



## COASTAL CULINARY DELIGHTS

### ENDLESS ARRAY OF LOWCOUNTRY DISHES

Travelers world-over journey near and far to discover the unfamiliar and the types of tastes that make lasting vacation memories. Visitors to the Myrtle Beach area will not be disappointed with the various styles of strikingly delicious cooking that make up the area. From fresh local seafood to rice and grits, sweet potatoes to peaches, Myrtle Beach is a “foodie” paradise.

At the northern end of the Grand Strand, North Carolina-style Calabash reigns supreme, with its traditional lightly breaded, fried seafood meals. Calabash buffets – the most famous being the Original Benjamin’s Calabash Seafood – line Highway 17 and offer guests hundreds of delicious options to choose from, including deviled crab, flounder and black bass. With wallet-friendly prices, Calabash has remained a steadfast cooking style since the Myrtle Beach area became a vacation resort in the mid-Twentieth century.

Venture further south and travelers will find themselves in the heart of the Lowcountry, where chefs utilize local ingredients such as Carolina rice, stone-ground grits, shrimp, blue crab, grouper and country ham, in traditional recipes handed down from the Gullah community of the southeastern coastal states. Today, young professional chefs in the Myrtle Beach area are taking this culinary genre to a new level with innovative interpretations of those traditional dishes. Dubbed “Carolina Coastal” chefs, they are using locally sourced ingredients, sustainable meat, fish and seafood, as well as regionally grown produce to enhance the taste and quality of cuisine. One of the most interesting spots to experience this style of cooking is in the community of Murrells Inlet – the seafood capital of South Carolina – where a slew of restaurants sit along the picturesque Murrells Inlet Marshwalk, offering a range of flavors for every taste and wallet.

#### ***Marshwalk***

When people think of great seafood along the Grand Strand, the Murrells Inlet Marshwalk often comes to mind. Visitors can enjoy a stroll along the area’s magnificent waterway before settling in for a meal in what has been dubbed the “Seafood Capitol of South Carolina.” There are eight renowned eateries sure to give your taste buds a serious wake-up call: Bovine’s, Wahoo’s, Divine Fish House, Drunken Jack’s, Capt. Dave’s Dock Side, Creek Ratz, Dead Dog Saloon and Wicked Tuna. Enjoy everything these dining wonders have to offer, from burgers and fries to fresh seafood, wood-fired pizzas to delicious steaks. The Claw House, a new addition to the Marshwalk serving New England-style seafood is planned to open in March 2016.

### ***Myrtle's Farmer Market in Downtown Myrtle Beach***

Myrtle Beach has its very own fresh farmers market, open three days a week, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Myrtle's Market offers an array of culinary favorites, fresh fruits and vegetables, plus seasonal items. The market is located on Mr. Joe White Avenue at Oak Street. For more information call (843) 457-5618.

### ***The International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach at Horry Georgetown Technical College***

The International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach at Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) will open a beautiful, new space in August 2016 at the college's Grand Strand Campus at the Market Common. The new building will include an outdoor barbeque cooking and demonstration center, bakery and patisserie laboratories, a nutrition lab, , production and training kitchens, a greenhouse, a wine cellar, a beverage bar, a chef's bar and chef's table, and an amphitheater with staging area for guest chefs to teach, offer cooking classes to the general public, and with broadcast capabilities for local television stations. The new facility will allow the International Culinary Institute to grow from approximately 170 students to more than 400, in addition to offering culinary classes for the general public and visitors. Ranging from barbeque skills to chocolate making, beer pairing to children's workshops, there is a class that will fit any level of skill, interest and palate. For more information visit [www.hgtc.edu/ce](http://www.hgtc.edu/ce) or call (843) 477-2020 or (843) 349-5363 for class schedules.

### ***Coastal Carolina Chefs***



#### **Chef Casey Blake, Chef, Drunken Jack's (Murrells Inlet)**

When Ervin Casey Blake II was 13, he wanted a restaurant job so much he lied about his age. Today, he has achieved executive chef status next door to his original place of employment. The son of Ervin Sr. and Phyllis Blake was raised in Pawleys Island, the youngest of three children. He remembers both of his parents cooking a lot – soul food like fried chicken, collard greens and macaroni and cheese. His first turn at the stove was at age 10, making scrambled eggs. Just three years later the young man got a job bussing tables and washing dishes at Capt. Dave's Dockside Restaurant, and a year after that he was promoted to brooding fried foods. By age 15 he was on the line, grilling and sautéing. The future chef graduated from Georgetown High School in 1992 and attended classes in the culinary arts program at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in '93. Early that spring, he moved next-door from Dave's Dockside to Drunken Jack's as a line cook. Just three years later he was executive chef, a job he still enjoys. Casey has received local recognition from winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in several community competitions such as Trio Dinner, Taste of the Inlet, and ACF's Souper Supper. Someday he'd like to have his own restaurant. For more information about Chef Blake or Drunken Jack's call 843.651.2044 or visit [www.drunkenjacks.com](http://www.drunkenjacks.com).



### **Chef Corey Johnson – Executive Chef, 21 Main**

Corey Johnson started his education at Francis Tuttle in Oklahoma City. After graduation he began his career as a Pastry chef with Bon Appetite, also in Oklahoma City. It was important for Corey to learn all aspects of the restaurant industry to better his growing career. He took positions as a Sous Chef, Bar Manager and Kitchen Manager at various restaurants including Bellini's and Sky Bar. Corey Johnson is a family man with a beautiful wife and two kids, and is very close with his extended family. This being said he followed his in laws, who are in the oil industry, to Kentucky where he became the executive chef to one of Kentucky's elite golf courses. Luckily Corey also followed his family to South Carolina where he worked for such restaurants as Umi Pacific, Devine Dining Brightwater and City Bar, gaining an amazing amount of management experience. Corey's love for cooking brought him to 21 Main at North Beach; he wanted to get back to "the kitchen" and came on staff as a Line Cook in 2011 quickly working his way up to Sous Chef.

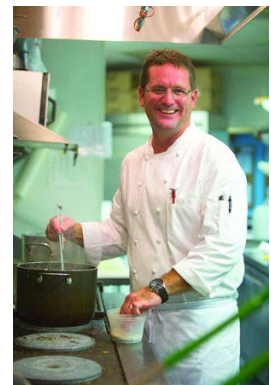
Corey is now the Executive Chef at 21 Main at North Beach and has several award winning dishes on his menu including; the Lobster Bisque, St. Louis Style Pork Rib Appetizer, Lobster infused macaroni and cheese, and Prime NY Strip.



### **Joseph Bonaparte, Executive Director, The International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach, Horry Georgetown Technical College**

Originally from Hackensack, New Jersey, Bonaparte began cooking as a child alongside his mother. Coming from a large Italian family, Bonaparte has fond memories of making homemade pasta in his home kitchen. Bonaparte received both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in hospitality from the University of Houston in Texas. With his well-rounded background, many years of experience and constant thirst to learn cutting edge practices in the industry, Bonaparte is a great asset to the HGTC program. His educational philosophy is hands-on, focused and centered on helping students truly learn the art of cooking. Under Chef Bonaparte's instruction students in the [Culinary Arts programs](#) train in real restaurant settings at The [Fowler Dining Room](#) and [The Beach Bistro](#) located on the College's Conway & Grand Strand Campuses. Students train in areas such as fine dining, buffet, and café service. Menus are created using a variety of cooking techniques focusing on taste, texture, color and creativity. The restaurants are open to the public.

**Chef Andrew Fortner, Executive Chef, Croissants Bistro and Bakery**  
Chef Fortner moved to Myrtle Beach in 1992 from Richmond, Va., to study marine science at Coastal Carolina University. While he was at Coastal, he got a job at a local restaurant to earn money while he was studying. His part-time job turned into a passion for cooking which he pursued by enrolling in the culinary program at Horry Georgetown Technical College. Since completing the program, Fortner has worked at other local



restaurants, including a stint at the Sea Captain's House as its executive chef. He has also received numerous awards for his style and attention to detail; he was the first place winner at the 2015 Trio Dinner. Fortner joined the team at Croissants in 2014, where he puts his own touch on the classic Southern and elegant French cuisine the bistro offers.



### **Heidi Vukov, Pastry Chef and Owner, Croissants Bistro and Bakery**

Chef Vukov moved to Myrtle Beach from Pennsylvania in the early 90s, and opened Croissants Bistro & Bakery in 1995, which quickly gained a loyal following because of its perfect lunchtime atmosphere and divine baked goods. Her love of food began with many hours spent in her grandmother's kitchen in Germany, where European bakeries inspired her love for cooking. Heidi and Croissants are the recipients of numerous awards, including the 2011 South Carolina Restaurateur of the Year. Most recently, Vukov wrote her first cookbook, "Bonjour, Y'all," which features European dishes meshed with good old Southern cooking. She is the first in the Myrtle Beach area to release a cookbook. Vukov is also responsible for co-founding the Coastal Uncorked Food & Wine Festival which takes place each year, and has grown in popularity since its inception in 2009.



### **Chef Dylan Foster, Executive Chef, Wicked Tuna**

A Maryland native, Dylan Foster is accustomed to fresh seafood. Prior to joining the team at Wicked Tuna in Murrells Inlet, where he is now the head chef and corporate executive sous chef, Foster attended culinary school and worked at Enzo in Charlotte, NC. Before entering the classroom, Foster was teaching one. He left a career as an elementary school teacher to enter the culinary industry, following a love for cooking that started with cook-offs between him and his dad when he was a child. That passion continued to develop while attending the University of Maryland, where he became the official chef for all of his fraternity's cookouts. Mr. Foster, Dylan's father, also works at Wicked Tuna, where he helps manage the restaurant and fresh fish facility in the bottom of the building. A second location for Wicked Tuna is currently being planned in the downtown Boardwalk area in Myrtle Beach. Chef Dylan will oversee the opening sometime in 2016.



### **Chef Shawn Dudley, Executive Chef, Thoroughbred's Chophouse & Seafood Grille**

Born in the Washington D.C. area, Shawn Dudley has called the Myrtle Beach area home for over 20 years. He received his Associate's Degree in culinary arts from Horry Georgetown Technical College, and has been with Thoroughbred's for over 15 years, currently as their executive chef. Shawn has enjoyed cooking as long as he can remember. His style rests in putting a little

Southern spin on a variety of foods he prepares. Since joining Thoroughbred's, Shawn and the restaurant have received numerous awards recognizing the delicious cuisine.



**Chef Kevin Luque, Executive Chef, Café Amalfi at Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort**

Chef Luque has been cooking since age 16, and counts seafood as his favorite to work with. For all of his dishes, Luque's goal is to create a fusion of flavors with which to dazzle the diner. Countless awards, such as being named the best seafood chef in South Carolina in 2012, prove that his passion comes through in his food. When he is not cooking for customers, he is cooking for those less

fortunate. Each December, Chef Luque is one of many who participate with Feed A Family, a non-profit organization that provides food to hungry families during the holiday season. Combining outside influences with the variety of fresh ingredients available in the Myrtle Beach area, Luque is truly transforming local fare along the Grand Strand.



**Chef John Leichy, Executive Chef, Tupelo Honey Café**

Originally from Atlanta, Chef Leichy spent some time in Tennessee with his wife, but decided to seek new opportunities back in Myrtle Beach following a stint at the former Tommy Bahama. When Tupelo Honey Café opened in The Market Common in that restaurant's prior location, it was an ideal fit. Leichy's desire to use fresh local ingredients aligned with Tupelo Honey's concept for the restaurant, leading to a match made in heaven. Leichy has spent over 23 years in the industry, beginning with a family restaurant called the Beaver House. Here, he discovered his

passion for cooking. Leichy enjoys putting his personal stamp on classic Southern dishes, and tying dishes together through the use of sauces.



**Chef Sean Thomas, Executive Chef, The Chemist**

A native of the Carolinas, Chef Thomas is a graduate of Horry Georgetown Technical College Culinary Arts program. He has had the opportunity to work as executive chef in several of the area's finest restaurants, including Capriz Italian Cuisine, The Divine Dining Group and Pomodoro's Trattoria, all the while enhancing his skill in farm-to-table cookery and proficiency in a variety of cuisines, from Lowcountry to progressive French. He joined the Litchfield Beach and Golf team as Webster's Lowcountry Grill and

Tavern's Executive Chef in November 2013. Upon arrival he immediately began developing a new menu for Webster's. Chef Thomas has been recognized by the American Culinary Federation on many occasions, including silver and gold medals in sanctioned mystery box competitions, and he was named South Carolina Seafood Chef of the Year in 2013. In 2015 Executive Chef Thomas joined Bond Fire Restaurant Group with the launch of The Chemist - Craft Cocktails and Modern Cuisine. His creative-yet-classic menu contains delightful and savory scientific twists.



**Chef Michael McKinnon, Executive Chef, Cypress Room**

Chef McKinnon, a native of Myrtle Beach, began working in restaurant kitchens at the age of twelve, helping out in his father's restaurant, the Kings 17. He landed his first Executive Chef position in 1988 with the Sea Island Inn, acquiring a lot of hands-on experience, and eventually earning a degree in Culinary Arts from Horry Georgetown Tech. He went on to win numerous awards at the Taste of the Tideland before proceeding to work in some of Myrtle Beach's finest restaurants, like The Grande Dunes Ocean Club and the Carriage House Club. He is a very tenacious and energetic chef, whose style is French-inspired New American Cuisine with a devotion to using the best fresh ingredients, and implementing a simplistic, stylish technique with dynamic presentations. His goal at The Cypress Room is to provide memorable dining experiences through passionately created culinary dishes. For more information, call (800) 854-5426 or visit <http://www.islandvista.com/dining>.



**Chef Curry Martin, Executive Chef and Owner, Aspen Grille**

Born and raised in the South, Curry Martin has always had an appreciation for good food served in a comfortable atmosphere. Martin entered the culinary arts program at Johnson and Wales University in 1994, and interned at The Cloister at Sea Island while in school. Following graduation in 1996, Martin launched his culinary career at Noble's Restaurants in the Triad area of North Carolina. At Noble's, Martin focused on keeping flavors of foods as natural as possible, using simple, yet the highest quality product available. In 1997, Martin moved west to work at the Domaine Chandon Winery restaurant and Beringer Winery's Hudson House in Napa Valley. Martin returned to Noble's as Sous Chef in 1998, and assisted in relocating the flagship Restaurant J. Basul Noble in High Point, NC. In 2000, Martin traveled to France where he apprenticed with Restaurant Pierre Orsi in Lyon and Restaurant Michel Rostang in Paris. Upon returning from France he joined Sonoma Bistro in Charlotte as Sous Chef, and then entered the wine business as an account manager for Prestige Wines. In June 2009, Martin purchased the Aspen Grille and moved with his family to Myrtle Beach. Martin has slowly adapted the menu to focus on the highest quality ingredients, prepared with care, and balanced flavors. His passion lies in creating the overall dining experience, where people can enjoy good food and good service in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. For more information call (843) 449-9191 or visit [www.aspen-grille.com](http://www.aspen-grille.com).



### **Chef Corbett Rourk, Executive Chef, Waterscapes**

Executive Chef Corbett Rourk has over 25 years of culinary experience in a variety of restaurants, private clubs and resorts. After spending the past 2 1/2 years at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia, he and his returned to Myrtle Beach in late 2015 as Executive Chef at the Marina Inn at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach where he leads the culinary team at WaterScapes Restaurant and convention catering.

Chef Rourk, a Charleston, South Carolina native discovered his passion for cooking at a young age. While still in high school, he began working and learning from Chef Mike Pappas, a renowned Charleston, SC restaurateur who opened the legendary Colony House Restaurant and Poogan's Porch following employment in the Aristotle Onassis private family kitchen. Continuing to follow his heart, Chef Rourk cultivated his culinary skills working in several kitchens and eventually landing his first chef assignment as the Sous Chef at Landfall Country Club in Wilmington, NC for three years. With extensive training, he developed his own cooking style that combines classic French with southern American twist. He has put his talents to work at well-known private clubs throughout South Carolina and Georgia including The Landings Club in Savannah, GA and Palmetto Hall Plantation Club in Hilton Head Island, SC. In 2006, Chef Rourk became the Executive Chef at the prestigious Dunes Golf and Beach Club in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. As a 2002 Greenbrier Apprentice graduate, Chef Rourk heeded the call and returned to The Greenbrier Resort in August of 2013 as the hotel's Banquet Chef de Cuisine. Although his time at the Greenbrier Resort was successful and rewarding; he felt the need to get back to his calling of preparing fresh, local products on a more personal level. The opportunity became available at the Marina Inn at Grande Dunes.

For additional information on the Myrtle Beach Area, visit [www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com](http://www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com) or call 1.888.Myrtle1.

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#### **Media Contact:**

Ann Marcum  
Fahlgren Mortine  
614.383.1634

[Ann.Marcum@Fahlgren.com](mailto:Ann.Marcum@Fahlgren.com)