

WHERE THE SURE MEETS THE TURF

This combination is a classic for a reason. These restaurants have updated takes on an old-time favorite.

BY EMILY LEINFUSS | CONTRIBUTOR

Old-fashioned? Maybe. But surf and turf so perfectly describes a dish that pairs steak and seafood that it's lasted for more than half a century – and isn't going away any time soon.

Some say the festive combination made its debut at the restaurant atop the Seattle Space Needle in 1962. Others claim it first made the scene in the Boston area circa 1966. Here, on the Gulf Coast of Florida, Lakewood Ranch restaurants have no beef with authentically offering their own versions of surf and turf – even when it goes by another name.

Grove Restaurant

With Grove Restaurant's emphasis on contemporary international cuisine, Chef Greg Campbell is disinclined to use the term surf and turf. "We typically don't use catchy terms for our food, which is made with fresh seasonal ingredients in a 100 percent scratch kitchen," says the executive chef and director of operations for Grove and its sister restaurant, Pier 22.

"We describe our food simply," he explains, according to "what the center of the plate ingredients actually are."

In fact, the simplest way to dine on ingredients from the sea and the land at Grove is to order the filet Oscar. The dish includes a 6 oz., hand-cut beef tenderloin with jumbo lump blue crab, bearnaise and demi glaze with mashed potatoes and asparagus.

However, "the sky is the limit on how many different options our guests have to mix seafood and land food together for a meal," says Campbell. "The best way to incorporate the blend of the two is to order seafood as an appetizer and land food as an entrée or vice versa."

Grove Restaurant

10670 Boardwalk Loop
941-893-4321
GroveLWR.com

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Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie

There are many ways to enjoy surf and turf at Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie, says Joe Guli, CEO of its parent company, Tableside Restaurant Group.

While you won't find that exact term on the menu, except for holiday specials, Guli assures that he still uses it to refer to Libby's pairings. "We use different techniques and ingredients," he explains (as compared to a classic lobster tail and steak combo). But (surf and turf) applies to what we do."

Specifically, when diners order a "from the grill" selection, such as a filet or sirloin, it's easy to tag on an add-on choice of shrimp scampi or crab cake. Alternatively, appetizers like dynamite shrimp, or even tuna tataki will do the trick.

"From my perspective as a chef, seafood is typically sweet (to the palate) and pairs beautifully with a flavorful steak," says Guli, as the reason for surf and turf's long-lasting appeal. As for preparation, "I'm a proponent of letting the ingredients speak for themselves."

To that end, Libby's partners with Day Boat Seafood of West Palm Beach to provide same-day catch of local fish and seafood from Atlantic and Gulf waters. The restaurant is also meticulous about steak preparation. After an in-house, 40-day seasoning and aging process, "our wood grill locks in the flavors," says Guli.

Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie
 8445 Lorraine Road
 941-357-1570
 LibbysNeighborhoodBrasserie.com

FEASTING FROM LOCAL WATERS

As the saying goes, there are many fish in the sea ... but which ones come from nearby? Use this seafood primer to can ensure your next menu selection is a local.



Grouper: With its sweet flaky flavor, grouper is great grilled or blackened (which typically means it's dipped in a butter wash, coated with spices and cooked on a hot skillet to seal in the seasonings) and is a classic choice for a grouper sandwich. Fries with that?



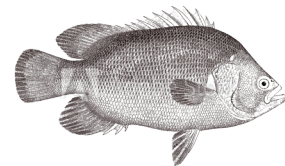
Mahi Mahi: This thick, firm fish is terrific blackened, or have it grilled in a savory fish taco.



Snapper: A lighter, flakier fish, snapper's delicate flavor is revealed when pan-seared with lemon butter sauce. Locally you'll find a few different varieties, such as mangrove, yellowtail or the most popular, red.



Kingfish: A type of migrating mackerel, seasonal supply and demand makes this sweet, steak-like fish more of a rarity on local menus: Grab it when you can.



Tripletail: This somewhat flat fish offers up a thin filet of flaky white meat, best prepared with a pan sear because of its delicate nature.



Stone crab claws: Another seasonal delight, from October to May, stone crab claws offer a more delicate, sweeter and softer meat than coldwater crabs. And, because trappers only take one claw and throw the crab back, it's a more sustainable choice. Especially considering the claw will grow back!



Blue crab: Known as Florida's other crab, blue crabs are often steamed or boiled and served up in what we call a low-country boil, along with potatoes, corn, clams, mussels, scallops and shrimp, all of which can also be found locally.



Key West shrimp: Speaking of shrimp, pink Key West shrimp are a sweeter, more tender treat compared to other shrimp, and delicious any way you like 'em.



Spiny lobster: This species of lobster, found around Key West primarily, has one important difference from its Maine brethren — no claws! But their delicate tails are every bit as delicious served steamed or grilled with a side of butter and lemon.

InkaWasi Peruvian Restaurant

The country of Peru has coastline, mountains, and jungle – making surf and turf a natural part of the food. So naturally the menu at InkaWasi has Peruvian takes on the classic pairing.

One example is surf and turf grill (found under “las parrilas del Inka” on the menu), which has tenderloin, chicken and shellfish topped with homemade antichucho sauce.

“Antichucho is made with aji panca, or chile pepper, garlic, vinegar, salt, pepper and Peruvian herbs, explains Jimmy Arias, who co-owns this Peruvian Fusion-style restaurant with his wife, Reina Pavon.

Taypa is another choice that boasts a land and sea combination with chicken, beef and shrimp. Found on the chifa section of the menu, the name means “well-served or full,” says Arias, who explains that chifa are fried rice dishes that emerged because of Chinese immigration (in the mid-1800s and starting again in 1971), when Cantonese and Peruvian flavors intermingled and formed a new, fusion cuisine.

Arias feels that the Lakewood Ranch area is ideal for InkaWasi because the community is open to trying diverse culinary options. “In this small area we find restaurants from different parts of the world and they are all well received. I am incredibly pleased when tell me they’ve visited Peru and that they know Machu Picchu and have eaten (traditional Peruvian dishes like) ceviche, causa or lomo saltado,” he says.

Inkawasi Peruvian Restaurant

10667 Boardwalk Loop
941-360-1110
InkawasiRestaurant.com



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The Capital Grille

“Surf & Turf is a very ‘retro’ term that can span from meaning old-school broiled filet (mignon) and lobster tail in shell, to any number of other combination of menu items,” explains Capital Grille Executive Chef Michael LaDuke.

Luckily, you don’t have to choose just one. “Guests can enjoy (our) renowned dry-aged steaks paired with their favorite seafood dish,” says LaDuke.

In keeping with the restaurant’s penchant for offering menu classics alongside “twists” on appetizers and sides, the combination that LaDuke most recommends is pairing one of the Capital Grille’s hand-cut, dry-aged steaks with the lobster

mac ‘n’ cheese. “Made with Havarti, mascarpone and grana Padano cheeses, with a generous serving of Maine lobster, it is the ultimate luxury side,” he says.

If mac n’ cheese isn’t your thing, there are plenty of other surf starters to meet your turf, including fresh oysters on the half shell, lobster and crab cakes and pan-fried calamari.

And if it’s takeout you want, the steak grille boxes offer a surf and turf option with 10 oz. filets and lobster tail to feed four.

The Capital Grille

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