

Josh Thomsen

Executive Chef, Eau Palm Beach

The award-winning chef and cookbook author moved from Princeton, New Jersey, to Palm Beach eight months ago for a few reasons—the weather, no state income taxes, family. But his main motivation? An offer he couldn't resist: a job at AAA Five Diamond resort Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa. As the executive chef, Thomsen oversees all of the resort's culinary operations. He has the resume for the job, having worked alongside renowned chefs Thomas Keller, Joachim Splichal and Michael Mina. The chef, who focuses on local and seasonal ingredients, recently released his own book, *Agricola Cookbook*.

What attracted you to cooking?

My love of food emanates from my dad.

What was the biggest lesson you learned starting out?

Do your best to out-work everyone if you want to get ahead.

Who are your culinary mentors?

George Mahaffey—my first hotel chef (Hotel Bel-Air); Jeff Jake—a true team leader (Lodge at Pebble Beach);

: Thomas Keller (The French Laundry);
: and Alice Waters (Chez Panisse).

What's the most underrated ingredient?

: Salt. Every single recipe has salt, but
: we never talk about how amazing it
: really is. Ninety percent of the time
: when there is a dish that is not quite
: right, an extra pinch of salt is all it
: needs to bring it to life.



FAVORITE DISH:
Crispy Local Pompano
(Serves 2)

Chef's comment: Pompano has amazing tasty white meat. Before cooking the fish, make sure that it is cleaned with the gills, innards and scales removed.

Fish Ingredients:

- 1 (2-lb.) Pompano fish
- 10 cups cooking oil
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup wondra flour
- 2 tbsp. garlic powder
- 2 tbsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 lemon, cut in half and grilled till caramelized (garnish)

Salsa Verde Ingredients:

- (makes about 1.5 cups)
- 3 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced shallots
- 1 tbsp. capers, rinsed and finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/4 cup finely chopped mint leaves
- 1/4 cup finely chopped basil leaves
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped oregano leaves
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice

Using a mortar and pestle, pound the anchovies, shallots and capers to a paste. (If you don't have a mortar, chop and mash them together with the side of a heavy knife.) Stir in the lemon zest. Stir in the chopped herbs and the olive oil, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Let the salsa sit for 30 minutes or so for the flavors to develop. Just before serving, stir in the lemon juice, then taste again and adjust the seasonings.

Heat the cooking oil to 350 degrees. Make diagonal incisions on both sides of the fish using a sharp knife. This will open the fish to absorb the seasonings. Rub the seasoned flour all over the fish. Make sure to dust inside the incisions as well. The flour will absorb the oil, preventing it from splattering. When the oil becomes hot, lower the fish into the clean oil. Fry for about 8 to 10 minutes or until the color turns golden brown and the texture becomes crisp. Remove the fish from the fryer while letting excess oil drip. Place it on a plate lined with paper towels so that the oil will be absorbed.

Mix a salad of blanched beans, shaved fennel and blood oranges with salsa verde.