



**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT
YOUR HOMETOWN,
AND YOUR MIND STARTS TO WANDER TO
THE FOOD AND THE PLACES YOU USED TO
GO TO EAT, WHAT COMES TO MIND? IS IT
ONE OF THE FOUR-STAR AWARD WINNING
PLACES THAT HELPED GET YOUR TOWN IN A
CULINARY MAGAZINE? OR, IS IT SOMETHING
A BIT LOWER ON THE FOOD CHAIN, LIKE
THAT PECULIAR
SANDWICH
BELOVED FOR ALL TIME BY THE
DENIZENS OF YOUR CITY, BUT ALIEN
TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, OR AT
LEAST IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCURATELY
REPLICATE OUTSIDE OF ITS BORDERS.**



STREET MEET

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Written by Frank Dunne Jr. and Photography by John Brackett

LET ME EXPLAIN. I've lived in three places besides Hilton Head: New York, Detroit and Philadelphia. All three have their share of fine dining establishments (Yes. There are some pretty good restaurants in Detroit), but that doesn't interest me in the least when visiting one or the other. For instance, when in NYC the first thing on my mind is a hot-out-of-the-oven, cheese- and oil-dripping foldable slice of pizza pie. In the City of Brotherly Love, my first stop is Pat's in South Philly to have a cheesesteak thrown at me through the order window. In Motown, the objective is a coney dog from the Lafayette Coney Island.

The slang term for these gastronomic treats is street meat, owing to the fact that many of them trace their origins to a sidewalk vendor's cart, and it served as the inspiration for local restaurateur Carey Basciano's choice of the name, Street Meet, for his tavern in Port Royal Plaza.

In 12 years spent managing Harbour Town's Harbourside Café, Basciano recalls chatting with customers from around the country about the signature foods in their hometowns. "Everybody was always telling me what's the best this and what's the best that. I kept journals of this information because



what's for dinner?

I'd always wanted to do street food," said Basciano. Those journals evolved into a menu of "Sidewalk Sandwiches from America's Favorite Street Corners" when Basciano opened Street Meet three years ago with his wife, Shelby, sister, Nicole, and college roommate, Eric Strauss.

"Now hold on there just a minute!" says the guy from Chicago. "You can only get a real Italian beef sandwich in Chicago!" Yes, sir. We realize that and so does Mr. Basciano, which is why Street Meet does not attempt to recreate any dish exactly as you remember it. What you get is "street food fusion," sort of a higher quality artist's interpretation of something as simple as a hot dog. "These are our versions of this sandwich. That's where the street food fusion idea comes in," said Basciano.

What this all boils down to is: if you just want a hot dog, go to the mini-mart at the gas station; but if a "New York dog fused with a buttered and grilled New England roll and topped with the slop from our favorite regions" sounds more appealing, you need to try a Fusion Dog at Street Meet. Our man from Chicago, for example, would be likely to select the Second City, a gourmet hot dog topped with relish, onion, tomato, pickle chips, jalapenos, celery salt and cucumber. The Queen City, on the

other hand, is topped with chili sauce, cheese sauce, onion, nutmeg, paprika and cinnamon in homage to the chili that is so popular in Cincinnati.

Over on the sandwich board, which is categorized by Land, Sea and Garden, is where I found my cheesesteak, only this one is made with shaved prime rib, grilled onions and mushrooms, and melted provolone as opposed to cheap sandwich steaks and ladles of hot Cheez Whiz. Other sandwich selections are a grilled, blackened or fried Fish of the Day with lettuce, tomato and onion, or a Veggie Burger made from a blend of roasted vegetables and topped with melted Swiss cheese, lettuce, tomato and onion.

A dinner menu, served from 5-10 p.m, offers several seafood entrées including Low Country Crab Cakes, plus a slow roasted prime rib and Buffalo chicken breast.

In a nod to Basciano's hometown of Youngstown, Ohio, you will observe an



unambiguous Ohio steel town theme to the décor. The bar area's name, Floyd's Hideaway, is rooted in an old legend about a tavern near Youngstown where

meet our creative team...



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famed bank robber, Pretty Boy Floyd, is said to have had his last meal before being gunned down by FBI agents.

"I wanted to recreate a gritty American tavern look and feel," said Basciano, "the kind of place where

you'd sit down at the bar for a burger and a beer." And, you can have that burger and beer as late as 1a.m., seven days a week. "I think we're the only place on the North End serving food that late," Basciano said.

Street Meet is also the official (or unofficial) headquarters of the local Cleveland Browns Backers chapter. So island Brownies fans have a place to gather with brethren on Sunday afternoons to watch the games.

Basciano also takes Street Meet "on the street" with a hot dog cart to cater large and small events. "I thought there was a need in this area for lower-level catering, around \$10 a head," he said. You may have encountered the Street Meet cart at one of Hilton Head's many 'fests or other large events. He will also wheel it out to cater your party if this sort of fun food is appropriate.

[TAVERN TALK 101]

GINKS & SITTERS

A "Gink" was a Dutch Treater who didn't buy a round. A "Sitter" was a person who couldn't afford to buy a round. However, sitters were permitted to loiter as long as his friends bought him his drinks.

GETTING TRUSTED & THE TICK

"Getting Trusted" was being welcomed into the club and being able to drink on "Tick," which was to run a tab. "Selling on Tick" was to allow trusted customers to pay their tabs on payday.

GROWLERS

A special can for To-Go-Beer. "Rushing the Growler" was going to get beer for the home. "Can Rackets" were "Growler Fests" held in alleyways and atop tenements.

SAINT MONDAY

Also referred to as "Blue Monday." Yes, there was a time when employees were allowed to slow down or stop working to nurse hangovers.

SNIT

Small glass of foam bartenders did shots of because "No nipping while on watch" was the policy.

DANDY

A "pretty boy" - a man who cared about his personal appearance. (See "Bottles for the Dandies" in Street Meet's beer selections.)

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