

# CARMA

PUBLIC RELATIONS+MARKETING

MIAMI

# HAUTE LIVING

JUNE/JULY 2016



PADMA LAKSHMI

THE MODEL AND TELEVISION HOST SHOWS OFF HER WRITING  
CHOPS IN LOVE, LOSS, AND WHAT WE ATE

SETH GREENBERG

BOSTON'S HOSPITALITY KING COMES HOME

PLUS

WHAT'S NEW IN THE HAMPTONS, JENCARLOS CANELA: MIAMI'S NEW LATIN SENSATION,  
CHEF JEFF MCINNIS IS BACK IN MIAMI AT THE SHELBORNE'S SARSPARILLA CLUB

\$20.00

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL



# Southern COMFORT

JEFF MCINNIS AND JANINE BOOTH OPEN MIAMI'S  
FIRST AMERICAN DIM SUM RESTAURANT

BY HADLEY HENRIETTE • PHOTOGRAPHS NICK GARCIA

**T**OP CHEF-TESTANTS JEFF MCINNIS AND JANINE BOOTH ARE PARTNERS IN LIFE AS WELL AS BUSINESS. THE TWO MET WHEN McInnis was chef and partner at Yardbird and now co-own New York City's fried-chicken mecca Root & Bone and the brand-new Sarsaparilla Club. With Booth's Aussie heritage and McInnis' Panhandle roots, the "American dim sum" restaurant merges low-country cuisine and Asian ideas with spectacular results. The beachfront restaurant is located in the former Morimoto space at the Shelborne Wyndham Grand South Beach. With a little imagination and a lot of taste, they have preserved much of the expensive buildout, reimagining it as a homey spot with natural elements and a touch of chic.

**HL: How did you decide to do this very unique concept?**

**JB:** We love dim sum, so we figured why does it have to be Chinese? We love the service style where you can pick what you want to eat right off the carts, so for us it just made sense. It's exciting too because we don't really have any boundaries. We can go in whichever direction we want and get very experimental.

**JM:** We really wanted to do something unique and different. It's tapas, mezzas, dim sum on carts rolling around. We get to do whatever we want so it's fun for us, and it's a unique experience for the guest.

Like America, Australia is very much a melting pot with touches of Southeast Asian, Indian, so this is somewhat of a Melbourne-style dining experience.

**JB:** I think that we both get equally as excited about Southern food as we do this concept. This is a completely new and kind of interesting cuisine. But I love cooking Southern food. Modern Australian cuisine and modern American cuisine are very similar.

**HL: Do certain dishes do better in New York than Miami?**

**JM:** In New York, at Root & Bone, it's fried chicken, and here, it's also fried chicken, although the two dishes are very different. Here it's green curry fried chicken, and in New York we use dehydrated lemons to coat the chicken. They are both brined in sweet tea, though.

**HL: Everyone loves fried chicken, but you guys have gone out of the way to have a lot of vegetarian dishes.**

**JM:** Yes! Over half of the menu right now is vegetarian, and there are a ton of vegetarian items on the cart. One of our favorites is a vegan tartare with black garlic.

**HL: Do you source your ingredients locally?**

**JM:** We try. Getting produce from all over the world has such a nasty carbon footprint. It's gotten easier for chefs in Miami. We work with a company called Local Roots, who brings us great things from Florida. They hit Ocala and the Panhandle and just about every county in Florida. They deliver great stuff twice a week from their own farm and others. When you work with them you automatically get ac-

cess to over 45 different Florida farms.

**JB:** Yes, and their list is huge with really interesting proteins like rabbit, alligator as well as baby greens, bok choy, honey, unique cheeses and breads.

**JM:** We have other sources too for artisanal stuff, so we get noodles made fresh from a Chinese guy in Fort Lauderdale, fresh-made tofu, wagyu meat from the Redlands. But it's very helpful to have some companies doing things like that now. It certainly makes the food better.

**HL: We have to ask, there has been reported bad blood between you and your former boss, John Kunkel. Why is a big restaurateur worried about one of his former chefs like that?**

**JM:** There was an unhappy time, but that unhappy time goes with every single chef he works with. You saw what happened to the other chefs that worked with him and what happened with me. There's an article there, but I can't help you write it. I'm sorry. I will say I have an amazing partner right now and I have never been happier.

**HL: You seem like it. Chefs notoriously have very little personal time. Is working with your life partner the answer to chef happiness?**

**JM:** Yes.

**JB:** We literally do everything together.

**JM:** In our New York apartment, we actually put two heads in the shower so we could shower at the same time.

**JB:** We really did. Since we are on the same schedules we're like, "All right, shower time." But about five percent of the time we'll want our own space, and that's healthy, you know. We also make time for each other outside of work and try to find a balance. Especially living down here in Miami, it's easier to find balance in Miami than in hectic New York. Down here, we have blue skies and sunshine and the beach.

**JM:** Yes we do, and I have a 3-year-old daughter, who's a little water baby. She's obsessed with the pool and the beach, so we are there at least once a day enjoying the outdoors.