



Eddie Deleon *O.C. White's Seafood & Spirits*

“I like to make people happy with the food I create”! For nearly two decades Chef Eddie Deleon has been an important member of today's culinary history in one of the oldest coquina buildings (circa 1790) in St. Augustine at O.C. White's Seafood & Spirits. Its history is fascinating and the location, steps from the famed Bridge of Lions, couldn't be more alluring. It's hard to imagine their 240 seats in the arbor, fireplace bar room and 2nd floor dining room are served Chef's dishes from a modest, meticulously managed kitchen – handled with a small team directed by Eddie with T.L.C.

Eddie's family heritage is from Guatemala. He grew up in Boston, the most delicious all-American city and landed his first restaurant job at fifteen. He worked in the pantry preparing salads and desserts at Durgin-Park (circa 1740s), a centuries-old restaurant not unlike the culinary history of St. Augustine's Revolutionary days. Eddie's natural passion for cooking at home and bringing a smile to his mother plus his desire to be a cook inspired him to study at Newberry College Culinary School receiving his associate degree. Humble and with joy, he became a 'Junior Sous Chef' during the ensuing years at The Top of the Hub, another renowned Boston restaurant!

After a family vacation in Orlando, it was time to follow his dream, leave home and explore new culinary opportunities. St. Augustine fascinated this young, spirited chef as he became a part of Flagler College's Aramark food service – followed by restaurant management at Baptist Hospital. But restaurants were his goal when he met the White Family in 2010. From cook to front of house manager and finally executive chef – his path now for 15+ years keeps Eddie happily directing his team of seven cooks/chefs at O.C. White's Seafood & Spirits.

With his secret weapon in hand, Eddie's sauté pans are ready to hustle along with him in his 'happy kitchen' listening to 80's music and rocking along to make guests happy. “You can't leave my restaurant hungry. With Dave, my sous chef and this excellent balance of hard work and creativity, we give our food lots of love!” Known for many years as serving the award-winning recipe for Chatty's Homemade Blue Crab Cakes, the restaurant is more than just a place to eat lunch or dinner daily. Since 1992, the White family has nurtured their historic building (known by many as the Worth Mansion) as dearly as their reputation for 'seafood and spirits.'

Whether dining indoors or out, upstairs or on the open-air balcony, Eddie's most popular request is for Shrimp & Grits – blackened shrimp, cheese, bacon and scallions. In 2nd place is Shrimp Abaco Sauté – shrimp sautéed with garlic, mushrooms, diced tomatoes and artichoke hearts in a light garlic cream sauce served over pasta. His garlic isn't just garlic; it's roasted. And onions are caramelized, not just cooked. With classic ingredients taking center stage in the kitchen (cilantro, cumin, carrots, garlic and onions), Chef Deleon has earned his place in history – truly! Although the menu doesn't date back to 1790, step up to the bar one night and imagine the dramatic times in St. Augustine, nearly 250 years ago, when Florida was a sanctuary after the American Revolution. Dining out with Eddie is a combination of good food, caring service and a memorable setting!

Leigh Cort



Eddie Deleon's Crabcake with a cajun aioli, fresh garden garnish, served with extra Tender Loving Care.