

Cold and hungry? Miami's dining scene is sizzling.

By Necee Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

MIAMI — In early December, Governor Rick Scott announced that Florida health officials had lifted the active transmission warning regarding Zika infections in the South Beach area. That's good news for the many of us who love Miami Beach, and for the many new restaurants debuting this winter. New England foodies are sure to find something to please their palates — at a variety of price points — at these retro-hipster hangouts, upscale eateries, and family-friendly spots.

Start your food crawl at the **Bakehouse Brasserie**. Open 7 a.m.-5 p.m., the 87-seat Parisian-style café serves fresh-baked croissants, pastelitos, cookies, brownies, one of a kind cakes and enormous cinnamon rolls that you'll swear you can't finish, but you will. Daily brunch and lunch items include creative salads, omelets, oh-so-French benedicts, burgers, sandwiches (the Croque Madame is a must!) and main plates. There's live jazz on weekends, and bottomless mimosas. (808 1st St., 305-434-8249, bakehouse-southbeach.com)

For a quick bite en route to the beach, **Antico Pizza Napoletana** serves wood-fired brick oven pies (with red or white sauce) and hot and cold sammys. Enjoy with beer or wine at long communal tables, or get something to go at the streetside window. (1058 Collins Ave., 786-216-7908, centrostorico.it)

Chill out at **Lolo's Surf Cantina**, a casual eatery serving authentic Mexican beachside cuisine in the lower level of the Marriott Stanton South Beach hotel. Named after Mexican-born chef-partner Richard Ampudia's grandmother, this family-friendly, must-not-miss gem offers cantina-inspired treats such as ceviche, fresh-corn tortillas with creative fillings—including a veggie option with smoked king oyster mushrooms — grilled meats and seafood, and small plates, including swoon-worthy bone marrow chalupas. Tequilas galore adorn the bar. The house margarita is perfection. (161 Ocean Drive, 305-735-6973, www.loloscantina.com)

New York City's eatery **Upland** has landed in Miami. The casually-hip modern bistro serves California-in-



PHOTOS BY NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



Clockwise (from left): The Bakehouse Brasserie, an 87-seat Parisian-style café serves fresh-baked goods as well as lunch and brunch; the Astor Hotel's poolside terrace; whole grilled snapper at Lolo's Surf Cantina.

spired cuisine crafted by Chef Justin Smillie. Sit at comfy leather banquets, surrounded by walls lined with jars of preserved lemons and artichokes, and savor rustic-slash-sophisticated fare such as creative pizzas (pistachio with fontina cheese!), house-made pastas, and wood-fired seafood and meats. Don't pass on dessert. The Dreamsicle, blood orange sorbet with vanilla ice cream, is as magical as its name. (49 Collins Ave., 305-602-9998, www.uplandmiami.com)

At the contemporary-chic **Now & Zen**, an inventive menu by French-Vietnamese Chef Yung Ngo-Hong (formerly of Nobu and Mr. Chow) showcases Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese dishes. Sushi combos include traditional (The Hulk) with salmon and avocado, and over-the-top (N & Z) with lobster and foie gras. Entrees include grilled lamb chop with lemon-grass, halibut in banana leaf and teriyaki tuna. Snazzy craft cocktails round out the menu. Sunday's "dim sum madness" brunch offers bottomless Moet Ice. (736 1st St., 305-704-8323, www.nowandzenmiami.com)

When you just gotta have some steak, head to **LT Steak & Seafood** at the newly-transformed and expanded Betsy-South Beach. Dine alfresco on the terrace and watch the crowds parade along Ocean Drive, or in the stylish wing off the Lobby Salon. Non-carnivores can sample other tasty dishes by Chef Laurent Tourondel, such as crispy mushroom bao bun, lemon-poached lobster salad, sushi rolls, seafood ceviche, and grilled local snapper. (1440 Ocean Drive, 844-862-3157, www.thebetsyhotel.com/dining)

How about a nightcap? The boutique Art Deco-era **Astor Hotel** has rehabbed its public spaces, and the bar off the lobby — opening to a small pool in a secluded patio — is a low-key place for a tasty cocktail. Downstairs, the hotel transformed its former restaurant into the Astor Social Club, a retro-hip "Deco-swank" spot for light bites and cocktails. On weekend nights, enjoy live jazz, blues, or a DJ. (956 Washington Ave., 305-531-8081, www.hotelastor.com)

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