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AROUND TOWN

DINING ★ ENTERTAINMENT FASHION ★ SHOPPING

Casa del Mare - Tis Exceptional!

The view is magnificent. Leisurely patio-styled dining, with the compliments of the ocean breeze. The food, exquisite in taste, gourmet Italian, yet casual ambiance. Casa del Mare, inside the Sea Club Resort, located on A1A (619 North Ft. Lauderdale Beach Blvd.) no doubt will become a happening, or should I rephrase that, IS A HAPPENING; an EXCEPTIONAL HAPPENING!!!

Seafood is the specialty of Owner/ Fabio Vaccarella, who prepares with love and flavorful amenities, many of his recipes going back in time to his heritage. The emblem inscribed on his chef's coat lapel reads "Celebrity Chef Events" and that he is indeed...star-sufficient, marvelous and award winning. He was awarded several honors for his creations of grandeur while a chef on Miami Beach and is highly regarded internationally.

Accolades continue to be rightly bestowed on Chef Fabio, a third generation restaurateur, born and raised in Palermo, Sicily. Coming from a large family of 4 brothers, all who have followed the family tradition and his sister, a sommelier, who's married to a chef and owns a restaurant in Palermo, this is a family to be reckoned with. "My dream was always to open a seafood restaurant," said Chef Fabio, who came to Florida in 1997. The combination of seafood and Italy is the perfect match with Chef Fabio at the helm. He was a child eager to learn. During WW2, his father was the first to open a store/restaurant in Palermo selling chicken and eggs. His mother, however, was a teacher. His grandfather certainly carved a niche for all to appreciate, with a passion. Among a handful of celebrities who have enjoyed his originality include Andrea Bocelli, Phil Collins, Andy Garcia and numerous others. This "Celebrity Chef" has hosted many events and is eager to continue to reign supreme, perhaps even yours'.

And you, my reader friends, will more than enjoy Chef Fabio's passion. Casa del Mare, opened last October and like all of us, were stunned by the events of 2020. "The impact took us all by surprise," in unison stated Marketing Director Marcos Dasilva and Chef Fabio. Both are looking forward to a great season, now that restrictions are being lifted. "I've seen so many differences on how people are approaching the restrictions," offered Marcos. "What we are trying to do, is to handle it in a very responsible way. "With restrictions lifted, we're full service on now and the bar is open." Still, they believe in cautiousness. "We are definitely keeping our eyes on things. We're doing everything that we can do to sanitize the space that we work. Our waiters all work with masks. So needless to say, we are very conscious and want to encourage the business to come back to our beaches." As for menus, they've gone the QR route, where one scans the QR barcode on their "Smart Phone."

With a location perfect, what more could one ask for. "I have nothing but good things to say," Marcos added with the Chef Fabio beaming in agreement. "I think we have a wonderful location. We're very fortunate to be part of a resort and also have the best food around. Plus, the view is priceless." And that, it is. Marcos goes back in time with Chef Fabio. He worked with him twenty years ago on Miami Beach and considers him a good friend. Both complement each other well.

Now on to the most important and that is the dining; we couldn't wait to explore Chef Fabio's wonderful offerings. We started off our meal with an appetizer of Crab Cakes. I knew from the first taste, that this was not going to be anything ordinary; actually, from the moment they set the dish down, there was this



extraordinary feel and aromas. They were perfect delicacies from the sea. A touch of crisp on the outside; soft on the inside and more than enough flavor and zest, with accompanying sauces of a special blend.

A little known, or rather rarely served favorite came next, Black Squid Ink Linguine. I haven't had this dish in what seems like forever. It excited me and although not on the menu, it is offered as a specialty of the day. It was accompanied by mussels and clams, with red roe, resembling caviar and greenery, for colorific appeal.

Again, there was the aroma and presentation perfect. There was a tad of heat coming from the Calabrese pepper flakes. Delicious!!!

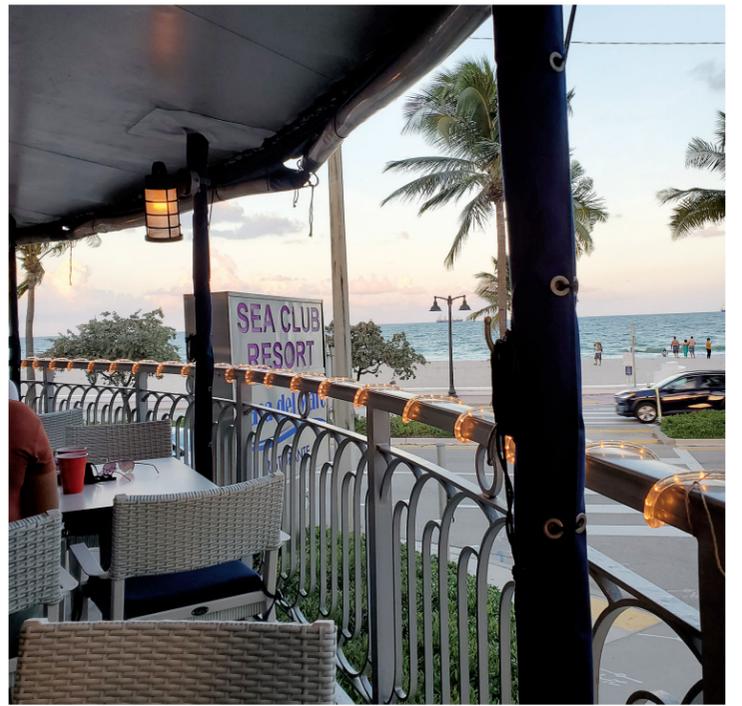
And then we were gifted to the wonderful Branzino Del Mare, a broiled Mediterranean Sea Bass. Our server Pino, brought the dish to our table and showed us proudly this masterpiece before he fileted it for us tableside. Branzino has a delicate smooth taste. It's not heavy. The artistry of just the right spices, lemon and virgin olive oil surpasses.

Additional items on the dinner menu include such appetizers as Polpo Saporto (Grilled Octopus with Chickpea puree, Chili Peppers and Olives) to Sashimi Tuna Salad (Pan-Seared Tuna with mixed greens, a touch of Cilantro and Ginger Vinaigrette) and Caesar Salad, while offered entrees include a selection of Seafood Pastas such as Seafood Ravioli with shrimp and scallops to Spaghetti Sicilian with Tuna, Olives, Capers and Tomatos and more. The Wild Caught Salmon is a wow factor as is the Fish Marechiaro (Mahi Mahi, Clams and Mussels). However, if you prefer a non-seafood dish, there's Agnello Scottadito (marinated grilled lampchops) or a NY Strip. As full as we were, dessert beckoned and we couldn't resist the Chocolate Lava Cake with Hazelnut Ice Cream, as well as the "cool" after-dinner drink that was mentioned time and time again, we should sample... Casa del Mare's homemade Limoncello, a tropical summer liquor. Need more be said.

It was great to make Pino's acquaintance again. I first met him several years ago, when I did a review of his former restaurant, Goia's. He's quite knowledgeable and his recommendations you can take to heart. He's a perfect asset to Casa del Mare.

But wait, there's more. How about breakfast and lunch or brunch. Casa del Mare begins serving at 8am - Salmon or Eggs Benedict oh my!!!! Lunch is served from noon to 4pm, followed by dinner, closing at 11pm.

Expansion will hopefully be soon underway, with plans



View from Casa Del Mare



Marketing Director Marcos & Chef/Owner Fabio



Server Pino



Black Linguine w/ Mussels & Clams



Crab Cake



Branzino before fileting



Chocolate Lava Cake & Hazelnut Ice Cream



Branzino after fileting

to open an inside dining room, Casa del Vino, cozy; upscale, with a beautiful wine cellar and then there's the banquet center, for exhibition and private parties.

As Marcos stated, "We have the two most important elements - alfresco dining - people are coming out. They want to be outdoors, not in a closed-in space and we have some of the best food that any Italian can cook that I know of. Speaking of flavors this is the guy here. Chef Fabio's got the flavors down." Most important, as Chef Flavio relates, besides the combination of food and flavors is "his love" for what he does and "That is very important. We take pride here. We want to make sure everyone leaves with a good memory."

Yes, good memories; wonderful memories can be made at Casa del Mare. For reservations call 954-537-1722.