lunch, choose from soups, salads, entrees, or maybe an appetizer, such as Calamari Parmesan, \$10.50, tender calamari rings dusted with freshly grated Parmesan and served with a choice of dipping sauces.

An interim menu and a sunset menu lead up to dinner, where many of Riverview’s most popular appetizers and soups appear. Clam Chowder, a house specialty, is one of these.

From the dinner menu, the Robertsons share a recipe with MyCoast readers: Goat Cheese Stuffed Chicken, \$20.95. Other choices are Bourbon Glazed Pork Loin, \$19.95, or Char Sui Atlantic Salmon \$24.95. “We have the largest selection of fresh fish in New Smyrna Beach,” said Beau, “and right now, big, beautiful stone crabs with a Dijon mustard sauce.”

But since this is the Grille, consider a center cut 8-ounce Filet Mignon, \$30.50 with accompaniments. “We pride ourselves on the quality of our steaks, all cut in house.” The Grille’s Prime Rib, 12 ounces, \$27.25, is aged a minimum of 35 days, slow cooked for six hours every day, and served with potatoes Au Gratin and other complements.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

What is it like, working in a family business? “Our minds are as one,” said Beau of he and his father. “He was my mentor coming up, but I wanted to make sure I wasn’t that kid who was given things. I had time to do my own thing in Denver first.”

When the recession hit, they barely hung on.



Pan Seared Grouper from the Grille at Riverview.

“To sustain a restaurant of our size and caliber, we worked seven days a week.” They came out of it, and now it’s better than ever. “We are not owners who sit at home, walk in and point and yell.” Roby is the CFO, the numbers man, and Beau, the operating partner, hiring and training. “We are only as good as our employees, and we have very little turnover.”

Lots of things are going on here in addition to meals. A specialty drink menu, for instance, features a signature cocktail that reflects the local terroir: the Pine Ridge Manhattan, that begins in a Florida distillery, and later, much later, emerges from a second oak barrel and is finished with a dark



A Pine Ridge
Manhattan,
topped with
Luxardo cherry.



purple Luxardo cherry. Wednesday night mixers offer Happy Hour all night long at the bar, and free samplings of the chef's bar bites. Monday through Friday, Happy Hour is 4 to 7 p.m., with music, Friday and Saturday nights.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Riverview is also popular for private parties, weddings, and conferences, with a choice of five different indoor and outdoor settings for groups ranging in size from 20 to 300. "There is no better place in Volusia County," said Beau. "We can do anything anyone wants." They've never taken the setting for granted, or the facility, designed by New Smyrna Beach architect Will Miller. The exposed brick, seen throughout, was salvaged after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

In the 12 years they have owned the Grille, the Robertsons have made modifications and improvements, and plan a major renovation in late summer or fall, quadrupling the size of the bar, with an indoor-outdoor design. "We can't wait. It will take us to the next level," said Beau. "A lot of great things are going on, not just for us, but for New Smyrna Beach."

RECIPE

GOAT CHEESE STUFFED CHICKEN

For the Spinach Cream Cheese Stuffing:

- 1 ounce garlic
- 1.5 ounces sun-dried tomatoes
- 6 ounces spinach
- 4, 6-ounce skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 3 ounces goat cheese
- 3 ounces cream cheese

In a medium sauce pan, saute 1 ounce of garlic over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Add 1.5 ounces of sun-dried tomatoes and soften for 30 seconds. Add 6 ounces of fresh spinach, heat until the spinach wilts. Transfer stuffing into a container and place in refrigerator to cool, approximately 10 minutes. While stuffing mix cools, clean and trim 4, 6-ounce skinless, boneless chicken breasts of any fat or tendons. Cut prepped chicken into small 1 inch cubes. Place cubed chicken into a food processor and grind. In a mixing bowl combine ground chicken, 3 ounces of goat cheese, 3 ounces of cream cheese and stuffing mixture.

For the Seasoned Panko Breadcrumbs:

- 2 cups panko breadcrumbs

WANT TO GO?

WHERE: 101 Flagler Avenue, New Smyrna Beach
HOURS: Dinner, 4:30-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 4:30-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; interim menu, 3-4:30 p.m.; early bird, 4:30-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; Sunday brunch, 10:30 a.m.

RESERVATIONS: 386-428-1865

MISC.: Full bar

- 2 tablespoons Italian herb blend
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly.

Bringing It All Together:

- 4, 6-ounce chicken breasts
- 3 ounces Chicken Cream Cheese Stuffing
- Flour
- Egg wash
- Seasoned Panko Breadcrumbs

Butterfly chicken breast. Place 3 ounces of Spinach Cream Cheese Stuffing in the center of the butterflied breast. Close butterflied breast, then coat in flour, followed by egg wash, and finish by coating in Seasoned Panko Breadcrumbs. Pan sear over medium heat with light oil until the breading becomes a light golden brown. Place stuffed chicken in 350 degree oven for approximately 20 minutes or until it reaches an internal temperature of 170 degrees.

Makes 4 servings

Au Gratin Potatoes:

- 1 quart heavy cream
- 3.5 cups grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ tablespoon white pepper
- 7 medium Idaho potatoes

In a mixing bowl combine 1 quart of heavy cream, 2 cups of grated parmesan cheese, 1 tablespoon of salt and ½ tablespoon of white pepper. On a mandoline or by hand, slice 7 medium-sized Idaho potatoes so you can almost see through them. Place all ingredients in a 3-inch-deep baking pan and bake covered in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes or until tender. Remove from oven and top with 1.5 cups of shredded Parmesan to completely cover the potatoes. Put back in oven for 15 minutes until cheese is a nice blistering golden brown.

Makes 6-8 servings