

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

MIAMI'S
TOP CHEF

WITH THE ADDITION OF RESTAURANT
MICHAEL SCHWARTZ, THE CHEF HAS
FOUR IRONS IN THE MIAMI FIRE

BY HADLEY HENRIETTE



Chef Michael Schwartz

AS MICHAEL SCHWARTZ'S RESTAURANT ROSTER GROWS to four with the recent openings of The Cypress Room and Restaurant Michael Schwartz, he emerges as Miami's reluctant culinary king.

Michael Schwartz is a self-taught chef who cooked at celebrated Miami locations like Nemo and Soji Sushi, before hitting the foodie zeitgeist with Michael's Genuine, which helped lead the resurgence of the Design District. Now, with Harry's Pizzeria, The Cypress Room, and a new multi-restaurant deal with sbe that starts with Restaurant Michael Schwartz at The Raleigh, the chef is not only a newly anointed Haute 100 member, but Miami's certified top chef.

What was your inspiration for Restaurant Michael Schwartz?

The Raleigh Hotel would definitely be and is the inspiration. This is *the* iconic property, and for me, it's the only property that I would come back to the beach for.

When you say come back to the beach, do you feel that that is kind of done? What is your resistance to the beach?

The beach has changed. I used to run and cook at restaurants here on the beach and left quite a long time ago. My restaurants are really situated in the Design District, and we sort of carved out a niche in that area.

Why do you think your cooking has resonated the way it has?

I don't know for sure, but I think Michael's Genuine struck a chord with the public at a time when fine dining was defined as white table cloths, and a stuffy ethos like, don't talk too loud, and don't have too much fun, or don't play loud music. The rules started to change. We cooked seasonally, which is difficult because the seasons are upside down here. And we tried to keep it simple. There is a beauty and an art to simplicity that is sometimes not simple.

What is your secret weapon in the kitchen? Something you like to pull out that you don't think everyone is doing, or maybe a combination of things?

Maybe really good olive oil and great salt. Those are key elements. But I supposed my secret ingredient probably would be restraint. That is really important in cooking.

Do you still get to cook a lot in the restaurants?

I love to cook, and it is why I am in this business so sometimes I wish I could do more of cooking. But I like what I do now. My role is to coach and innovate and try to inspire the young cooks and the chefs, which here is Danny G.

So, you can create without having to cook?

I can. I can create through them and they can execute better than I could have ever. So, yeah, I miss it, I love it, but I've been doing that a long time, and I'm comfortable in my role now.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAYLEEN GONZALEZ



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