

GRAND NIGHT OUT

It's a new dawn at Sunshine Café

A longtime locals' favorite has reopened on Captiva, with more outdoor seating, inviting interior décor and a staff happy to be back in action.

Alfresco dining has always been a popular choice at Sunshine Café in the island's trendy "village" area. A frontporch expansion created much-needed space without compromising the friendly feel (patrons still vie for fewer than a dozen outside tables).

Foodies will really appreciate Sunshine's inside seating, however, which is never far from the action that fills this tiny setting.

The best seats in the house might well be the sole pair at the open-kitchen bar. With a full view of chef Jose Luis' nightly orchestrations, diners at the bar indulge in a sensory smorgasbord. (We dare you to pass on dessert after watching Luis' talented kitchen staff create sweet treats all night!)

Popular dishes from the café's past remain on the menu, but diners also have lots of new options. There's wood-grilled shrimp cocktail, mussels herbanato, lamb chops and a luxurious veal chop. Daily specials normally feature two or three delish fish entrees.

Brunch at Sunshine is another new treat. The menu is available daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., which should fit the schedule of any hungry boater or sheller. Offerings include beef carpaccio benedict, lobster and asparagus frittata, and a quesadilla made with scallops and shrimp, jalapenos and an avocado cream.

Whenever you dine at Sunshine, it's always a good idea to call ahead for reservations.

If you go for dinner, plan on strolling around the corner afterward to hear live music at Keylime Bistro or R.C. Otters, part of proprietor Sandy Stilwell's same family of restaurants.

And if you can't make the drive to beautiful Captiva, look no farther than south Fort Myers' own Sunshine Seafood Café & Lounge, the latest jewel in Stilwell's crown. The mainland location at Winkler and Gladiolus is a bit larger and has an extensive menu, full bar, live entertainment on the weekend and a cheery, expanded dining room that is still quite cozy.



— LIBBY BOREN McMILLAN

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