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SOUTH MIAMI

'Global comfort foods' talk of TOWN

TOWN Kitchen and Bar is an informal gathering place for professionals and families alike, where customers can enjoy a quality meal and a relaxed, fun environment.

- **What:** TOWN Kitchen and Bar
- **Address:** 7301 SW 57th Ct., South Miami
- **Hours:** Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.; extended lounge hours, 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.
- **More information:** Phone-in catering and pickup available.
- **Phone:** 305-740-8118.
- **Website:** www.townkitchenbar.com.

BY ERIKA CAPEK
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Working professionals dressed in shirts and ties chat over martinis outside while families, young men and women and seniors laugh over candlelit tables.

In this dimly lit and relaxed environment, wait staff smile and mingle with the customers as though they're family while refilling glasses and delivering meals.

TOWN Kitchen and Bar, the casual South Miami restaurant at 7301 SW 57th Ct., has been serving "global comfort foods" at an "affordable price for everyone" since its opening in June 2006 by owner John Janette.

"We have a great atmosphere here," said Manager Nick Jenks. "Our employees are experienced; we offer extensive wine lists, and alcohol selections and our food is top quality. There's an overall great vibe to this place."

Jenks said people of all ages come into the restaurant. Whether someone's having their 40th anniversary or just starting off the weekend, TOWN is a popular destination.

"What we do here is try and take fun food and make it more fun," said Executive Chef Michael Altman. "We like to inform and teach our customers about the food and not just have them come in and eat because they can do that at home."

Altman said he finally came up with the perfect burger and fries after experimenting for two years.

Called The Triple Grind, the patty combines three types of selected meat -- chuck, brisket and sirloin. And for the fries, Altman used hand-cut fries and tested different blanching times at certain temperatures before arriving at the best one.

"The key to crispy fries is removing all the starch from the fries and letting them soak in ice water overnight," Altman said.

TOWN also offers a selection of favorites from pizza and sandwiches to stir-fry, roasted chicken, pan-seared tuna and filet mignon.

"We have all different kinds of cuisine," Jenks said. "Repeat customers as well as people from all over come in to eat here."

One customer in particular comes to TOWN every day for at least two meals.

"Since it opened, I've been here," said Bob Hammel, a South Miami resident. "I came and ate lunch here one day when I was in the area and it's been a love affair ever since."

Hammel has ordered everything on the menu at least once and usually chooses the Chef's Special for dinner.

"The other night, I was in here for almost four hours," Hammel said. "I'm just so comfortable at TOWN. I'm treated very well here, especially by one of my favorite servers, Leo Osorio, and the rest of the staff."

And with lunch or dinner, a variety of signature cocktails and alcohol selections are offered.

Ranging from more than 10 types of martinis, TOWN offers an assortment of vodkas, single malt scotches, blended scotch whiskeys, bourbons, tequilas, rums and beers. And the bartenders even get to make up their own cocktails.

"We're always getting new drinks," said bar manager Jeff Ambler.

"Usually people between ages 28 and 45 come to the bar for a drink or two and we get a lot of locals who also come in close to the weekend."

TOWN hosts Ladies Night on Thursdays, serving free champagne to women from 4 to 7 p.m. in addition to regular happy hours every Monday through Saturday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., meaning half-price drinks and appetizers.

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The restaurant is now open for breakfast on Saturdays and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Fresh hollandaise sauce is made from scratch and eggs are poached to order for the TOWN Benedict Bar that ranges from the classic preparation to a Florentine version with spinach and lump crabmeat. And the Bloody Mary bar is open at breakfast and unlimited mimosas are a favorite for \$15.

"This has been really well-received by the community," Jenks said.

"A lot of people have been coming in, and we even allow patrons to bring their dogs. We offer pillows, water bowls and dry snacks for our canine guests."

With all TOWN Kitchen and Bar has to offer, employees at the restaurant stick to their motto, "a neighborhood joint," by encouraging customers to make special requests and be a part of their restaurant family.

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