



## FOOD & DRINK

# Valentine's Tables and New Openings: A Look at South Florida's Hottest Dining Destinations

BY BETH LANDMAN

We are always on the hunt for great new restaurants, and just came across one that's only two months sold. Opened by Calabria native Armando Naclerio, and his wife Maria (who is lucky enough to come from the Amalfi Coast), **Armando's** shines, even in a sea of Boca Raton's Italian spots. The room is full of cozy booths, and illuminated by crystal chandeliers. Among the standout dishes are beef short ribs in red wine reduction with saffron risotto; a veal chop that is baked in the oven with fresh tomato and mozzarella; risotto with shrimp, clams and calamari; and a special that I'm still dreaming about — a thick cut of super fresh halibut dusted with herbed bread crumbs and finished in the oven, oreganata style. On Valentine's Day the restaurant is offering a four-course prix fixe of \$135, with such opening choices as crab cake, seafood salad, or tuna tartare, pastas like lobster ravioli and pappardelle with lamb ragu; and entrees including filet mignon; branzino with crab meat; and swordfish with grilled vegetables.

Another great choice for the romantic holiday is **Le Colonial**, the stylish southeast Asian spot on Delray's Atlantic Avenue, where the \$125 holiday menu kicks off with an amuse bouche of fresh oysters with fish sauce; includes small plates like yuzu scallop crudo; pan seared chicken dumplings; and heirloom beets. Among the large plate options are seabass; duck breast, tofu curry and beef sate; and desserts include La Vie En Rose, a white chocolate lychee mousse with raspberry rose preserves, raspberry feuilletine and coconut dacquoise; and Fire and Ice, a special Valentine's Baked Alaska for two, with



THE CRISPY PRAWNS SPRING ROLL AT SEAHAWK PRIME.



THE OCEANFRONT TERRACE AT EAU PALM BEACH.

strawberry sorbet, coconut gelato, strawberry yuzu preserves, chocolate cake and meringue.

**Meat Market**, one of Boca's snazzier steak spots, has a buzzy bar scene, a range of quality meats, and a branzino made especially flavorful by a sauce of harissa with cauliflower and chickpeas. Those who have found their match there, or elsewhere, might want to return for the valentine celebration with live music on the veranda, a violin performance in the main dining room, and a flower booth.

A perfect way to spend the occasion is by booking a couples massage at the legendary spa within the **Eau Palm Beach**, and then

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nibbling on sushi at the resort's new waterfront location of **Nobu**. The "Eau Spa Experience for Two" includes side-by-side massages, facials, and access to the sauna, steam room and relaxation gardens. The special Valentine's weekend "Aphrodite's Experience" features a floral soak infused with Bulgarian rose and vanilla, full body massages, and sweets to share.

The long awaited opening of **Tutto Mare**, a sibling of the Hamp-ton's beloved Tutto Il Giorno, was kicked off by two glamorous nights

of "friends and family" dinners that included such recognizable guests as Jon Bon Jovi, Bret Baier, and Vera Wang. The Intracoastal and Royal Poinciana Plaza are elegant backdrops to the beautifully-designed space that owner Gabby Karan referred to as "Sag Harbor on steroids." Luckily there were heat lamps on the veranda overlooking the water, as it was a chilly night, and Gabby's mom, Donna Karan, sold out of cashmere in her Urban Zen shop, located within the restaurant.

David Burke has opened his long awaited steakhouse, **SeaHawk Prime**, at the luxurious new Nautilus 220 building in Lake Park, just north of West Palm Beach. The uber chef will showcase some of his signature dishes, like the familiar clothesline bacon and lobster dumplings, along with a selection of prime cuts including a tomahawk for two; Florida snapper with tomato olive couscous; and a bison short rib with mushroom cavatelli. The restaurant will serve brunch on weekends. We are also anticipating

the opening of **Birdie Dockside Bar & Grill**, a more casual waterfront spot, later this month.

The Nora district in West Palm is in a soft opening phase, and there are already lines out the door for new auto-inspired cafe, **Sunday Motor Company**. People are loving the coffee, strawberry matcha, and breakfast soft scramble. While you are there, you can pick up some bagels at the new **H&H**, and a fresh-pressed drink or smoothie at **Celis Juice Bar** and by the fall, there will be an outpost of **Pastis**.



PRAWNS AND LINGUINI AT ARMANDO'S.

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