



TABLE TALK

with LEIGH CORT

What is a “personality-driven” restaurant? If you visit Atlantic Beach on any night of the week, you might find yourself in one of Al Mansur’s VERY appealing restaurants — Flying Iguana, Mezza Luna, Al’s Pizza or Coop 303. They are all distinctively stylized, innovative restaurants with an ambience like no other in Northeast Florida. That is personality driven! Nothing cookie-cutter here.

Coop 303’s building is an angular hardscape of contemporary architecture with a surprise landscape of bright seasonal flower baskets from the ground-floor front porch setting to the second-story upstairs parlor and rooftop garden! It’s alluringly fresh — with huge black and white art that feels whimsical — but really tells the story about Coop 303, whether you’re gazing at a giant canvas cow or a massive tractor wheel. The art represents Coop 303’s and Chef Marshall Ziehm’s minimalistic approach to Florida’s pristine ingredients that dance colorfully on each artistic plate.

Florida regional cuisine is Chef Ziehm’s heart and he wears it on his sleeve! Even on a wild and crazy restaurant night, if you mention that you’d like to see the chef, he might just appear and wow you with culinary facts. Chefs are a part of one of the largest industries in the world, without whose presence the food industry would cease to exist. Chef Ziehm represents how chefs go through laborious training and have to be extremely passionate when it comes to their profession. There has been an explosion in the number of chefs around the globe, all working toward making the food industry fascinating conversation. At Coop 303, you can’t find one dish on the menu that doesn’t sound fabulous!



Chef Marshall Ziehm

COOP 303

A Personality-Driven Restaurant

Although most restaurant stories focus on the food — and Coop 303's food is incredible — the story belongs to the Chef here. He's squeezed a lifetime of travel and hard work into the past thirty years since growing up on a farm in rural Virginia. He came to understand the beauty and importance of a farm to table, sustainable lifestyle at a very early age — long before those words became the current mantra of dining out. Picture Ziehm cooking in small cantinas in Mexico and three-star Michelin restaurants throughout Europe with one goal in mind: Mastering his trade!

Critical acclaim is attached to Ziehm's career resume. From L.A. Magazine that directed readers with, "You must dine at Ziehm Restaurant during the Sundance Film Festival," and the Salt Lake Tribune, "Chef Ziehm is changing the palate of Utah" — his rave reviews continued in Chicago with, "Best New Restaurant," Ena, which brought him attention throughout America's chefdom! His minimalistic approach highlights farm, water and forest. His menus are created with respect, humility and joy. It's obvious with the servers who bring Coop's experience to life too. Here it's not just a meal.

Now come with me to the table! Dinner doesn't always need to begin at 7 p.m. If you start cocktailing at 2 p.m., you can enjoy each of Coop's unique five dining spots throughout the afternoon and evening. It's known for a four-hour Happy Hour. The bustling bars focus on California wines, local brews, irresistibly clever cocktails and 100-plus USA bourbons. Don't overlook sipping a "Helen Dobson." Why this catchy cocktail? Helen was featured in the film "Creatures of the Black Lagoon," which was filmed in Jacksonville! It's a jumpin' combination of Tito's vodka, St. Germain elderflower liqueur, simple syrup, fresh lemon juice and mint.

Did someone whisper fish? Chef works closely with specific fishing boats to serve the best local fish of the season. Each day the whole fish takes on a new personality. You'll have to call ahead to find out what each day brings. From the boat to their door, the preparation changes with Chef's



Coop 303 Fried Chicken Basket



Chef Ziehm with fried sheephead



Pan-seared scallops

whim. My favorite salmon in the region is Crispy Skin Nordic Blue Salmon (with local vegetable couscous and Florida sweet corn broth). If scallops call your name, the Pan-Seared U10 Scallops are butter basted on crushed Florida fingerling potatoes with gremolata and chili oil. Gorgeous and irresistible!

Chef Ziehm treasures his days out of the kitchen to visit local dairy and produce farms, selecting the best Florida grown and created products. He believes in and supports Florida's rich legacy of distinctive food. It's obvious that the micro garnishes are his choice too. Each dish bursts with flavor from the tiniest stems with the biggest personality. Surprises await your appetite. He knows exactly what to do with fennel pollen, ruby streak mustard greens, micro radish sprouts and pea shoots!

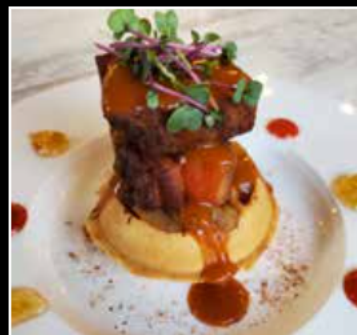
Chicken and beef vie for centerstage, too, at Coop 303. A simply prepared olive oil and rosemary roasted half chicken is grilled and crispy. The filet mignon hails from Florida Cattle Ranchers beef, chargrilled to perfection. If you're wondering what the fuss is all about at Coop 303 for a fried chicken basket — just order it. Whether four or eight pieces, it's the most succulent dish when you crave a cool weather comfort dish.

If you try hard to save a little appetite for dessert, you won't be disappointed with Coop's sweet specialties — don't overlook the Chocolate Waffle. Warning: It's decadently composed with coffee ice cream, homemade peanut brittle and buttermilk whipped cream. The waffle ranks somewhere between a brownie and an old-fashioned chocolate cake with an alluring chocolate aroma — a must-share treat!

As night falls at the beach, you'll appreciate Ziehm's great skill and self-assurance with very little preening or self-consciousness. When you eat at Coop, you might enjoy knowing that a brigade of chefs is working like crazy in the kitchen to make each dish boisterously flavorful. Let me know you're on the way. I'll share my bourbon root beer float if you let me taste your warm peach cobbler with vanilla bean ice cream!



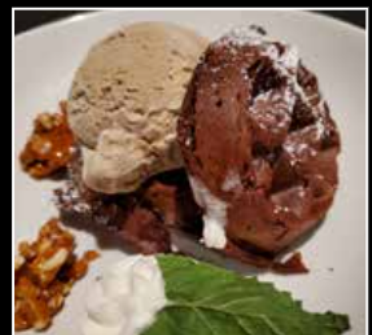
Crispy skin Nordic Blue Salmon



Smoked Heritage Pork Belly appetizer



Peaches & Cream appetizer



Chocolate Waffle