



The firepit surrounded by towering bamboo.



The artistry of darks and lights, luxury and history in the living room.

Victoria 1883 in New Smyrna Beach, one of Florida's grand homes, is now an inn.

[ wine & dine ]

## PACK YOUR PORTMANTEAU

# VICTORIA 1883: ESCAPE INTO A GRAND EPOCH OF FLORIDA HISTORY

story by **LEIGH CORT** photos courtesy of **VICTORIA 1883**



Leigh Cort

Setting the scene for a love story isn't always easy. If you're determined to remember every moment while staying somewhere that captures your heart and imagination, Victoria 1883's

lush plantings, majestic oaks and meandering Indian River in New Smyrna Beach is an inspiring spot to land.

One could create a story about the getaway as a delicious recipe for lingering images of history. Victoria 1883's tale could be compared to a beautiful symphony of musical interludes throughout the inn's 140 years. Perhaps it's compared to a colorful canvas that plays with the artistry of transforming a lovely home into today's masterpiece of innkeeping! But is there really an inn of such supreme surprises and beauty?

New Smyrna Beach seduced visitors for centuries with its extravagant natural setting of tropical climate and grand villas like Victoria 1883 that depict the dazzling 19th century when residents and visitors delighted in the complexity of contrasts. From prehistoric Indian-shell middens dating from 800 to 1561 A.D. to massive sugarcane plantations in the 1700s, family sagas dominated history books. The Civil War, cotton plantations, timber era and grand hotels volleyed for historic prominence along with archaeological studies and the Great Depression.

Arriving on the shore of the soothing Indian River, with its banks of mangrove thickets, you can often see playful dolphins and manatees steps from the inn's circular front driveway. Its heavenly setting is nestled beneath the hundreds-of-years-old live oak trees reminding you it's possible to escape into another century, a more peaceful time where families lived their lives "in the moment."

On any day, without leaving the Victoria, one can stroll the intriguing property, walk through the arbor, sit at the firepit in giant chairs, enjoy the private dock for fishing, read volumes of American history or just watch the river and relax.

Fabiola and Peter Spooner stumbled upon this fabulous historic gem and fell in love with its legacy. They revel in the knowledge that they are only the sixth owners in its 140-year tale. Together their story is sprinkled with determination to preserve one of Florida's grand homes where guests indulge in their own dreams of romance, a special celebration, a posh wedding or just a respite from work where you vacation like royalty.

Once you've selected one of the seven exquisite rooms or suites named after family members of the original home (Eliza, Emma, Henry and more), you will be thrilled with your

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choice. But remember: you might be lured to see their other accommodations that have been impeccably designed and decorated with international artisans' furnishings and art. Their master theme is "chiaroscuro," creative plays of color in a dark/light scheme.

The Spooners noticeably selected 17 colors that explore the contrasts with woods, leathers, nature themes and wallpapers. Even the luscious bed linens (bamboo sateen) and bathrobes carry their signature "V" embroidered white on white. Take a tour of the inn as though you were visiting a renowned art gallery — everything carries forward the black-and-white theme of modernist prints and photographs, line drawings and heart-stopping masterworks.

Breakfast is another special moment at the Victoria 1883. The casual dining room welcomes you with beautiful music and one of Fabiola's culinary surprises, accompanied by fresh fruit, baked sweets and heavenly coffee. Nothing is left to chance. It's an elegant beginning to your day either chatting with other guests or taking breakfast in the garden. If you're staying on the second or third floors, you will love the private elevator that makes each day easy to navigate with your luggage or just to enjoy this fun way to not climb the grand staircase — whether visiting for an overnight or arriving with an entire wedding party of gowns, ensembles, tuxedos, slippers, hair stylists, makeup artists and boxes of accoutrement! The elevator is fabulous!



PHOTO BY LEIGH CORT  
The entrance to the Garden Dining at Riverpark Terrace

RIVERPARK TERRACE

Historic inns promise a different style of vacation that pairs perfectly with out-of-the-ordinary dining. With a surplus of options in New Smyrna Beach and surrounding towns, visitors can dip deeply into researching their palates' delight. Nearby on South Riverside Drive, a very short drive or lovely stroll from Victoria 1883, you'll find Riverpark Terrace, a magical restaurant that will immediately steal

your heart. Once you step onto the winding brick path, you'll feel the magic of intricate stonework, sculptures in the garden and the uniqueness of the property that welcomes you to dine outside or in.

Owners Mary Jane Finn and Beth Bay also fell in love with this "refuge from the stresses of life" when they purchased it from the prior owner who was a well-known local artisan of the Clay Gallery, transforming it into Riverpark Terrace in 2017. Its presence in "The Art District" couldn't be more appropriate. Their food is true culinary artistry. Friends in New York for 30-plus years, they have worked diligently, bringing Chef Andre Compres into the restaurant's spotlight with an exciting new dining experience to New Smyrna.

Riverpark Terrace contributes importantly to the town's current moniker, "foodie dining Mecca." Combining their multi-dimensional big-city talents and careers, the restaurant's popularity continues to explode as they live

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their philosophy of “keeping it fresh, keeping it local and keeping it irresistible.”

Whether selecting the most unbelievable English pea soup, tuna tataki or mozzarella frita, you must order wisely since the menu will tempt you long after you’ve dined; you’ll be counting the days until you return again for their 36-hour pork chop brined in black tea ... served with heirloom roasted carrots.

If Sunday brunch brings another dimension of a vacation, Riverpark Terrace is very popular for discerning brunchers. The short rib skillet with onions, peppers, red potatoes and sunny side-up egg is a favorite. Sinful desserts are curated from The Bake Shop as Riverpark Terrace wows locals and visitors to enjoy top quality food, craft cocktails, live music and an enchanting setting you’ll never forget.

Learn more at [riverparkterrace.com](http://riverparkterrace.com)

New Smyrna Beach could lure you to leave Victoria for another day or evening and explore boutiques, poke into art galleries, hike along wide ocean beaches, dine in a multitude of casual cafes and chef-inspired restaurants or adventure on the waterways in a kayak. The balance of history and contemporary lifestyle is delightfully appealing.



PHOTO BY LEIGH CORT  
36-hour black tea-brined pork chop from Riverpark Terrace.



PHOTO BY LEIGH CORT  
Razor clams with bay scallops and Maine lobster.

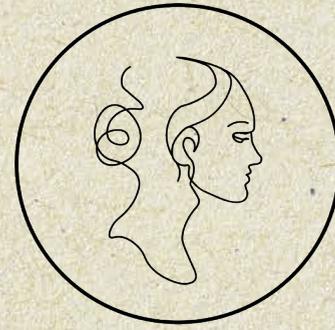
### THIRD WAVE CAFÉ

If you’re a true foodie, you’ll save your evenings to dive deeply into another dining surprise within a short drive from the Victoria 1883. It’s the do-not-miss Third Wave Café & Wine Bar. Locals know how fabulous it is — and visitors will feel like locals when they find it — hidden through a narrow canopy of age-old trees. Here, it’s an intriguing feast from morning ’til night. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in March 2024, Kathryn, Wayne and Nate Lundberg exemplify what a real

family restaurant means, when everyone plays a vital role from barista and sommelier to handyman, server, bartender or gardener.

They have poured their hearts into Third Wave Café. Family stories could become a book about farming sorghum and growing passion fruit on Maypop Farm. They have grown this little 1920s building into one of the most in-demand hot spots for folks who love the casualness of dropping in, knowing their service and food will wow them every time.

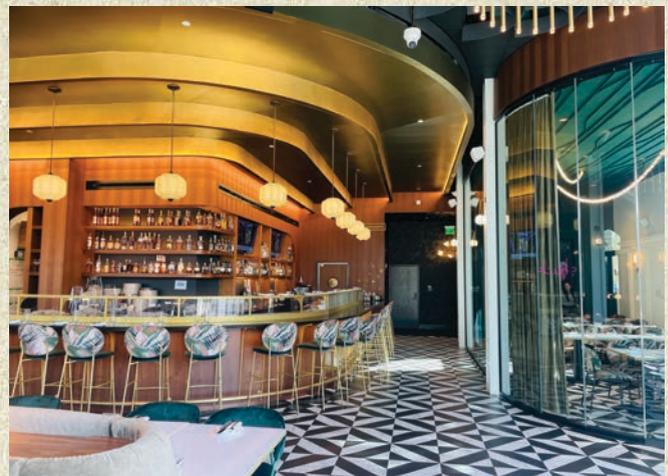
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Be prepared to applaud Chef David Moscoso's expertly outrageous cuisine. Winning the Smart Catch award of the James Beard Foundation for multiple years and receiving accolades from Wine Spectator Awards of Excellence, the awards sound showy, but here you don't need to dress for the occasion. The spotlight is on Chef's unbelievable food! His legacy came from parents who bestowed their own heritage upon him: his father's Ecuadorian roots, an artist who created bold colorful canvasses, and his mother's farming family, instilling her kindness and respect for animals and the land that nourishes.

David's style is fittingly identified as Classic Basque Fusion. His gifted passion is a tapestry of abundant portions paired with star-quality presentations. There is nothing shy about Third Wave Café's menu; Chef's powerful influences from grilling and smoking to raw flavors reflect his career of learning from international culinary mentors. His menu is a



The hidden speakeasy of Victoria 1883.

cornucopia of excitement that delivers everything it promises.

Begin with Moroccan Date Night (creamy mascarpone, Medjool dates, pecan pesto, aged balsamic, crisp baguette) or Shrimp Gambas (blackened butter-sauteed jumbo Key West pink shrimp, garlic, chilies, Calabrian oil crispy baguette). For the hearty appetite, share the pastrami Angus beef rib — bone-in, seven-day brine, smoked Angus beef, sauerkraut, marbled rye, million-island dressing, house mustard blend and datil pepper pickles! Consider the decadent New England razor clam with Nantucket Bay scallops and Maine lobster — garlicky butter and house-made

rosemary focaccia.

Chef's oak-fired pizzas, rotating features (seafood and meats) from the smoker, salads, sandwiches and crepes — there is nothing humdrum that you've experienced in the past. He's lovingly passionate about thrilling guests.

Learn more at [thirdwavensb.com](http://thirdwavensb.com).

## HIDDEN SPEAKEASY

If you feel the inclination to turn back the clock, don't fight it. Not only does Victoria 1883 open a window into the bygone style of golden-age travel, but their "speakeasy" is an opportunity to revive the luxury of old upper-class families. Put glittery chandeliers and grand staircases aside; there is everything "unintentionally" meaningful about Victoria 1883 and their secret speakeasy. Don't overlook it! This is a noteworthy historic property that hasn't yet received many international awards, but they're on the way. It's a modernist getaway, a sophisticated stay tucked inside a century of transitions. When you leave, you'll feel as if you, too, were a piece of this grand epoch of Florida history!

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