

Cowgirl Hospitality Group hires Chef David Cunningham as Executive Chef & Partner at Blue Mabel Restaurant and Bar

Restaurant shifts into a new gear as Chef Steven Sandy retires

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Nikki Nickerson, founder of the Cowgirl Hospitality Group (CHG) announces the hiring of Chef David Cunningham who is well known for delivering delicious dining experiences at V Seagrove and Commanders Palace. Chef Cunningham will lead as Executive Chef at the newest CHG restaurant, Blue Mabel Restaurant and Bar in Blue Mountain Beach Florida.

Blue Mabel opened in fall 2018 filling a much needed cuisine and location gap along 30-A under the guidance of Executive Chef Steven Sandy. After 22 years, Sandy has decided to retire his knives to explore his passions outside of the kitchen. Under Chef Sandy's leadership, the restaurant has received acclaimed honors such as "Best New Restaurant Emerald Coast". During the early days of Covid-19, Blue Mabel pivoted to take out for their popular brisket and roasted chicken in family-sized picnic orders. This change, along with brisk business in the summer of 2020, allowed for unprecedented growth for a second year restaurant during one of the most significant crisis periods for restaurants throughout the United States. Chef Sandy will be missed and remembered for his passionate flair in the kitchen as well as his commitment to the staff and overall organization.

"I have competing emotions about these changes for our team. I am incredibly appreciative of Chef Sandy's contribution to getting Blue Mabel launched and established" Nickerson said. "And, I am also thrilled about adding David Cunningham to our team at Blue Mabel. I met Chef Cunningham years ago when he led Commanders Palace in Destin, one of the only places that I would regularly travel off 30-A for a meal. We maintained our relationship through his successful opening and tenure at V Seagrove. He created an amazing Chef's counter and led a talented team on some of the best food I have experienced anywhere."

David Cunningham joins the CHG and Blue Mabel with experience and energy. "Over the past few years, I was able to step off the line into different leadership roles in the culinary industry" Cunningham said. "I am very excited to bring my food and passion back to 30-A. Blue Mabel fans can expect to see more of my seafood obsession on the menu, as well as a continued focus on our wood fired meats and vegetables."

Joining Chef Cunningham will be General Manager Michael McIntosh, a distinguished career hospitality veteran and a certified Sommelier. McIntosh joined Blue Mabel in the

fall of 2019. Together, this team is poised to take Blue Mabel Restaurant into an exciting next phase for the restaurant. “I am a big fan of Chef Cunningham, his leadership and food style will be a perfect fit for our customers. It will be a food and wine love-fest this fall at Blue Mabel” said McIntosh.

Beyond Chef Cunningham’s pedigree, he brings to Blue Mabel accolades for both BBQ and Seafood “Best of Show” titles, has been featured in Gourmet Magazine, and was an invited chef at the renowned James Beard House in NYC. His culinary and leadership style will bring continued momentum as well as talent to the CHG restaurant group.

About Cowgirl Hospitality Group

Cowgirl Hospitality Group offers three restaurant experiences along 30-A; Blue Mabel Restaurant and Bar, Cowgirl Kitchen Restaurant and Bar, and Cowgirl Kitchen Market, along with boutique retail store CK Feed & Supply, and catering through Southern Belle Catering Company. All focusing on casual and fun experiences while serving delicious food with an inviting and hospitable staff. Nikki Nickerson was recognized in 2019 as a James Beard Fellow for outstanding entrepreneurship with her culinary leadership and has been a restaurant operator in South Walton Florida since 2005.



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