

TGIF

The Palm Beach Post



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Critic's pick: The county's best new restaurants in 2022

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Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

Now that we've caught our breath after the height of the 2023 winter season, we may detect a question that's so very 2022: Any new, hot restaurants I need to check out?

Well, yes! Here are the 10 biggest restaurant openings of 2022.

Blackbird Modern Asian

This stylish, Chinese-inspired restaurant became a quick hit after its October debut in one of Jupiter's vintage buildings. Thanks to its veteran chef/partner Tim Nickey, the kitchen gives modern, sometimes snazzy touches to classics. The Szechuan ribs are brought to the table beneath a smoky glass cloche and revealed tableside.

Blackbird's owners, the same trio of restaurateurs behind Papichulo Tacos, have turned the 1955-era building (formerly home to Shipwreck Bar and Grille) into a showpiece with terrace views of the Jupiter Lighthouse and the Loxahatchee River.

Blackbird: 151 N. Old Dixie Hwy, Jupiter, 561-589-7505

Ela Curry Kitchen

The team behind Palm Beach Gardens' hotspot Stage Kitchen brought a second buzz spot to the city in August. While Stage introduced a sprinkling of Indian spice on its menu of global small plates, the new Ela Curry Kitchen fully embraces the culinary traditions of chef/co-owner Pushkar Marathe's native India.

The result is a jewel box of a restaurant (in the former Coolinary Café space) that serves multi-component, thali-style trays, Indian street snacks and a tandoori chicken dish that has made regulars out of casual visitors.

Ela Curry Kitchen: 4650 Donald Ross Road, Suite 110 at the The Shops of Donald Ross Village, Palm Beach Gardens, 561-345-2196

The Butcher's Club

Acclaimed Miami-area chef and food TV star Jeremy Ford, a newly minted



Oysters on parade at Blackbird in Jupiter. ALISSA DRAGUN/PALM BEACH POST



A traditional thali tray at Ela Curry Kitchen in Palm Beach Gardens. LIBBYVISION.COM

Michelin-starred chef (for Stubborn Seed, South Beach), opened this swanky steakhouse at the PGA National Resort in January 2022. The menu offers luxe touches like caviar service and hefty "Royal Cuts" of USDA Prime Grade Certified Angus Beef (including a 50-ounce "Tomahawk Experience" for \$340). But, yes, there's more affordable options in steaks, seafood and poultry, tempting sides, sauces and steak enhancements and shareable raw bar and appetizer dishes.

With a mid-century luxe decor, the space exudes "special occasion."

The Butcher's Club: at the PGA National Resort, 400 Avenue of the Champions, Palm Beach Gardens, 561-627-4852

Honeybelle

Also at PGA National, star chef Lindsay Autry opened this charming, breakfast-through-dinner restaurant during the hectic week of the resort's Honda

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Chef Lindsay Autry's fried chicken is served at Honeybelle, her PGA National Resort restaurant. ALISSA DRAGUN/PALM BEACH POST

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Classic in February 2022. With a menu she describes as "fresh Mediterranean with a little of that Southern touch," Honeybelle offers lovely spaces for dining indoors and outdoors on the sprawling, lushly set patio.

The menu offers everything from appetizers, salads, wood-fired pizza (including gluten-free) and a variety of main plates. Fans of Autry's famous Southern fried chicken will be happy to know the menu's got them covered. Autry added a lemon-rosemary brined and fried organic half-chicken that's served with hot honey, mashed potatoes, gravy, collard green slaw and buttermilk biscuits to the menu.

Honeybelle: at the PGA National Resort, 400 Avenue of the Champions, Palm Beach Gardens, 561-627-7015

Lewis Steakhouse

The family behind the iconic Okeechobee Steakhouse opened this sister restaurant in Jupiter in May. Owner Ralph Lewis partnered with three long-time Okeechobee managers to open Lewis Steakhouse in the former Giuseppe's Italian Restaurant space on Indiantown Road.

With its dark-wood touches, leather booths and underlit bar, the place brought an instant-classic element to the strip plaza. It also brought high-quality steaks, steakhouse appetizers (colossal shrimp cocktail), sides and a popular happy hour.

The Okeechobee family of restaurants continued to expand in the fall

with the Loxahatchee opening of Lewis Prime Grill in November.

Lewis Steakhouse: 6390 W. Indian- town Road, Jupiter, 561-277-9188

AquaGrille

Wellington-raised "Top Chef" TV series alum Stephen Asprinio opened this stylish, coastal restaurant in March 2022 to instant buzz in quiet Juno Beach.

The menu adds modern touches to classics and the drinks here take their inspiration from the 90s cocktail scene (think jazzed up appletinis, tuna ceviche tostaditos with shots of kicky leche de pantera, grilled salmon with a guava-soy glaze).

AquaGrille: 14121 U.S. Highway 1, Juno Beach, 561-355-0438

El Camino WPB

What happens when a hip Delray Beach Mexican spot opens an outpost in a corporate plaza like The Square in downtown West Palm Beach? Lively happens. El Camino has been a steady hit at the shopping/dining plaza that continues to refresh itself. Not an easy task for a restaurant perched on the second floor, away from casual pedestrian traffic.

The taqueria and bar made its debut during the July 4th weekend in the former Brother Jimmy's barbecue restaurant space.

The scratch-kitchen menu here is accompanied by an extensive selection of

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