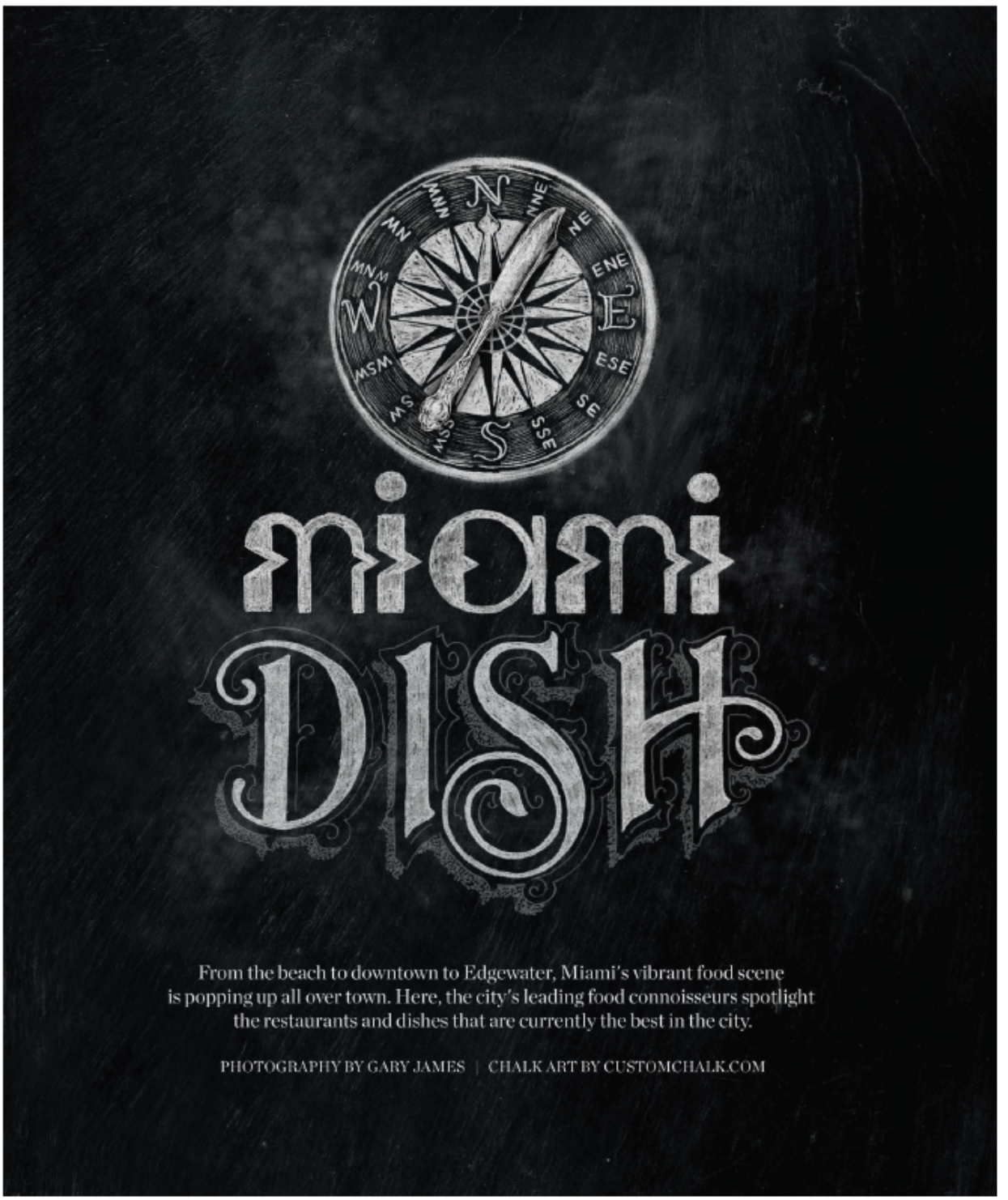
November 2014 Issue

OCEAN DRIVE



From the beach to downtown to Edgewater, Miami's vibrant food scene is popping up all over town. Here, the city's leading food connoisseurs spotlight the restaurants and dishes that are currently the best in the city.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY JAMES | CHALK ART BY CUSTOMCHALK.COM

Chef Tim Andriola of Basil Park finishing grass-fed beef lettuce cups with cilantro.

Suckling pig with maque choux and cheddar grits at Oak Tavern.

Fiocchetti di pera at Touché.

Macchialina Taverna Rustica chef-owner Michael Pirolo preparing a dish of polenta with sausage ragu and cipollini.

Broccolini cooking as part of the monkfish dish with smoked trout roe and lobster sauce at Mignonette.

Fresno chilies simmering with garlic and vinegar for the homemade sriracha.

Chef Tim Andriola in the open kitchen at Basil Park.

Grass-fed skirt steak lettuce cups with wild-mushroom confit. A topping of sriracha adds an extra kick.

WINNING CUP

***Basil Park**, tucked into Sunny Isles Beach, plates a delicious example of where conscious cuisine is heading with its grass-fed beef lettuce cups.* BY INGRID HOFFMANN

Sunny Isles Beach is known for lots of things, but not necessarily forward-leaning cuisine. That's all changed with the recent opening of Tim Andriola's Basil Park. Andriola is the chef from neighboring Italian Timo Restaurant & Bar, but for his new spot, his direction shifted to a "clean food" philosophy, with dense nutrients and earth-friendly sourcing. The concept came about after Andriola took a health and nutrition course from nutritional guru Vaughn Gray, and the resulting eatery feels more hip San Francisco beach house than Miami with its beautiful, natural pale butcher-block wood tables and open kitchen.

"We avoid using any ingredients that are processed and opt for substitutions that are whole in nature," says Andriola. "We use coconut palm sugar, dates, and brown rice syrup to give our desserts sweetness. We only use intact grains and grass-fed meat, and natural pasture-raised chicken void of hormones, antibiotics, and GMO feed." A partner in the restaurant is organic farmer Tamer Harpke from Harpke Family Farm in Dania Beach, which provides piquant lovelies such as microgreens, mizuna, bok choy, lacinato kale, purple dragon carrots, arugula, and chioggia beets.

Now, I loved everything on the menu, but if I had to call out one dish, it would be the grass-fed skirt steak lettuce cups. First, chef Andriola marinates the beef in organic tamari (gluten-free soy) and eventually sears it on a Spanish-style plancha grill. The iceberg lettuce cup holds a wild-mushroom confit, made by covering the mushrooms in coconut oil and roasting them in a 300-degree oven for half an hour, then mixing in garlic, ginger, scallion, tamari, lime, and cilantro. The dish is topped with an award-winning homemade sriracha sauce concocted with Fresno chilies, garlic, vinegar, brown-rice syrup, and salt. The end result has an intense beef flavor layered with the earthy mushrooms, the pop of the sriracha, and the crisp, cool shell of the lettuce. To me, Basil Park is a shining star, the perfect example of how healthy food can also be deliciously exciting food, all the while treating our bodies and Mother Earth kindly. *17608 Collins Ave., Sunny Isles Beach, 305-705-0004; basilpark.com*