

INDUSTRY NEWS



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Brasserie Laurel is Ariete Hospitality Group's Newest South Florida Restaurant

JUNE 5, 2023

The most recent restaurant addition to the acclaimed Ariete Hospitality Group (AHG) portfolio of food & beverage concepts, Brasserie Laurel is a contemporary brasserie imbued with the spirit of a classic French cookery as well as chef/owner Michael Beltran's extant culinary considerations and deft understanding of classic and contemporary techniques. Here, guests will discover an upscale take on a neighborhood French boîte, a place as welcoming for raw bar and a glorious glass of wine or a sophisticated supper. Located at Miami Worldcenter in downtown Miami, Brasserie Laurel's opening both helped foment and signal a rediscover of French cooking in Miami, a city that is currently considered the national epicenter of culinary cool.

"I've always had a deep affection and respect for the flavors, techniques and passions that are the foundation of classic French cooking," says Beltran, who is arguably one of the Magic City's foremost culinary talents. So much so he is currently celebrating retaining a Michelin star for his group's namesake fine dining restaurant, Ariete, as well as a Bib Gourmand for his casual Cuban diner, Chug's. "Technique has always been essential to my cooking but with Brasserie Laurel we now have an AHG restaurant that represents the love and respect we have for French cooking itself. If Ariete is our 'New American' restaurant than Brasserie Laurel would be its Parisian sister."

The menu consists of 11 *Appetizers*, seven *Entrées* and four *Accompaniments*, all designed to deliver impressive flavors and a gourmet, gastronomic adventure. *Appetizers* oscillate between rich and savory to fresh, light and flavorful. Robust offerings include foie gras with berry gastrique, canelé and cocoa nibs; squid bourguignon with duchess potato and preserved lemon gremolata and a silky brouillade of farm eggs with black truffle and truffle jus. Lighter fare includes a salad of chicory, Bosc pear, endive, Castelfranco radicchio and Shropshire blue cheese as well as white asparagus with clams, verjus sabayon and pickled mushrooms. Any or all *Appetizers* pair well with Laurel's complimentary, house-made bread service, which is paired with infused butter and anchovies.

Delectable *Entrée* options abound but two selections stand-out. They are the whole guinea fowl, served with chanterelles and creme de champignons and the boeuf en croûte, an expertly-rendered beef Wellington with beef jus and mesclun salad. Paired with one of Laurel's *Accompaniments*, such as pommes algot or leeks, these two items are perfect to share. More composed main-plates include burger au poivre with Gruyère and caramelized onion, on brioche with pommes frites; pork chop with clam jus demi, beans and roasted petite fennel and turbot with braised morels, samphire and tarragon. *Desserts* are as satisfying as they are sublime. Arguably the not-to-be-missed selection is the crepe made tableside and served with crème anglaise, berries and foie touchon; a dish that dances elegantly between sweet and savory.

Also on offer, black forest éclair stuffed with a candy cap mushroom meringue; framboise sorbet and, naturally, a cheese plate. Dessert offerings pair perfectly with any of the by-the-glass selections from Laurel's list of cognacs, dessert wines, and absinthes.

On the topic of libations, as with any AHG concept, the bar program is as thoughtful and artfully considered as the menu. Five signature cocktails are currently on offer with flavor profiles carefully calibrated to stand alone at Happy Hour or enjoyed with food. Current perfect pours include the House Stinger (vodka or cognac, white crème de menthe) and Garco's Sharpener (gin, cognac, lemon, orange, orgeat, bitters and soda). For extra joie de vivre, the bar features an antique absinthe fountain. The wine list, overseen by AHG Wine Director Adrian Lopez, encompasses 120 bottle selections, skewing French but also including Spanish and Italian Old World style wines.

Brunch can be a luxurious three-hour affair or simple and sublime. An array of temptations abound, from caviar service with all the accoutrements, foie gras paté with cognac gelée and country bread and escargot tartine to a French omelette with goat cheese, fine herbs, crème fraîche and caviar and venison frites with béarnaise.

With seating both inside and outside, Brasserie Laurel evokes a Parisian vibe with a soupçon of Miami chic. A beautiful gold, blue and marble bar centers the restaurant, home to its value-driven and quality-oriented Happy Hour (deep discounts on beer, wines and absinthes by the glass, \$9 cocktails and a bar bites menu). The bar's gold accents echo throughout the space, including hammered gold wall sconces, pendant lights and table bases. A marble floor brings in some natural beauty, playing off the dark, polished wood tabletops and banquettes.

Overseeing the kitchen at Brasserie Laurel is Executive Chef Ashley Moncada, who transitioned to Laurel from her role as Chef de Cuisine of Ariete in Coconut Grove. A veteran of kitchens in France, Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Africa, Chef Ashley brings a global approach and an eclectic skill set gleaned from both formal kitchen work to more unusual culinary experiences, such as cooking on an African game reserve. A culinary force to be reckoned with, the diminutive chef brings passion, a deep dedication and sharp focus on excellence that will help position Brasserie Laurel as one of the finest new restaurants in Miami.

Also among AHG's newest holdings and constituting what has casually become known as "Ariete Corner" at Miami Worldcenter is Chug's Express, a ventanita style quick service window incarnation of the group's celebrated Cuban diner, Chug's in Coconut Grove and El Vecino, a tony cigar bar and lounge.

Brasserie Laurel is located at 698 NE 1st Avenue, G170 at Miami Worldcenter at the base of Miami Worldcenter's Caoba residential tower along the development's 7th Street pedestrian promenade. Hours of operation: Happy Hour, seven days a week from 5PM to 7PM; Dinner, Sunday through Thursday, 5PM to 10PM, Friday & Saturday 5PM to 11PM. Brunch is served on Sunday from 11AM to 3PM.

Dedicated to the notion that service, excellence and hospitality are the cornerstones of any successful food & beverage concept, Ariete Hospitality Group is the culinary and hospitality collective created by celebrated chef Michael Beltran and his business partner Andrew Falsetto. Under the AHG umbrella, the duo own and operate some of South Florida's most popular and award-winning food and beverage concepts. They include the group's namesake and a defining Magic City dining destination, the Michelin-starred Ariete in Coconut Grove. Also in Coconut Grove, Chug's Cuban Diner, The Taurus, The Allocation Room retail bottle shop/tasting room and AHG's event space, Nave. In addition, AHG owns/operates The ScapeGoat, a celebrated watering hole on Miami Beach, Brasserie Laurel, El Vecino cocktail lounge/cigar bar and Chug's Express in downtown Miami at Miami Worldcenter and The Gibson Room, a vibey, loungey restaurant, bar and music den in Miami. All AHG concepts strive to offer locals and visitors alike unparalleled experiences in food and beverage built upon a bedrock of pride, innovation and exploration.

Each restaurant's culinary offerings are grounded in inventive New American cuisine that combines classic techniques, global flavors and the spirit and vibrancy of Chef Beltran's Cuban-American heritage. Cocktail offerings at each outlet are unique, hand-tailored and embraces its location and offers a unique perspective on modern cocktail culture. Boasting a team of talented and passionate individuals, Ariete Hospitality Group prides itself in the ability to consistently provide thoughtfully prepared, locally-sourced and inspired dining and drink delivered with flair and style.