

After a complete make over the waterfront icon is still the same as it ever was and more like it always should have been.



Story and photos by Mark Shaffer (additional photos by Riann Mihiylov Photography)

When I told my sister that Plum's had undergone a major expansion and renovation, she gasped. Like hundreds – maybe thousands – of seasonal visitors, she's been a regular for most of the restaurant's 22 years. The mere thought of any sort of change to the beloved waterfront icon simply smelled of desecration. I have since assured her that nothing could be farther from the truth. Relax, Sis. They got it right. But it took a real leap of faith.

Owner Lantz Price has had his eye on the space directly behind his flagship restaurant for years. When the Shipman Gallery closed its doors late last year, he simply couldn't pass up the opportunity to make Plum's into the kind of place he'd always envisioned. In an eight-week frenzy the 143 year-old building was gutted, stripped to its bones, re-imagined and re-fitted. The result is a space that feels very much like it might have always been this way. The old



space is more airy and more. The bar is bigger and beautifully handcrafted from wood reclaimed during the renovation. The redesigned kitchen is state of the art. The new space may

open directly onto Bay Street but the Raw Bar right is right off of Bourbon Street. A tub of iced-down oysters stop passersby in their tracks, tongues lolling. Ten bucks gets you a juicy dozen on the half, shucked to order. You'll want one of the craft brews on tap to help wash 'em down. Maybe two.

The recent summer wine dinner – a celebration of locally grown food brilliantly paired with boutique Italian wines – was equal parts shakedown cruise and coming out party for the new Plum's. A couple of days later I sat down with Price and Executive Chef Will McLenagan to talk about the re-fit and the reaction to it.

Wine Dinner/Menu

Mark Shaffer: Let's start with this second annual Locally Grown Wine Dinner –

Lantz Price: You were here, right?

MS: Absolutely. I didn't see you.

LP: I was on the way – for 18 hours.

(Laughter)

(Price's flight from Boston to Atlanta was delayed due to mechanical issues and was eventually transferred to another plane. Just as he made it to Atlanta that airport was shut down because of severe weather.)



MS: You missed a hell of a meal





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