

Chef Talk: Jaryd Hearn of Polo Grill & Bar

By Abby Weingarten, Correspondent

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Interview plus recipe

Jaryd Hearn returned to the Polo Grill & Bar in March to become the executive chef after working for two years at Alinea, a world-renowned, three-star Michelin restaurant in Chicago. Since coming back to Lakewood Ranch, Hearn has collaborated with chef/proprietor Tommy Klauber to bring a rustic, modern, locally-focused, seasonal approach to the menu.

Q: What have been some of the highlights of your career?

A: I began my restaurant career in 2008 at the age of 15. My first job was at the Grove House Grill as a busser and food runner before moving to a line cook position. During my time there, I met a chef who offered me an opportunity to work in New York. At 18, I moved to Bolton Landing. I spent a season at Lakeside Restaurant, working as a junior sous chef. This experience showed me how to handle a high-volume, fine-dining restaurant while working over 90 hours a week. After my time in New York, I returned to Bradenton to attend Keiser University for a degree in culinary arts while working at Polo Grill. In 2015, I joined the Alinea team as a chef de partie before becoming a sous chef. While with Alinea, I traveled to Dallas, Madrid, Miami and

New York before relaunching Alinea -- and maintaining its three-star Michelin rating and No. 6 world ranking.

Q: Could you tell me about your experience at the Polo Grill?

A: I started working for Polo Grill as a trainee while attending the culinary program at Keiser University. Starting as a line cook and quickly advancing to sous chef, I worked beside chefs Tommy Klauber and Andrew Thompson -- and this is where my knowledge grew tremendously. During my initial time at Polo Grill, I had the opportunity to work at Jaymie and Tommy Klauber's other establishments: Fete Catering and Pattigeorge's. In March, I rejoined Polo Grill's team as executive chef. Since then, I have strived to bring the techniques I learned from around the world to Lakewood Ranch.

Q: What moved you to become a chef?

A: Growing up in rural Georgia, I grew to love agriculture. Fruits and vegetables excite me and provoke nostalgic emotions, which inspires my love of being a chef.

Q: What are three of your signature dishes and what makes them special?

A: Risotto of sweet corn, scallops and beurre noisette is one. This dish was inspired by Florida sweet corn that is perfectly in season and sensational. We make an in-house sweet corn stock and finish the risotto with raw, juicy corn. Our Red Snapper Bouillabaisse is another. We use several modern techniques for this dish and play with textures of different flavors. There is a carrot pudding, preserved lemons and cured snapper, as well as a salad of fennel and Pernod. Our crudite is also special, not because of the preparation or manipulation of the ingredients but because of the simple purity of the ingredients. We hand-select the most beautiful produce, clean it gently and serve it buried in a vinegar ice to enhance the natural flavors.

Q: What was one of the most memorable meals you served you at Polo Grill?

A: A 12-course tasting menu for Tommy and Jaymie Klauber, and friends. I got to be more experimental than was originally allowed in the Sarasota-Manatee area. It was a very progressive and forward-thinking dinner, and the guests truly enjoyed it.

BLACK TRUFFLE BRIOCHE AND THYME-STUFFED CHICKEN

Ingredients:

For the brine:

1 whole raw chicken

2 gallons water

2 1/2 cups sugar

2 1/2 cups kosher salt

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 cup soy sauce

Method:

Combine the ingredients, except for the chicken, in a large container. Whisk until the ingredients have dissolved into the water. Submerge the chicken in the liquid and refrigerate for 24 hours.

For the stuffing:

6 1/2 ounces unsalted butter

1 loaf brioche

1 1/4 ounces black truffle (or 1 tablespoon black truffle oil)

5 sprigs fresh thyme

Salt and pepper, to taste

Method:

Allow the butter to come to room temperature. Remove the crust of the brioche and discard. Weigh 5 ounces of the cleaned brioche, combine it with the softened butter and mix it into a paste. Remove the leaves from the thyme sprigs and chop the black truffle into small pieces. Combine the brioche paste, thyme and black truffle, and season with salt and pepper. To stuff the chicken, put the stuffing in a piping bag and leave it at room temperature until the chicken is finished brining. Remove the chicken from the brine and carefully separate the skin from the flesh. Gently pipe the stuffing under the skin. Set the chicken on a roasting tray and leave it in the refrigerator uncovered overnight. To roast the chicken, allow the chicken to come to room temperature for 1 hour. Turn the oven to 350 degrees. Brush the chicken with butter, and season heavily with salt and pepper. Roast the chicken for 1 hour and 20 minutes or until it is fully cooked. Serve immediately.

Polo Grill & Bar is at 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Bradenton; 941-782-0899; pologrillandbar.com.