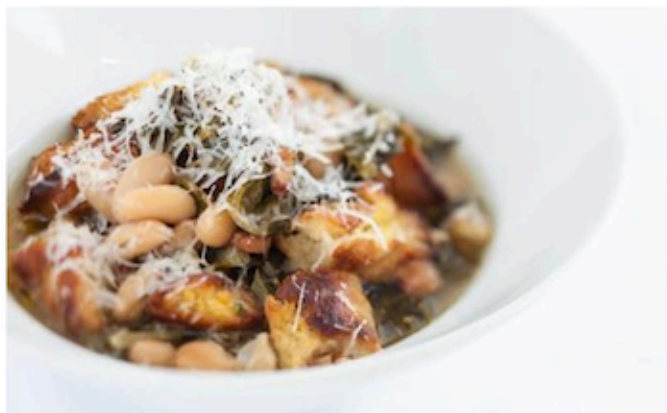


First Look

Dena Marino's MC Kitchen brings rustic Italian eats to the Design District

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• MC Kitchen
4141 NE 2 Ave, Miami
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12/14/2012

The goods: Aspen, Colo., chef Dena Marino partnered with hospitality vet Brandy Coleta to transform the former Fratelli Lyon space into MC Kitchen, an upscale tavern for

rustic Italian eats.

Ambience: The warm space is outfitted with Brazilian wood walls, delicate butterfly mobiles, a polished marble bar, tufted banquettes, bare-bulb chandeliers, a 12-seat chef's bar and a wood-burning oven.

The grub: Modern Italian with a focus on seasonal ingredients. Prices skew to the well-heeled: starters \$10-\$24 and mains \$15-\$36.

Crusty Italian bread precedes starters like artichoke heart bruschetta, a thick slice of toast topped with poached egg, shaved truffles and creamy parmigiano fonduta; piadena, house-made, herb-rubbed pizza dough; head-on langostines with creamy polenta and serrano chile; and squash-filled burrata. Marino's nine hand-rolled pastas include pear fiocchi and pumpkin tortelloni with braised Florida rabbit ragu, Tuscan cabbage, house-made ricotta and balsamic drizzle. Carnivores can sate on bresaola, duck prosciutto and a heritage breed Poulet Rouge and munch on sides like wild mushrooms, Meyer lemon mashed potatoes and prosciutto-wrapped asparagus.

Desserts include a restrained tiramisu cheesecake, coconut pana cotta and a classic affogato.

Verdict: An elegant spot for rustic Italian eats.

