

Q&A

GRILL BOSS

After working with star chefs such as Charlie Trotter and Norman Van Aken and serving as an instructor at the Florida Culinary Institute, Lisabet Summa joined Big Time Restaurant Group in 1994. She's now the corporate culinary director, responsible for the success of the group's 18 restaurants. Before the opening of her new namesake eatery, **Elisabetta's Ristorante**, on Atlantic Avenue in Delray, she found time to reflect on her life in the kitchen. (elisabettas.com) —M.S.

PBI: What's the culinary philosophy at Elisabetta's?

Summa: We're aiming for the integrity of flavors that comes through in home-style, family Italian dining. We kept some items from the Louie Bossi menu, but we've added a number of new, vegetable-focused dishes. The Italians have a word for it: *simplice*, or simple—using fresh, high-quality ingredients in an unfussy manner. It's not an easy thing to do well because you have to resist the temptation to overdo it and make it complicated.

Do you have a more personal feeling about Elisabetta's than the other Big Time restaurants?

My partners came up with the idea. It was their way of taking their hat off and thanking me for sticking by them for all those years. Now the ball's in my court, and I have to show everyone what I can do. Fortunately, I have a great team—Louie Bossi is a partner and Kevin Darr is our executive chef. He has an amazing work ethic and is very creative.

What's the best thing about being a chef?

You start each day with a clean slate, and you get to do something very gratifying: You're making wonderful food for people in the dining room who are eating, drinking, and enjoying their lives.

WHO ARE SUMMA'S GREATEST CULINARY INFLUENCES? FIND OUT AT PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM/ELISABETTAS



LIGHTER PLATES LIKE THE MIXTAS SALAD (TOP) AND THE ROMAN LUNCH (ABOVE), A PIZZA BIANCA TOPPED WITH PROSCIUTTO, BURRATA, AN ARUGULA TOMATO SALAD, AND AGED BALSAMIC, ROUND OUT THE MENU.



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ASIAN

BEG FOR MORE IZAKAYA This tiny eatery introduces Delray Beach to the concept of *izakaya*, a casual Japanese pub where tapas-style snacks are served to accompany sake. 19 S.E. 5th Ave., Delray Beach (begformoreizakaya.com) \$\$

ECHO The Asian restaurant of The Breakers offers brilliantly executed dishes from the cuisines of China, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. 230A Sunrise Ave., Palm Beach (echopalmbeach.com) \$\$\$

JOY NOODLES AND ASIAN CUISINE Order the fresh ramen at this hidden gem. 2200 S. Dixie Hwy., West Palm Beach (joynoodles.net) \$\$

KAPOW! NOODLE BAR This Asian fusion restaurant provides late-night comfort food with a French-Vietnamese flair. 519 Clematis St., West Palm Beach; 431 Plaza Real, Boca Raton (kapownoodlebar.com) \$\$

LEMONGRASS ASIAN BISTRO Presenting Creative pan-Asian plates—from sushi to noodles and curry—in sleek surrounds. 1880 Congress Ave., Boynton Beach; 420 E. Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach; 10312 Forest Hill Blvd., Suite 204, Wellington; 101 Plaza Real South, Boca Raton (lemongrassasianbistro.com) \$\$

MALAKOR THAI CAFÉ This Northwood staple offers a colorful setting to enjoy Thai classics such as curry and noodles, house favorites like green papaya salad with tempura shrimp and sticky mango rice, as well as a wide selection of sushi. 425 25th St., West Palm Beach (malakor.com) \$\$

RAMEN LAB EATERY Both the noodles and the rich, umami broth are made in-house at this funky ramen joint. 25 N.E. 2nd Ave. #114, Delray Beach; 100 N.E. 2nd St., Boca Raton (ramenlabeatery.com) \$\$

SAIKO-I SUSHI LOUNGE AND HIBACHI A sexy and stylish atmosphere gives way to crowd-pleasing hibachi, sushi rolls, and craft cocktails with an Asian twist. Don't miss the DJ spinning on Friday and Saturday nights. 5970 Southwest 18th St., Boca Raton (saikoiboca.com) \$\$

SUSHI SIMON Freshly caught fish from around the world and a playfully creative flair make this seemingly obscure oasis a must-visit for any sushi lover. 1614 S. Federal Hwy., Boynton Beach (561-731-1819) \$\$

FRENCH

BISTRO CHEZ JEAN-PIERRE The late Jean-Pierre Leverrier's restaurant is the quintessential family affair, featuring updated versions of French bistro classics. 132 N. County Road, Palm Beach (chezjean-pierre.com) \$\$\$

KATHY'S GAZEBO CAFÉ With an Old World feel, Kathy's specializes in French Continental dishes and wine pairings. 4199 N. Federal Hwy., Boca Raton (kathysgazebo.com) \$\$

LA NOUVELLE MAISON Savor plates from chef Gregory Howell and indulge in the hedonistic desserts from pastry chef Stephanie Steliga. 455 E. Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton (lnmbocaraton.com) \$\$\$



LEFT: WOOD-GRILLED SPIEDINI OF SHRIMP ABOVE: AN INSTAGRAM-WORTHY STAIRCASE IN THE COMPLETELY RENOVATED SPACE, FORMERLY OCCUPIED BY 32 EAST, LEADS TO ANOTHER DINING ROOM WITH A CHARMING TERRACE.

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JERRY RABINOWITZ