

lifestyle

AVENTURA

DECEMBER 2023
\$4.95



'TIS THE
SEASON
OF HARMONY

BOYZ II MEN SETS
WINTERFEST TO R&B

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

EVA

WHERE: Inside CocoWalk, 3105 Grand Ave., Coconut Grove

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BY LAINE DOSS



From left: Executive chef Ashley Moncada; Chef/owner Michael Beltran

1 FLEXING CULINARY MUSCLES:

Michael Beltran is best known for his New American cuisine that incorporates his Cuban roots along with his formal culinary training. So, the Mediterranean menu at his newest Miami establishment Eva initially seemed like a stretch. But considering Beltran is the chef, whose flagship restaurant, Ariete, has two Michelin stars, diners can rest assured they are in capable hands no matter the fare. To create Eva's menu, Beltran enlisted the help of executive chef Ashley Moncada to develop dishes with strong influences from Greece, Turkey and beyond. The menu took about a year and a half to conjure, says Beltran, who concedes that there were more than a dozen menus drafted before he and Moncada landed on the winning one. "Chef Ashley loves this cuisine and she understands it."

2 SHARING PLATES:

Eva's menu is divided into Dips & Breads, Garden, Meat, and Seafood but diners are encouraged to mix, match, and share. Every dish can work as a side or main, and dishes arrive at the table as they come from the kitchen, making Eva the perfect spot for a leisurely dinner with friends. The mushrooms are a perfect example: roasted mushrooms are accompanied



by mushroom hummus, chimichurri, and cracked wheat. The and provide-dish does double duty as a hearty main dish for vegetarians or a sharable side when paired with the lamb chop or octopus. Whatever you do, save room for the “seashell” pistachio Baklava for dessert.

3 PRE-GAME YOUR MEAL AT THE ADJACENT OYSTER BAR:

Adjacent to Eva is the 20-seat Oyster Bar. This

little gem is the perfect place to get your evening started. The menu is as concise as the Oyster Bar is intimate — slurp down a dozen oysters from a daily selection, or order a clam dip or lobster roll along with a gin mule or a boozy snow cone. Don’t miss the weekday happy hour where well spirits and wine are just \$9, oysters \$1.50, and beer \$6 from 4 to 7 p.m.

4 A PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

Eva is located in Coco-

Walk, at the very center of Coconut Grove. The tree-lined neighborhood is very special to chef Beltran and is home to most of his restaurant and bar concepts. “The Grove is amazing,” says Beltran. “It’s the last walking city in all of Miami.” Beltran calls Coconut Grove his home base, saying that his roots are in Miami’s “most magical neighborhood.” Walk off your meal at Eva with a stroll through the Grove to complete your evening.

5 COCKTAILS AND WINE:

For a truly immersive experience, cocktails are infused with flavors and ingredients from the Mediterranean. Mastiha, which gets its flavor from the mastic tree found in the Greek Islands, is paired with vodka, elderflower liqueur, and cucumber for the Narkisos cocktail; while the Me Joolie flavors bourbon with sweet and spicy notes from Medjool dates, cardamom bitters, and oranges. Wine Director Adrian Lopez has curated a selection of more than three dozen wines from Greece, Lebanon, Israel, Slovenia, Spain, Croatia, Italy, and Palestine.

SHORT TAKES

> Though everything on the menu is delicious, Beltran shares a few favorites that can’t be missed. Start with a crunchy red and green cabbage salad with Marcona almonds, starfruit tahini, and mint. He’s also a fan of the whole grilled chicken, served with charred green peppers, harissa yogurt, and pita bread so everyone can make their own custom pita pockets. Finally, Beltran recommends the pork schnitzel, a fried pork chop served with shaved cabbage salad, orange tahini, and grilled lemon.

