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French Laundry chef Thomas Keller is finally opening his Miami restaurant. We've been waiting...



Chef Thomas Keller's first venture in South Florida is open: The Surf Club Restaurant Photo: Deborah Jones



By **Connie Ogle**
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Soon, you won't have to travel across the country to indulge in the world-famous food of Chef Thomas Keller, best known for his classic Napa Valley restaurant [The French Laundry](#). Keller is finally opening his a new restaurant in Miami, his first in Florida, and it promises to be every bit as iconic.

The [Surf Club Restaurant](#) is now scheduled to open in July at The Surf Club in Surfside, at 9101 Collins Ave. Recently revamped by Fort Partners, the space will pay tribute to the building's glamorous past, with Art Deco-inspired chandeliers, a beaded ceiling and terrazzo floors.

Martin Brudnizki Design Studio, famous for its interiors at London spots Scott's, The Ivy and Annabel's, will design the restaurant's interiors.

Keller's aim, with partner Nadim Ashi, founder of Fort Partners, is to honor the building's history with his classic Continental cuisine. The Surf Club, which opened on New Year's Eve in 1930, stretches over nine acres of beachfront and is a Mediterranean-revival style monument to leisure and luxury.

Keller, who opened The French Laundry in 1994 and Per Se in Manhattan in 2004, wants to evoke a vibe that's a homage to the glitzy Surf Club history, when Frank Sinatra and The Rat Pack threw wild parties and you could spot Liz Taylor or Gary Cooper on a beach getaway.

"What we're hoping to bring to Miami is the kind of restaurant where people can go out and celebrate," he told [The Miami Herald](#) last year. "It's going to be a tip of the hat to a time when America was the most optimistic, when the appeal in America, the pride in America, was at its peak. The glamour, the celebration, that's the kind of restaurant this will be."

This won't be another French Laundry, the three Michelin-star restaurant once named the world's best. It won't be what he calls personality-driven, where Keller steps into the kitchen nightly to impose his point of view as a chef.

So what can you expect on the menu? The classics. Beef Wellington. Herb-roasted chicken. Lobster Thermidor. Vegetable Louie. True Ribeye. Desserts will include lemon meringue tart and coconut cake.

The restaurant will be open from 5:30 p.m. – 10 p.m. daily, with a weekend brunch from noon to 2 p.m.

Illustrations of The Surf Club's interiors



Connie Ogle loves wine, books, movies, the Miami Heat and "Game of Thrones." Please don't make her eat a mango.

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