



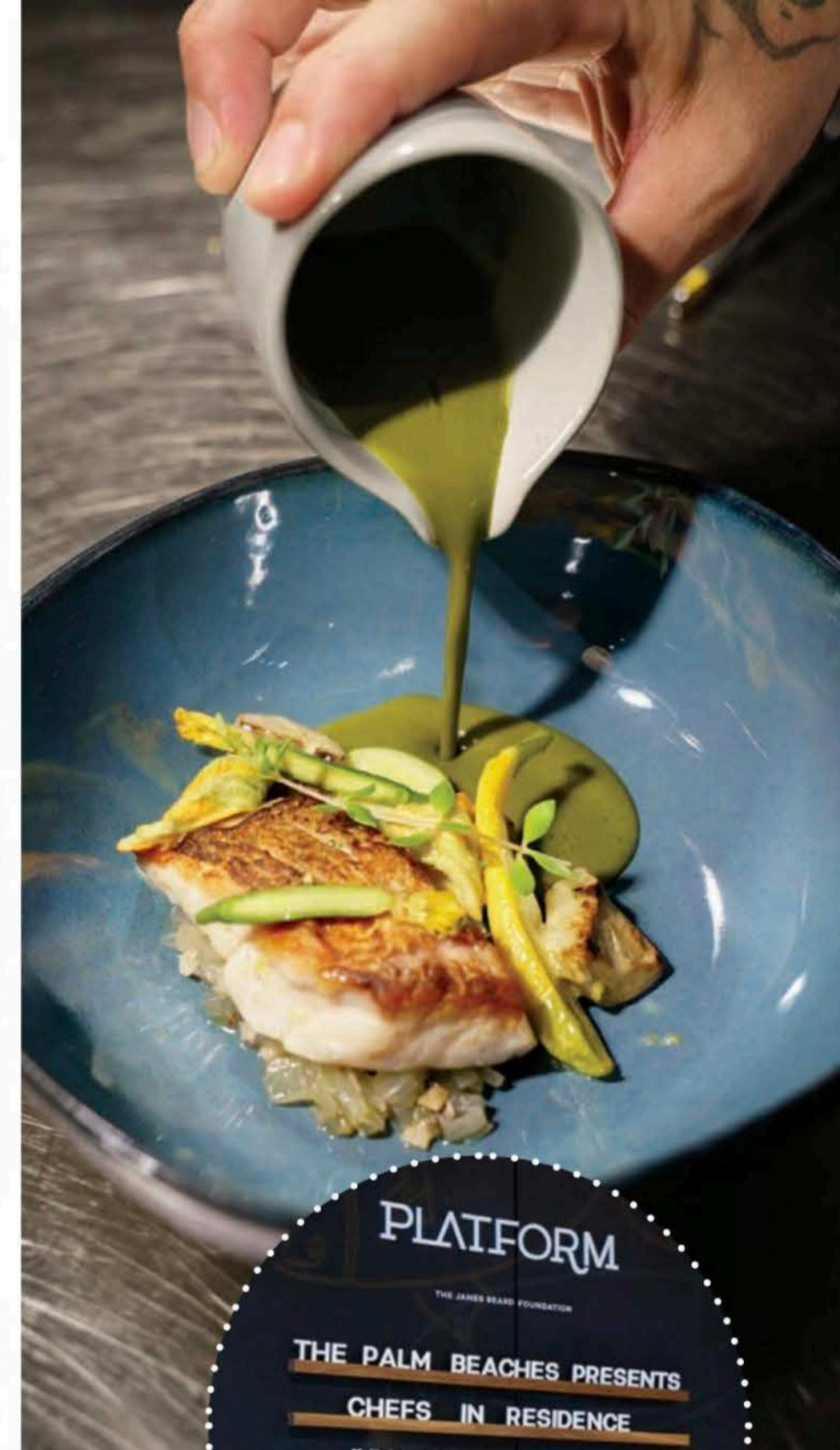
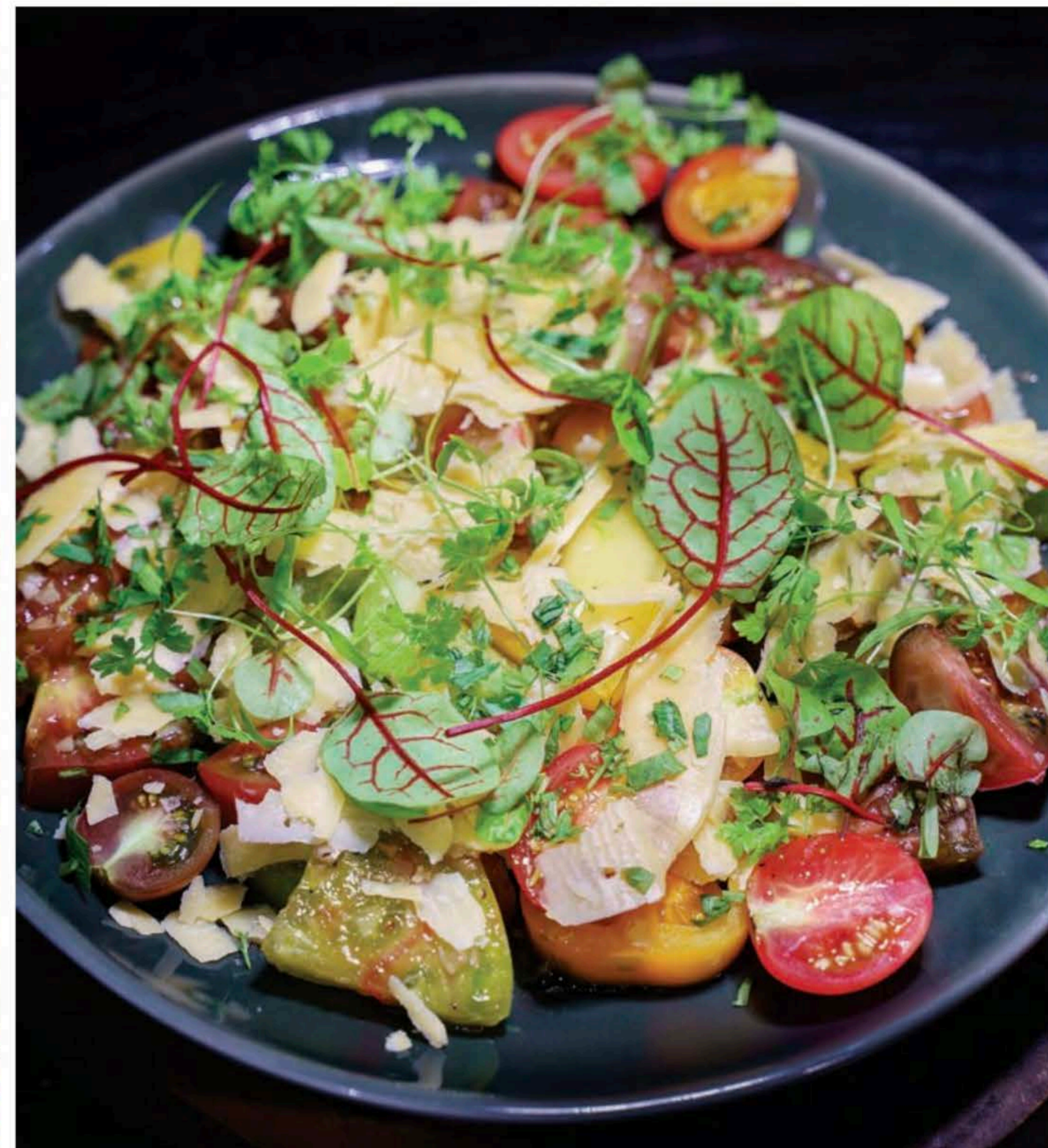
# PALM BEACH TAKEOVER

PBI's food editor travels to New York City to attend a showcase of Palm Beach County chefs at Platform by the James Beard Foundation. Here, she shares insight into the experience as well as the flavors, ingredients, personalities, trends, and themes that are setting a new culinary standard in the region.

By Mary Murray | Photography by Eric Vitale Photography

My husband and I follow a short list of commandments when we travel. Chief among them is this: thou shalt not eat something thou can get at home. Well, color me a sinner because I recently visited New York City with the intent to do just that.

In late July 2023, some of Palm Beach County's most acclaimed chefs descended upon Hudson River Park's Pier 57 to present "A Taste of the Palm Beaches," hosted by Discover The Palm Beaches and Platform by the James Beard Foundation (Platform by JBF). Across four days, these chefs—including Lindsay



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DISCOVER THE PALM BEACHES TEAMED UP WITH PLATFORM BY JBF TO PRESENT "A TASTE OF THE PALM BEACHES," FEATURING JAMES BEARD-NOMINATED CHEFS LINDSAY AUTRY, JEREMY FORD, PUSHKAR MARATHE, AND CLAY CONLEY (LEFT) AS WELL AS TIM LIPMAN. ACROSS THE SERIES, THE CHEFS SHARED DISHES THAT REFLECT THEIR COOKING AND THE CUISINE OF THE PALM BEACHES. THESE INCLUDED CONLEY'S JERSEY TOMATO SALAD (ABOVE LEFT) AND FORD'S ATLANTIC SALMON WITH SUMMER ZUCCHINI, SHIITAKE SOFRITO, AND AN HERBACEOUS COCONUT EMULSION (ABOVE RIGHT).



A SENSE OF TEAM-  
WORK WAS PALPABLE  
IN THE PLATFORM  
BY JBF OPEN SHOW  
KITCHEN, WITH  
PARTICIPATING CHEFS  
JUMPING ON THE LINE  
TO SUPPORT THEIR  
COLLEAGUES DURING  
THEIR MEALS. FORD  
(FAR LEFT) HELPED  
OUT LONGTIME  
FRIEND MARATHE  
(LEFT), WHILE LIP-  
MAN ACTED AS SOUS  
CHEF FOR AUTRY AND  
VICE VERSA (ABOVE).  
CONLEY BROUGHT  
A SMALL TEAM FROM  
PALM BEACH WITH  
HIM TO NEW YORK,  
INCLUDING MICHAEL  
CHAVEZ WHO SERVES  
AS EXECUTIVE CHEF  
AT BUCCAN (ABOVE  
LEFT).

“I WANTED TO SHOWCASE ALL THE DISHES THAT MAKE US WHO WE ARE ... WE NOT ONLY SHOWCASED OUR RESTAURANTS AND TALENT BUT ALSO THE BOUNTY OF INGREDIENTS WE HAVE AROUND HERE.” —Pushkar Marathe

ner, Andy Dugard. The pair opened Stage in February 2020 and weathered the worst of the pandemic to establish one of the county’s most celebrated eateries; *USA Today* listed Stage among its “Restaurants of the Year” for 2024.

One common belief about Floridians is that very few of us are actually from Florida. But I have found that such heterogeneity has greatly contributed to the culinary thumbprint of the Palm Beaches. Just look at Marathe. A native of Nagpur, India, Marathe cut his teeth in South Florida, working with mentor Dean Max and forging relationships with such fellow chefs as Ford and Niven Patel, who recently opened NiMo in Tequesta. Now, he is blending influences from both of his homelands to arrive at a global cuisine all his own. For his “A Taste of the Palm Beaches” dinner, Marathe wanted to give a glimpse of these signatures, inspired by the flavors of India and his favorite Floridian ingredients.

“Usually, for dinners like this, I’m always trying to create a new experience, something people have never had,” he says. “But for this, I wanted to showcase all the dishes that make us who we are at Stage and Ela. We not only showcased our restaurants and talent but also the bounty of ingredients we have around here.

Autry, Clay Conley, Jeremy Ford, Tim Lipman, and Pushkar Marathe—shared dishes that exemplify not only their personal approaches to cooking, but also the exciting growth that has occurred across the Palm Beaches in recent years.

“We wanted to bring a taste of the Palm Beaches to New York City, which is our largest market of travelers to our destination,” says Erika Constantine, vice president of marketing for Discover The Palm Beaches. “With so many award-winning chefs in our area, we knew we had something special to tout and showcase, and wanted to make sure our audience knew about our first-rate culinary scene.”

A lot has changed in Palm Beach County dining in the last decade, with a noticeable uptick in restaurant openings occurring within the last three years, spurred by an influx of new residents from larger metropolises. I moved here in 2012. At the time, of the five

chefs who participated in “A Taste of the Palm Beaches,” only Conley and Lipman were operating their current restaurants.

As Constantine notes, the Palm Beaches now boast restaurants by chefs whose other ventures have earned Michelin stars (among them Ford, Daniel Boulud, Mauro Colagreco, Akira Back, and Fabio Trabocchi) and is home to many James Beard Award semifinalists for Best Chef South. In fact, in 2023, the Palm Beaches had five James Beard-nominated chefs, more than any other destination in Florida. “Palm Beach County is attracting these talented, world-renowned chefs to open outposts or original restaurant concepts, and [we’re] also becoming known for our homegrown chefs, making us a burgeoning foodie destination,” Constantine adds.

One such 2023 James Beard nominee is Marathe, who runs Stage Kitchen & Bar and Ela Curry & Cocktails with his business part-



We shipped local fish all the way to New York, [and] I flew in with lychees and fresh mangoes.”

The lychees (donated by Naga Gardens in Loxahatchee Groves) materialized in Marathe’s Lychee Ceviche, a playful, vegetarian spin on a Peruvian dish that is typically made with fish or shellfish. It was a favorite of Terence Harvey, who serves as executive sous chef with Platform by JBF and helped to coordinate the logistics within the open show kitchen.

“James Beard is just really happy to have everyone here,” says Harvey. “Everyone is so talented, and we got a lot of different types of food. Pushkar has strong Indian flavors. Jeremy Ford does Mediterranean-style cuisine. Chef Conley has some Japanese flavors. And Lindsay was the truest of the South.”



MARATHE WANTED TO BRING HIS GLOBAL FLAVORS AND FLORIDIAN INGREDIENTS TO MANHATTAN. HIGHLIGHTS FROM HIS MULTICOURSE MEAL INCLUDED (CLOCKWISE FROM CENTER LEFT) BANG BANG CAULIFLOWER WITH MUSHROOMS, PANEER, MINT, AND CILANTRO; NIMAN RANCH IBERIAN DUROC PORK COLLAR WITH ONION SEED, FENNEL, AND TOMATO, PAIRED WITH SEEDED NAAN; AND LYCHEE CEVICHE, MADE WITH NAGA GARDENS LYCHEES, CUCUMBER, COCONUT LECHE DE TIGRE, AND THAI CHILI.



AUTRY'S MENU SANG WITH INFLUENCES FROM NORTH CAROLINA AND PALM BEACH COUNTY, AS SEEN IN HER MAIN OF SCOTCH EGGS, FLORIDA SHRIMP, AND LOADED SPECKLED GRITS (BELOW) AND HER ATLANTIC BEACH PIE WITH CANDIED HONEYBELLS (ABOVE RIGHT).



The South was a focus of Autry's "Southern Hospitality" Sunday brunch, which closed out the series. The menu captured Autry's North Carolinian roots as well as her newfound home of Palm Beach County. Mains included Florida shrimp with barbecue nage and Scotch eggs, both served with speckled grits laced with aged Vermont cheddar and charred scallions.

"The Scotch egg is something that I love," says Autry, who helms Honeybelle inside PGA National Resort. "My mom used to make them when I was growing up, and it was something that we only did on certain occasions because there is a lot of work involved."

She finished the meal with Atlantic Beach Pie, the perfect marriage of her past and present. This "North Carolina version of a key lime pie," as she describes it, recalls the fried seafood restaurants that dot the state's coast. She cradled the lemony filling within a sea salt cracker crust and dressed it with accents of honeybell, a type of orange native to the Palm Beaches and the inspiration behind the name of Autry's restaurant.

A three-time James Beard nominee for Best Chef South, Autry is particularly well-positioned to represent the Palm Beaches on a national stage as she and her husband, David Sabin, own and produce the Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival, which takes place annually in December. For this meal, Sabin took on the title of "reluctant sous chef," notes Autry, working in the kitchen alongside the not-so-reluctant Tim Lipman.

The day before, Autry and Sabin donned their aprons as Lipman's sous chefs during Saturday's lunch service. Though his Coolinary restaurant is a North County fixture (it's a go-to birthday dinner spot in my family), this was Lipman's first time working with the James Beard Foundation. "I'm here to cook what I cook at home," Lipman says. "I want to bring Coolinary to New York."



One of just two participating chefs raised in Florida, Lipman worked for the Little Moir's restaurant group before branching out on his own. Now, he runs Coolinary alongside his wife, Jenny, who serves as general manager. This family-centric model is another defining characteristic of many of the county's most popular restaurants. Other standouts include Matthew and Aliza Byrne's Kitchen in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach Gardens, Wendy Tilkaran and Evita Thomas' Chunkay in Riviera Beach, Jacob and Nadia Bickelhaupt's Konro in Flamingo Park, and Michael and Melanie Hackman's Aioli in southern West Palm (where I can be found at least once a week). Jeremy and Cindy Bearman operate Oceano Kitchen in Lake Worth Beach and were both 2023 nominees for Best Chef South.

A New Englander by birth, Clay Conley is firmly entrenched in Floridian food and agriculture. While he currently resides in a farmhouse near Gainesville, he is still active at his Palm Beach County restaurants, which include Buccan and Imoto on Palm Beach and Grato in West Palm Beach.



LEFT COLUMN, FROM TOP: AUTRY'S FRIED GREEN TOMATO SALAD WITH BURRATA AND PEPPER JELLY; SHE WAS JOINED IN THE KITCHEN BY LIPMAN, HER HUSBAND, DAVID SABIN, AND JEN FORSYTHE, WHO SERVED AS GENERAL MANAGER OF AUTRY'S FORMER RESTAURANT, THE REGIONAL. RIGHT COLUMN, FROM TOP: LIPMAN'S LUNCH INCLUDED A CORNBREAD DESSERT WITH CARAMELIZED PEACHES, SAFFRON HONEY, AND WHIPPED CREAM, PLUS SMOKED CHICKEN-PORK SAUSAGE WITH ROASTED RADISHES AND WHIPPED FETA YOGURT.





CONLEY BEGAN HIS "THE BEST OF BUCCAN" DINNER—ONE OF THE SERIES' MOST ANTICIPATED MEALS—WITH SUCH PASSED BITES AS TUNA CRISPS (ABOVE), A MAINSTAY ON BUCCAN'S MENU. OTHER STANDOUTS INCLUDED MAINE LOBSTER CEVICHE (TOP RIGHT) AND WILD STRIPED BASS (LEFT). "WHEN I THINK OF SUMMER FISH, BEING FROM NEW ENGLAND, I ALWAYS THINK OF STRIPED BASS," SAYS CONLEY.



I ABSOLUTELY LOVED THE NEW SPACE [AND] HAVING EVERYTHING YOU COULD EVER NEED AS A CHEF AT YOUR FINGERTIPS. THE INTERACTION AND BEAUTIFUL DIALOGUE WITH THE GUESTS WAS THE BEST." —Jeremy Ford

fonduta ravioli with Australian black winter truffles was a stick-to-your-ribs masterpiece befitting the decadence of Palm Beach.

Whereas Conley (a seven-time nominee for Best Chef South) represents the first wave of chefs to put the Palm Beaches on the foodie map, Jeremy Ford—who kicked off the series—is one of the area's most recent attractions. A Jacksonville native, Ford now lives in Miami. In 2022, he was nominated for Best Chef South and his Miami Beach restaurant, Stubborn Seed, was awarded a Michelin star. With help from a locally based team, Ford operates PGA National's The Butcher's Club, his homage to traditional steak house trappings, reimagined for the twenty-first-century palate.

For Ford, chef comradery and guest interaction are paramount. He traveled to New York with a cadre of young chefs—including executive chef Dallas Wynne—who spearhead and execute day-to-day operations at The Butcher's Club. This type of mentorship and sense of community is another throughline in the Palm Beach County restaurant scene. Established chefs are quick to give credit to those who make the magic happen behind the scenes and clear paths for their



advancement. (A prominent example is Rick Mace, a Daniel Boulud protégé who went on to open Tropical Smokehouse and earn a Best Chef South nod in 2023.) And much like the space at Platform by JBF, many of the participating chefs have a chef's counter in their restaurants, where guests can ask questions as their courses are fired.

"I absolutely loved the new space [and] having everything you could ever need as a chef at your fingertips," Ford says of the Platform kitchen. "The interaction and beautiful dialogue with the guests was the best."

Education is also at the forefront of Platform by JBF, which provides visiting chefs with help from talented up-and-comers, such as Terence Harvey. "I feel like I'm still trying to home in on my style of cooking," he says, "so getting to see all these different types of cuisine is really nice."

Attendees at the various meals ranged from former and seasonal Palm Beach County residents who wanted a taste of home, to curious foodies with little to no knowledge of the region. This mix reflected not only the joy of such events—where the discovery of new chefs and friends makes for a memorable eve-

ning—but of the mission behind Platform by JBF. While the foundation's James Beard House in the West Village is its most well-known piece of real estate, the Platform operates as a satellite show kitchen, event space, and educational hub inside Market 57, a food hall curated under the foundation's guidance. Here, nestled between the Hudson River, Little Island, and Chelsea, culinary enthusiasts from all over the country can engage with the individuals who are defining America's food culture.

It's not groundbreaking to say that New York City has been at the forefront of that culture for the better part of the last century. Currently, there are some 25,000 restaurants across the city's five boroughs, and the metropolis has numerous iconic dishes, from pizza to the bodega bacon, egg, and cheese (I was sure to sneak one in during my visit). NYC is also leaps ahead of the Palm Beaches when it comes to ethnic diversity, though the region is making progress.

But as demographics shift toward midsize



FORD KICKED OFF HIS MEAL WITH WHITE WATER CLAMS WITH CARROT VINAIGRETTE AND THAI BASIL FROTH (TOP LEFT) AND SHRIMP AND LOBSTER TOAST WITH WAGYU BEEF KATSU (LEFT). HE PROCEEDED TO PLATED COURSES INCLUDING SUMMER CORN PASTA WITH AUSTRALIAN WINTER TRUFFLE (ABOVE) AND A BUTCHER'S CLUB FEAST WITH MACALLAN-AGED WAGYU BEEF, FAMILY-STYLE SIDES, AND FORD'S FOUR SAUCES (TOP).

cities, restaurateurs and chefs alike are embracing smaller markets, a locavore ethos, and the regional flavors that define such areas. Could Palm Beach County be the country's next great food destination, Michelin stars and all? That remains to be seen. Even as I enjoy watching it grow, I'm keeping an eye on the stars who put us on the culinary map in the first place. ◀◀