

YOUR BEST SOURCE FOR SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT & MAPS

APRIL/MAY 1999

WHERE

PUERTO RICO

SPICE IT UP!

Old San Juan's Chefs
Heat Up the Dining Scene

PUERTO RICO
CHEF
Chef Tivino

OLD SAN JUAN
THE MAKING OF HISTORY

FEEL THE MAGIC OF
THE EAST END

THE INSIDE SCOOP
SHOPS, DINING & MORE

WHERE

PUERTO RICO

Managing Editor Clidiane Aubourg

Editor Delinda Karle

Photo Editor/Photographer Robin Hill

Proofreader Jerry Abrams

Director of Design & Production

Bruce Borich

Art Director Letizia Albamonte

Advertising Artists Sean Bennett,

Maria Solorzano

Advertising Services Coordinator Yelina Camargo

Production Coordinator Maria Gutierrez

Publisher Garry Duell Jr.

Director of Sales Luis Sardinas

Account Executive James Carrey

National Advertising Sales

Eastern Sales Director Sandra Ourusoff

(212) 725-7500

Western Sales Director Shelley Fariello

(310) 893-5419

WHERE Puerto Rico Magazine

11900 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 300

Miami, FL 33181

Tel.: (305) 892-6644

Fax: (305) 892-1005

www.wheremags.com

All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part strictly prohibited. WHERE is a registered trademark of WHERE International LP, a division of Miller Publishing Group LLC, Los Angeles.

WHERE Puerto Rico is published by ABARTA Media as a franchise of WHERE International LP.

President and Chief Operating Officer

Gregory J. Corona

Group Publishers

Barry R. Senoff, Michael J. Flora

Director of Finance and

Administration Maria J. Mager

Director of Credit Operations Dean A. Churack

Director of Marketing Carol Brenner

Hotel Marketing Senior Manager Sharon Ferrer

Circulation and Fulfillment Manager

Tammy Splees

Distribution Manager Cindy J. Tepedino

WHERE makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information it publishes but cannot be held responsible for any consequences arising from errors or omissions.

WHERE International:

President Linos Kogevinas

Executive Vice President and

General Manager George Joost

Vice President National Sales Robert P. Sherry

Vice President Editorial Marq de Villiers

Vice President Art & Production Wendy Pease

WHERE Puerto Rico is pleased to be a member of The Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce

ABC membership applied for.

MPA

WHERE

in the World

SURE, THE VEHICLE OF CHOICE IN HOUSTON IS THE PICKUP TRUCK, AND sure, we think the word "all" should be recognized as the official local greeting...but Houston isn't a cow town anymore. It is, in fact, the fourth-largest city in the United States. It is one of the few cities in America that supports all of the cultural big four: opera, ballet, symphony and vibrant live theater. There are more than 7,000 restaurants in the city, with a foodie culture that is worldly and sophisticated. And Houston was, after all, the first word spoken from the surface of the moon...

WHERE Houston is the third of our editions in Texas (Dallas was first in time, followed by Fort Worth) and represents a growing WHERE presence in the southwest (there are already WHEREs in Orange County, Los Angeles, Phoenix-Scottsdale and Las Vegas, with Denver to come later this year). But of course it's a logical city for a WHERE edition. Houston, Hub City of the Third Coast, is well served by local media, but there is always a need for clear, well organized, and

credible visitor information in any city, and Houston is no exception. More than 21 million visitors showed up in the city last year, neatly split between business and leisure travelers. Houston is becoming a destination of choice for wealthy Hispanic and South American travelers. The civic bean counters discovered to their pleasure that visitors spent around \$5 billion in the market last year; the Galleria is among the highest-grossing malls in America, and as Sean Thompson put it in an editor's note in his inaugural issue last month, "You won't have to venture very far from your hotel room to appease the shopping beast within."

— Marq de Villiers,
editorial director



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GREATER HOUSTON CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

THE WHERE NETWORK

United States: Alaska & the Yukon, Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New Orleans, New York, Orange County, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix/Scottsdale, Puerto Rico, San Francisco, Seattle, Silicon Valley, St. Louis, Washington

Canada: Banff/Jasper, Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Ottawa/Hull, Toronto, Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Victoria, Winnipeg

Europe: Birmingham, Budapest, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg

Asia: Hong Kong, Singapore

¡Con Sabor!

San Juan's Chefs Heat it Up

Old San Juan's Hottest Chefs add Spicy Personality to their Flavorful Fare
By Clidiane Aubourg / Photography by Jorge Ramírez



THERE IS NO DOUBT that one of Puerto Rico's main attractions is the quantity and diversity of top-notch restaurants to be found on the island. No matter what your taste, there is sure to be an eatery that caters to your craving, be it for traditional Puerto Rican, Italian, French or even Japanese. Old San Juan in particular is known for its establishments, gaining a reputation as

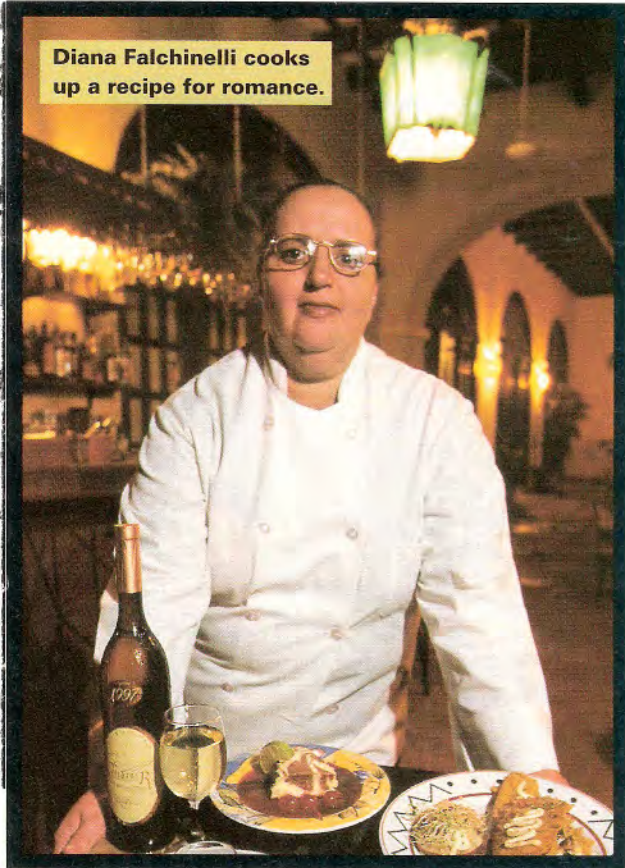
the place to go for an exceptional dining experience, including great service, wonderful ambience and, of course, incredible food. And while the maitre d', wait-staff and manager play an important (and more visible) part in making your visit unforgettable, often the true stars behind the scenes—the chefs who create those memorable dishes—use their creative talents and unique personalities to add the flavors that make you remember the meal long after you're done. The following chefs, from some of Old San Juan's best

restaurants, are just an example of the kind of gifted culinary artists you'll discover in Old San Juan. Getting to know these individuals provides a unique perspective into their creative process, and a better understanding—and appreciation—for the masterpieces they create.

THE OTHER PLACE FOR LOVE

TO SAY THE ATMOSPHERE AT LA OSTRA Cosa—which translates literally to “the oyster thing,” a delightful tribute to one

Diana Falchinelli cooks up a recipe for romance.



of its more libidinous menu items—is infatuating would be an understatement. Set in the secluded, romantic little courtyard of a historic building built around 1531, this eatery is the perfect place to dine on sumptuously sensual fare (rated by owner Alberto Lazario for its aphrodisiacal effects) with your paramour. Ancient tropical foliage shrouded in legend and home to serenading coqui frogs all add to the restaurant’s enchanting ambience. One of the driving forces behind the eatery’s success—besides its exuberantly colorful owner—is the delicious artistry of Diana Falchinelli, the unassuming master of La Ostra Cosa’s kitchen.

Shy and modest, yet passionate about her work (“Cooking is one of my great loves”), this Argentine native and Albert share a kind of yin-yang relationship that brings about much success for the two-year-old establishment. “I had worked with him about five years ago in another restaurant...when he decided to open this restaurant, he called me and asked if I would like to work with him again, and so I said yes.” While the bulk of her experience comes from a life-long love affair with cooking, her training at the Chef International School gave her the culinary edge with which to hone her craft.

The rest, as they say, is history, with the creation of a simple yet elegantly savory

menu featuring such dishes as fresh prawns grilled with garlic and herbs (to have Alberto personally teach you how to “eat one properly” is an experience in itself), fresh grilled salmon with a zesty mustard sauce (one of Diana’s favorites, because it is “as much a feast for the eyes as it is for the taste”), and the Cheese Crisps, an original dish made with fresh cheese grilled to crunchy perfection and filled with your choice of beef, chicken, seafood (the octopus is not to be missed) or vegetables. Each dish is tasted and rated by Alberto, but the real test is the approval of the patrons. “That is the most rewarding thing about cooking,” Diana enthuses. “When someone comes up to you and tells you, ‘that was good,’ it makes me

feel...very special.”

LATIN LUXE

IF YOUR TASTES RUN MORE TO THE LAVISHLY elegant than the lushly romantic, head over to the Restaurant La Galería. Located on San Justo Street, the place exudes refinement, which you sense from the moment the soft-spoken, well-mannered maitre d’ escorts you into the open, arboretum-like space. Flowering vines hanging from the central gallery and a tasteful decor done in shades of rose make you feel as if you have stepped into a private garden party. Magda Rodríguez Couto, the energetic, no-nonsense proprietor, takes great pride in La Galería, and especially in chef Jesús Evangelista.

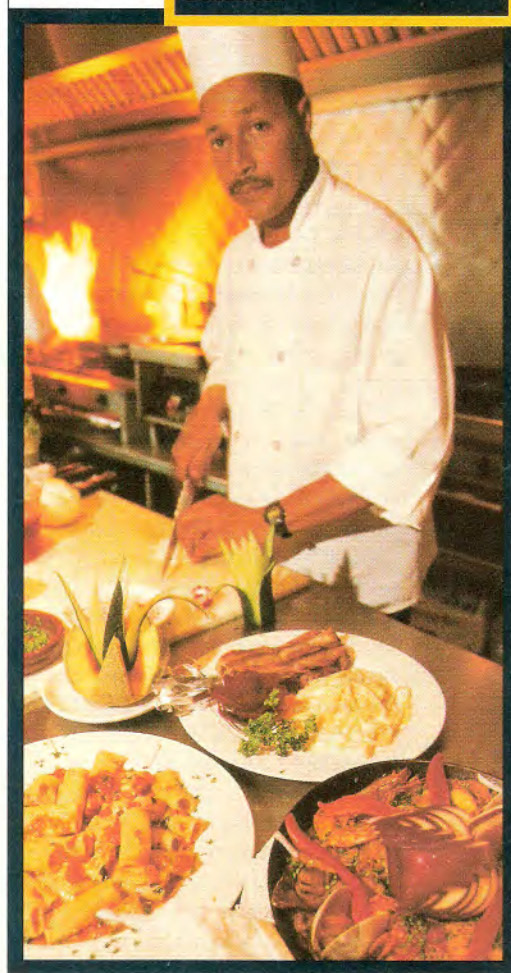
A man of few words and most at home working in his kitchen, Jesús received his training from life experience, working his way up from the helper staff in the hotels of Santo Domingo on his native island, the Dominican Republic. He gained expertise in the culinary arts along the way, eventually working in such notable resorts as the Sheraton, Concorde and Casa de Campo in the Dominican Republic before coming to Puerto Rico and working at Restaurant La Galería. Jesús considers himself just a part of the family business; four of his brothers are in the restaurant business,

and some of his earliest (and fondest) memories are of being taught to cook as a child.

“Cooking is my life,” he states simply. “I like everything about it, especially when I have created a challenging dish, and receive compliments on it from the guests. I feel I have really done my job when I serve the dish, and the plate comes back to the kitchen so clean you almost don’t have to wash it!” Among the dishes that have received such favorable reviews are the paella marina, a savory rice dish prepared to order with the freshest seafood; pasta with salmon cloaked in a delicate, creamy sauce; and veal chops with pasta, seared to tender perfection—all creations that are sure to have you following Jesús’ clean-plate policy again and again.



Jesús Evangelista continues his family tradition.





BIRD OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

ONE OF THE HOTTEST DINING SCENES TO have hit Old San Juan in recent years is the **Parrot Club**, and with good reason. A funky, bright decor in a tropical explosion of warm pinks, yellows, oranges and greens, legendary happy hours that have attracted both local and international celebrities as well as standing-room-only crowds, and an innovative yet tasty menu have made this eatery the place to see and in which to be seen—and enjoy a great meal while doing it—in Old San Juan.

Much of that success is due to the artistry of Roberto Trevino, The Parrot Club's talented young chef. Born and raised in the San Francisco area, Roberto decided to pursue a career in the culinary arts because, as he puts it jokingly, "I was a bad student at school." As a youngster he developed a passion for cooking, becoming a willing "victim of its pleasures," he says. He attended culinary school in the Bay area, where he learned "under the instruction of great chefs, a lot of nice kitchens—and many hours of suffering."

After school, he found his way to Puerto Rico by accepting a position to help

Roberto Trevino's cutting-edge cuisine makes The Parrot Club the place to be in San Juan.

open the El Conquistador hotel, and he liked the island so much he stayed. He worked at the El Conquistador for two more years, using his talents to inject some of the fresh new-style cooking techniques he had learned in San Francisco into the traditional, almost conservative cuisine that was the staple of Puerto Rican dining. "We were doing things there that had never been done before, and based on the response, I knew that a new trend [in preparing and presenting dishes], like the one I had seen happening in the [San Francisco] Bay area, was about to explode in Puerto Rico."

When he got the opportunity to head the kitchen at the Parrot Club four years ago, he was among the young maverick chefs who turned Puerto Rico's dining scene on its ear by introducing Nuevo Latino cuisine, a zesty new way of infusing traditional Latin cooking with American, Asian, African and other influences to create a kind of New World flavor—*al caliente*, of course. "Here at the Parrot Club," he states, in his intense, animated

style, "my only goal is not to necessarily take things that are already done in Latin America and say 'This is my rendition of it,' but to reinvent Latin food for the new Latin America, [with] all the different races—I myself am Mexican—cultures and influences that make Latin food so interesting. Basically I like to take what my clientele would be used to eating at Grandma's house, and give it a really funky twist."

That "twist" translates to such innovative entrées as blackened tuna in a dark rum sauce with orange essence, served with yucca mash and viandas, seared pork medallion with sweet plantain chorizo and apio mahada, or risotto con chicharones, flavored with spicy pork cracklings—dishes that appeal to not only the tourist crowds that flock to the Parrot Club but to the solid base of local customers as well. "We try to cater to our local patrons," Roberto states. "In fact, we bill ourselves as the place 'where the locals go to feel like they're on vacation.' They are just as important as the visitors; without them, our success would not have been as great as it is." Boyish modesty notwithstanding, few would argue

that as long as Roberto remains a slave to his kitchen, the Parrot Club's continued success is assured.

NEW WORLD FLAVOR WITH OLD WORLD STYLE

WITH ALL THE AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND success Chef Marisoll Hernández has received during her exceptional culinary career, it's hard to believe that it almost never came to pass. Marisoll found her calling quite by accident; she had originally planned and trained to be an interior designer. "It was a mistake," she relates. "I never cooked in my house as a teenager; my focus was on interior design." After leaving Puerto Rico for Connecticut to pursue a career in the decorative arts, she happened upon a job in a restaurant-shop for vegetarians, where she discovered her love of cooking. "It was something I tried just for the heck of it—it was something new to try. When I discovered I was good at it, I decided to see how far it would take me."


In 1985 she returned to Puerto Rico

and took a job as a Chef Trainee at the Caribe Hilton Hotel, where she stayed for three years honing her craft. She was accepted into the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in New York, where she took advantage of such opportunities as completing an externship at the Gattwick Hilton in London.

By the time she was 29 Marisoll had become the first Puerto Rican woman to be named Executive Chef in a four-star hotel, winning a number of awards in that capacity. Besides heading the kitchen, she had her own culinary television show, spoke on many radio talk shows and was a teacher and trainer to a select group of students at the Puerto Rico Culinary School. Despite her overwhelming success, Marisoll knew there was still one thing left to accomplish: to have a place of her own where she could develop her artistry her own way, by her own exacting standards.

In 1994 she was able to do just that with the opening of her restaurant, **Chef Marisoll**. Set in a romantic courtyard in the heart of the historic district of Old

San Juan, the restaurant is a beautiful, tasteful expression of her training in the decorative fields and has won the recognition and recommendation of several hotels and customers for her international cuisine and artful presentation, along with impeccable service. Among the wonderful dishes you can try there are risotto and pigeon-peas cake with langoustines sautéed with soffrito, Caribbean lobster salad with asparagus and spicy curried chicken stew served with delicately herbed rice, all presented with a beautiful, artistic flair.

"This is truly a dream come true," she enthuses. "While it is challenging to run the restaurant—for unlike working for someone else you are responsible for everything, whether it goes right or wrong—in the end it is very fulfilling, because it allows me to express myself in my own style and to keep evolving it as I go along. Cooking to me is fun. You can say in a way that having Chez Marisoll is like being able to have the freedom to play—but in a way that pleases my customers as well as myself." 

Marisoll Hernández displays design savvy in her elegant cuisine.

