



Salt of the Earth - A Hot Discovery in Florida!

I had the wonderful opportunity of interviewing celebrity chef and Chopped judge Marc Murphy, at the Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival this past December. The festival is a full out food lover's dream where you could rub elbows with your favorite Food Network stars and attend various dinners and events (www.pbfoodwinefest.com). I could clearly see the excitement in Marc's eyes when he talked about his newest restaurant Grey Salt that had recently opened inside the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino - Tampa. A new adventure for Marc, this is his very first restaurant location outside of New York City.

Marc is owner and executive chef of Benchmarc Restaurants. He first opened Landmarc in TriBeCa in March 2004, Ditch Plains in 2005, then later added another Landmarc restaurant three times the size of the first at the Time Warner Center. In 2013, another successful endeavor, Kingside, at the Viceroy New York hotel, hit the West 57th Streets.

Why Tampa? Marc was impressed by the local flavor and community and shows his passion for featuring the local products you can only find on our Florida coast. Collaborating with long-time friend Victor Tiffany (senior vice president of hospitality for gaming operations for the Seminole Tribe of Florida), Marc brings the essence of the Mediterranean to Tampa by offering a 240-seat space for diners who seek the thrill of exotic flavors. Marc describes his establishment as a "clean palette, an oasis in the middle of the busy casino offering a tranquil place to chill with a refreshing array of dishes and, of course, a watering hole. You could expect to order fresh seafood, house made pastas, beef steak, grilled pizzas pulled straight from their wood-burning ovens, and fattoush, a middle-eastern bread salad made from toasted or fried pieces of pita bread combined with mixed greens and other vegetables, such as radishes and tomatoes. If that doesn't tickle your fancy, a full sized rotisserie offers roasted chickens inside their beautiful coal kitchen. I can't wait to sink my teeth into some succulent spicy lamb kabobs and tzatziki flatbreads while being transported to Mediterranean Seaside villages via the award-winning decor by TBD Architecture + Design Studio.

A name is not just a name; a dish, not just a dish. Marc claims his personality comes through in his foods, mostly derived from his French and Italian influences as a child. "I grew up throughout Europe – predominantly in Southern France and Italy where grey salt is a staple," said Murphy. "When I was thinking about the menu for this restaurant, I decided to incorporate the finishing salt into some of my dishes to serve as a reflection of my childhood, and when it came to think of a name, I realized that the words 'Grey Salt' felt very much like what I wanted the restaurant to feel like: calm and soothing.

Grey Salt will soon be a staple amongst Floridians and tourists alike! Boca Locals, follow me to: Grey Salt, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, 5223 N. Orient Road, Tampa, FL 33610. Call for reservation or catering: 813.627.8100

<http://www.greysalt-restaurant.com/#grey-salt-menus-section>

About Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa:

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa is the premier entertainment destination of Central Florida and the place where celebrities love to stay and play. Owned and operated by the Seminole Tribe of Florida, this electrifying casino destination is one of the largest and most successful casinos in the world and is located in Tampa, Florida, off of I-4 at North Orient Road and Hillsborough Avenue, between I-75 and I-275, about 10 minutes east of downtown Tampa. For more information, please call 866-502-PLAY.