

SAVOR



Clockwise from top left:
“Bread and butter” foie gras,
Crepe Passion Claude Troisgros,
and hamachi crudo
PHOTOS BY KRISTIN TEIG



CLASSIC WITH A TOUCH OF

whimsy

In Palm Springs, newly opened rooftop restaurant **4Saints** boasts dishes with foundational French preparation that flair with creative presentation.

WORDS BY KRISTIN SCHARKEY

A few weeks into opening 4Saints on the rooftop of Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs, Executive Chef Stephen Wambach asked his pastry department to come up with (what’s now) the Parker House Roll. The demand for bread from local clientele was so high that his team developed this crunchy-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside loaf, served with maitre d’ butter made with parsley, dill, shallots, garlic, white wine, vinegar and lemon zest.

“In the big city, that’s a big no-no, bread is viewed as something that you don’t want to do,” Wambach laughs. “But people, they would come in and be like, ‘Can we have some bread?’ It was such, not an uproar, but there was a lot of people asking for bread.”

Palm Springs knows what it wants. It’s also open to new ideas. I’ve heard the word “experimental” used to describe Wambach’s menu, but these dishes are more about their classic preparation and whimsical

presentation. (Both Wambach and Executive Sous Chef Joe Gentempo worked in France.)

“The menu is meant to reflect American food, but I worked for the French my whole life so the French technique is very much prevalent,” says Wambach, who’s worked in eight continents outside the U.S.

For dinner, start with the Highway 111, a classic cocktail made with demerara, roasted dates and bitters that is bourbon at its best. Then, move on to a different kind of “bread and butter,” Wambach’s take on a mini foie gras terrine. Each brick is marinated for 24 hours in Jurancon wine, pink salt and Thai long pepper (a dried spice), then served with slices of mini Brioche along with apples three ways – salted caramel apple puree, passionfruit-braised apples and apple confit – as well as ground cherries and poached pears. Gentempo calls this the “most classic” prepared dish on the menu, but I’d describe as the new charcuterie.



LAURE JOLIET

4Saints

Open for dinner Sunday through Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m., and Friday through Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m. The bar is open Sunday through Thursday, 5:30-11 p.m. and Friday through Saturday, 5:30 p.m. to midnight
760-392-2020
4saintspalmsprings.com

“My biggest concern coming into this whole project was, ‘Is it going to fly?’ ” Wambach says. “Are sea urchin custards going to sell? Is the foie gras going to sell? Can I put a boudin noir on a menu with wild boar? Are people going to buy that? And the answer has been yes. From what people have told me – and they’ll stop me in the lobby when they see me – is, “Thanks so much for taking a chance on this. There’s nothing like this around here.’ ”

My favorite dish of the night is the warm artichoke salad, topped with sunchoke chips and dressed with miso. Braised with fresh black truffles and white wine, sunchoke are complemented by Crosnes, or Chinese artichokes. Served in a narrow-mouthed bowl so that everything goes onto your fork, this mix is everything you want to eat in winter.

If you’ve still got room, try the lobster tortellini. Dressed with a lobster Bolognese made with San Marzano tomatoes, you essentially get an entire pound of lobster from the dish, Gentempo says. For more of a showy entrée, the kampachi is soaked in a bourbon

wrap for 24 hours before it’s crusted with chamomile, poppy seeds, ginger powder and coriander seed, and slightly grilled. Known by the chefs as “Fish in the Forest,” this dish features a beurre blanc of vinegar, fish stock and wild juniper berries, and is served with leeks, and sorrel and matsutake mushrooms.

Finish with the Crepe Passion Claude Troisgros, known as “The Mentor’s Specialty since 1982.” (Wambach traveled to Rio de Janeiro five times to work with Troisgros at Restaurant Olympe.) This classic crepe, filled with vanilla pastry cream, is served in a passion fruit caramel that’s as tart as they come.

“We’re not trying to change anything here,” Wambach concludes. “We’re trying to be our own thing here. I don’t view ourselves as game-changers. Maybe the hotel project as a whole has a bigger landscape effect on Palm Springs, but for the restaurants, I’m just doing my style of cuisine here and really nothing more than just trying to keep people happy and the restaurant busy.” 🌱

INSIDE TIPS

Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs Executive Chef Stephen Wambach shares a few highlights from rooftop restaurant **4Saints** and lobby-level eatery **Juniper Table**.

Savory Secret

Wambach says he’s contemplating a new off-the-menu item for 4Saints: a large-format dinner. “If you order this 72 hours in advance, we can have this ready for a table of eight,” he explains.

Think a 20-pound catch of the day, or porcelet porchetta. Bon appetite!

Built for Breakfast

At Juniper Table, make sure to try the bacon. “Everybody’s had that sad hotel bacon,” Wambach explains. To get away from it, his staff braises whole slabs of smoked bacon, cuts them into thick chunks and then makes them crispy with pure maple syrup and bit of spice.

Pass the Potatoes

Similarly, Wambach made it a priority to not overlook the breakfast potatoes on the menu at Juniper Table. Yukon potatoes are shredded and served Spanish style, with a romesco sauce as crispy hashbrowns. Yum!