

MISSISSIPPI

BY CAROLINE EUBANKS

➔ **RADISH**
Long Beach

In August 2022, William Rester and chef Lauren Joffrion opened Radish on the state's Gulf Coast, celebrating the best of the region's ingredients. The name comes from the Long Beach radish, a variety that helped earn the town the title of Radish Capital of the World. Residents of the Northeast enjoyed them as a bar snack before Prohibition led to a decline in popularity.

Now the humble radish is one of many seasonal and local ingredients to go into the restaurant's menu. The colorful and beautifully plated dishes include rotating pasta and fresh catch items such as Gulf shrimp scampi and cornbread-crusted redfish, and staples like the pork chop with molasses-glazed collard greens atop grits from Grit Girl in Oxford.

"We had spent all these years before we had kids going around and finding really great places to eat in New Orleans and Mobile and different places and taking things from each of those," Rester says. "So the idea for me when I got started would be this collection of memories because I would come home and try to re-create things."

The pair had opened a small coffee shop / breakfast sandwich place right before Covid-19. "I have impeccable timing," Rester says with a laugh. During the pandemic, they shifted and became a food truck and catered before the future space for Radish opened up on Long Beach's well-traveled Jeff Davis Avenue, just four blocks from the beach. "It was one of those locations where it's on the frontage of a downtown area that you can't miss driving by, with a huge traffic count," says Rester.

With 31 seats inside, including the bar, the restaurant isn't big on space, but that's part of the appeal: When you're sitting down to eat, you're going to get to know the people next to you. "It's a very familiar 31," Rester says. "We've had some really cool relationships develop between diners that will all come as a group now because they've gotten to know each other just by sitting together in the restaurant." *@radishlongbeach*

CAN'T MISS AT RADISH

MISSISSIPPI MULE

This refreshing sipper is made with Mississippi's Cat-head honeysuckle vodka, ginger beer, lime, and mint.

CRAB BEIGNETS

Lump crab meat fills these fried nuggets, which are set atop a beurre blanc and topped with a zippy pepper jelly.

GULF FISH ENTREE

The daily catch comes in fresh and is served with fried grits, green tomato salsa, and a lemon beurre blanc.



Pops of color inside Radish



Roasted radishes with whipped goat cheese and chimichurri



Catch of the day with fried grits

ROASTED RADISHES WITH WHIPPED GOAT CHEESE AND CHIMICHURRI

SERVES 4 TO 6

For the whipped goat cheese:

1 cup goat cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup sour cream, at room temperature
¼ cup local honey
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon roasted garlic purée
Salt and pepper to taste

For the roasted radishes:

1-2 pounds radishes
½ cup garlic oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
Salt and pepper

For the chimichurri:

½ cup chopped parsley, finely minced
½ cup chopped cilantro, finely minced
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 small red chile, minced and seeded
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon coarse salt

To serve:

Raw radish slices
Mix of fresh herbs
Grilled or toasted bread

1. Make the whipped goat cheese: Combine all ingredients in a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Whisk on medium-high for about 3 minutes. Set aside.

2. Make the roasted radishes: Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Slice radishes in half and toss with garlic oil, herbs, and seasonings. Arrange evenly on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes.

3. Make the chimichurri: In a bowl, combine herbs, oil, vinegar, garlic, chili, and seasonings. (If you prefer a smoother texture, combine in a blender.)

4. To serve, place whipped goat cheese in a pastry bag. Pipe onto serving plates in a circle. In center of circle, place a few roasted radish halves. Top with chimichurri, fresh radish slices, and fresh herbs. Serve with grilled or toasted bread.

WILLIAM RESTER. OPPOSITE: LAUREN JOFFRIAN



Sambou's
Africa Kitchen

RESTAURANTS WORTH WATCHING

PULITO OSTERIA, JACKSON

The menu rotates several times a week, but you can expect Italian staples paired with surprises like Sicilian ceviche at this refined concept from Jackson native and executive chef Chaz Lindsay. @pulito_osteria

QUACKS, OXFORD

This gourmet hot dog and bar is slated to open mid-February, with creations like the Little Italy dog, a riff on pizza, and the deli dog, a version of the reuben. @quacksdogs

→ **SAMBOU'S AFRICA KITCHEN** Jackson

This family-run restaurant brings under-represented Gambian cuisine to the capital city. The spacious dining room is filled with photos and African jewelry. Here you can sample dishes like oxtail, jollof rice, and fufu, a breadlike side made with yuca and used to soak up sauces. @sambouafricankitchen

→ **ETHEL MAE'S** Tupelo

Named for the owner's mother, Ethel Mae's serves up chef Reginald Scott's neo-soul food in a welcoming environment. The menu has all of the favorites you'd expect from a family gathering, including fried chicken and wings, alongside seafood dishes like crawfish étouffée and shrimp and grits. @ethelmaestupelo



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF SAMBOU'S AFRICAN KITCHEN; ALEXIS OANH LE. OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF GOOD DAY CAFE

→ **GOOD DAY CAFE** Oxford

The alley alongside the Lyric Theatre has welcomed a number of businesses over the years, but the latest is Good Day Cafe. The walk-up restaurant opened in fall 2022 with 14 bar seats. The menu offers burgers and sandwiches as well as weekly pop-ups including, most recently, Sri Lankan food. @good_day_oxford



Good Day Cafe

→ **ROBERTS PLACE CAFÉ** Pass Christian

Dorothy Roberts, sister of Robin Roberts on ABC's *Good Morning America*, opened her dream breakfast joint in January 2022 in a charming 1930s cottage in downtown Pass Christian. The menu includes some of the family's favorite dishes and recipes, with interesting stories behind every plate, including the rosemary baked chicken. @robertsplacecafe233

→ **ENZO OSTERIA** Ridgeland

Restaurant industry veteran chef Robert St. John opened this Italian spot with a menu of classic Italian favorites, like pizza and pasta along with aperol spritz and negroni cocktails. The pasta stracciacatta was inspired by St. John's travels in Italy. Come for the live music on weekends. @enzo_osteria

→ **BACCHUS ON THE BEACH** Pass Christian

Gulf Coast restaurateur Jourdan Nicaud took over ownership of the Marina Cantina in 2022 and completely transformed the space into the first Bacchus on the Beach. The restaurant highlights Gulf seafood, including redfish, oysters, and blue crab, and has views of the water. Outdoor dining is best for watching the sunset. @bacchusonthebeach

➔ **SLEEPY CACTUS**
Oxford

Located in a converted gas station (previously home to Oxford Canteen), Sleepy Cactus was opened in May 2022 by Alexandra “Ale” Santiago, one of the canteen’s former cooks. Start the day with Texas-style breakfast tacos on homemade tortillas or the “gas station breakfast” biscuit casserole, with horchata cold brew. The specials and desserts also shine. [@sleepy.cactus.ms](https://sleepy.cactus.ms)

STEPHANIE FISHER