

## FLORIDA WEEKLY CUISINE



ALEX BROCK

Cactus Grille & Tequila Bar offers Tex-Mex cuisine at Donald Ross Village in Palm Beach Gardens.

### 1 CACTUS GRILLE & TEQUILA BAR

Donald Ross Village, 4650 Donald Ross Road, Suite 100, Palm Beach Gardens; 561-249-3090 or [www.thecactusgrille.com](http://www.thecactusgrille.com).

Jupiter family Jason and Beth Brown, and their children Jordan, Olivia and Cal Brown, opened Cactus Grille & Tequila Bar early this year in the space once occupied by Burger Bar. Inspired by the Browns' original Cactus Grille in Providence, Rhode Island, this restaurant offers Tex-Mex cuisine, with family recipes from the first generation Cactus Grille. It's open for dinner seven days a week, lunch on Fridays and brunch on Saturdays and Sundays.

### SCOTT'S THREE FOR

#### 2 HIVE BAKERY & CAFÉ

1603 S. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach; 561-360-2196 or [www.hivebakeryandcafe.com](http://www.hivebakeryandcafe.com). Oldtimers may remember the Hive space as the longtime location of Ambrosia, a popular pizza spot. But the building has been gutted and renovated as a dine-in and takeout restaurant that seats 68 people inside and 100 outside. The menu, by a husband-and-wife team — executive chef Jay Felton and executive pastry chef Amber Felton — is a mix of salads, sandwiches and baked goods — star of the menu is a lobster roll (\$34). Hive is open 7 a.m.-3 p.m. daily.

### 3

#### Newer places to dine

A trio worth noting

### 3 AQUAGRILLE

Loggerhead Plaza, 14121 U.S. Highway 1, Juno Beach; 561-355-0438 or [www.aquagrillejuno.com](http://www.aquagrillejuno.com).

AquaGrille, "Top Chef" star Stephen Asprinio's latest effort, offers a menu with a mix of small plates, "big salads," seafoods, and meats in a beach-house setting just north of Donald Ross Road in Juno Beach. You could go for oysters, wings and cocktails. But for dinner, think shrimp and melon salads, seared yellowfin ahi tuna with avocado, pineapple, cashews, pickled red onion, ginger-soy-lime vinaigrette, and other touches. ■

— Scott Simmons,  
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## THE DISH: Highlights from local menus

**The Dish:** Southern Chicken Biscuit  
**The Place:** Monka's Beer and Burger Bar, 921 Lake Ave., Lake Worth; 561-720-2930 or [www.monkas561.com](http://www.monkas561.com).

**The Price:** \$15.

**The Details:** Monka's is one of the best things to happen to the downtown Lake Worth Beach dining scene in recent years.

The sports bar and restaurant opened in the long vacant space that once was home to Bizarre Avenue Café.

That space boasted quirky design and an equally quirky menu whose influences spanned the globe.

Monka's sticks closer to home, specializing in Florida beef and locally produced brews.

We stopped by on a Sunday afternoon for lunch and enjoyed an order of shrimp and avocado eggrolls (\$15), loaded with bits of shrimp and avocado and accompanied by a rum glaze.

But the star of our lunch was the

Southern Chicken Biscuit, with boneless fried chicken thighs served atop lighter-than-air biscuits and topped with American cheese and smothered in a white gravy.

The chicken was perfectly seasoned — it's amazing what a little salt and pepper can do — and fried until tender and crispy.

The onion rings had the same breading as the chicken — there was just enough to cover the onion and provide a little crunch.

The space had a healthy din — Monka's was screening a Miami Dolphins game on the multiple TVs that line the dining room, but service was pleasant and efficient.

The restaurant also has happy hour specials Monday-Friday and entertainment some nights.

We'll be back. ■

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