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Spell Restaurant Group offers 30A area five dining options

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By Laura Holloway

Anyone who has had the Spicy Salt and Pepper Shrimp from [George's at Alys Beach](#) knows why patrons return again and again. Diners who sample the freshly made guacamole from [La Cocina](#) or the Smokehouse Scramble from [Grits & Grind](#) quickly add these fares to their list of favorite dishes. And guests who taste the Pasta Del Mar from [La Crema](#) or the Lobster Baked Oysters from [Edward's Fine Food & Wine](#) can easily understand what it means to taste a little bit of heaven.



Christy Spell Terry



Edward's Fine Food & Wine in Rosemary Beach offers the unbeatable partnership of a "vibrant and entertaining setting" and a killer menu.

But many don't realize that these celebrated eateries are part of one family, or how that family continues to deliver quality and taste in each of its restaurant offerings. Spell Restaurant Group, co-owned by Rick Spell ar his daughter Christy Spell Terry, have created an empire of food delight, and anyone lucky enough to dine at one of these fine food establishments is truly lucky enough.

It all started for the Spells in 2004 in Memphis, when Rick and Christy first partnered to purchase Brookhaver Pub & Grill. Each had a strong business background (Rick as a managing director at Raymond James and Christy as a corporate accountant at Shelby Group International), but once the restaurant bug had bitten, there was no turning back.



George's at Alys Beach gives diners two menus: Behave and Misbehave.

Christy went all-in, leaving the "day job" behind in 2011 to pursue the restaurant business full time, and they set their sights on the 30A restaurant scene, recognizing the uniqueness of the area and its ability to attract talented chefs and true foodies.

"Being in a small, rural part of northwest Florida, it would be easy for one to dismiss 30A and its food scene, but this is certainly not the case!" she explained. "From Destin to PCB, this 24-mile scenic corridor is teeming with quality restaurants serving some of the most inventive food you will find in the Southeast.



Grits and Grind in Seacrest Beach is open for the earlier riser and breakfast lover.

"The chefs who work on 30A know that their customers demand quality food using only the freshest ingredients possible. This is the cornerstone at each of our restaurants, and we believe that it helps to make this area truly special."

Their first 30A restaurant purchase happened in 2015 with George's at Alys Beach, followed by Saltwater Grill in Panama City. The 30A growth continued with the acquisition of La Cocina, followed by La Crema Tapas & Chocolate in Rosemary Beach in 2016. But 2017 saw the biggest step for the duo when they opened their first restaurant from concept to completion: Grits & Grind in Seacrest Beach. The Spells purchased Edward's Fine Food & Wine in 2017, and since then have been working to renovate and revamp several of these locations.

Speaking of revamping, George's at Alys Beach just completed a window-filled addition to their location.

"It gives us better ability to give our guests better temperature conditions, but still have access to outside air if the weather is appropriate," Christy said.



La Cocina features unique takes on classic Latin dishes, each made from scratch.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

What contributes to their success in setting Spell Restaurant Group apart?

"We are a father-daughter team who treats our team members as well as our guests: like family. We are blessed to work with so much talent and love watching them grow and learn every day," she admitted. "It's important to us to listen and learn from our team as well and give them the best tools we can for them to do their jobs well."

With each restaurant having its own menu, atmosphere and vibe, the Spells know not only the value of putting the right people in charge of each, but also assuring that the teams share a similar work ethic, love of the food, and appreciation for the guests.

The Spells have continued to build each restaurant to greatness because they live by a very simple motto.

"People make the difference," Christy said. "We are very proud of the unique and diverse staffs who work with us, and they are truly what makes each of our restaurants special. By hiring good people who care about the food they prepare and the service they provide, we know that visitors to and locals of 30A will leave our restaurants happy. We also sell fun and strive to give our guests a unique experience every time they walk into one of our restaurants."

MEET THE RESTAURANTS

Each of the Spell Group restaurants delivers its own flavor and personality. La Cocina is described as a "Latin-inspired restaurant with a coastal twist" and features unique takes on classic Latin dishes, each made from scratch using fresh ingredients, many locally sourced when available. Christy recommends the Ribeye Asado (barrel cut ribeye, red chimichurri, green chili whipped potatoes, cotija cheese, and roasted baby carrots).

George's at Alys Beach has been well-loved in the area since opening its doors, and their dishes fall into two categories: Behave and Misbehave, meaning there is something for the organic, health-conscious diner as well as the diner looking for traditional beach food in all its fried glory.



La Crema Tapas & Chocolate in Rosemary Beach serves a mix of sweet and savory.

La Crema Tapas & Chocolate in Rosemary Beach offers a truly unique experience, with a focus on not only delectable entrees like Christy's favorite, the Seafood Paella (lobster tail, shrimp, scallops, mussels, red onion, piquillo peppers, and chorizo with saffron rice), but also on exquisite chocolate experiences and flavorful desserts, as well as an extensive wine menu. What's not to love?

Then, for the earlier riser and breakfast lovers, Grits and Grind in Seacrest Beach packs a powerful morning punch with sumptuous choices like "The Next Morning Benedict," a biscuit with chopped sausage and gravy, topped with two over medium eggs, hollandaise, diced tomato and green onion.

Finally, Edward's Fine Food & Wine in Rosemary Beach sets the scene for a memorable night out with the unbeatable partnership of a "vibrant and entertaining setting" and a killer menu. Christy's favorite, Snake River Braised Pork Shank features a sorghum-mustard glaze, butternut squash puree, and bacon braised kale. The rest of the colorful, mouthwatering menu makes clear why every table at Edward's is typically taken.

The Spells have clearly mastered the art of the dish, providing one-of-a-kind dining experiences that keep their patrons coming back again and again.

To find out more about the Spell Restaurant Group and any of their establishments, visit spellrestaurantgroup.com.