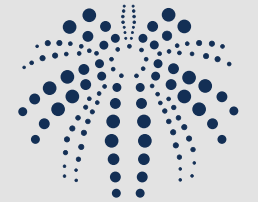


# Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach's Steelpan Restaurant

PR Highlights



STEELPAN

TO DATE, THE PR AGENCY HAS GARNERED MORE THAN

**111,972,249**

Media Impressions

**121**

Print, Digital and Broadcast Placements

These Steelpan placements have  
resulted in the ad value equivalency of **\$1,071,370.42.**

# Key Outlets

**VENICE**  
FORT LAUDERDALE'S MAGAZINE

**SOUTH FLORIDA  
BUSINESS JOURNAL**



**SOUTH FLORIDA  
SunSentinel**

**SOUTH FLORIDA  
THE CW**

**NT**  
BROWARD PALM BEACH  
**New Times**

**MEDIA GROUP**  
*lifestyle*

**FORT  
LAUDERDALE** magazine®

**E**  
**MIAMI**

**boca**  
magazine

*Gold Coast's*

Fort Lauderdale *Daily*

# PRINT & ONLINE PLACEMENTS





**WHAT'S IN A NAME**  
 The outdoor patio seating and full bar at Steelpan is part of the draw, along with live music every Wednesday and Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., and every Saturday from 6 to 9 p.m. As an ode to the restaurant's name, musicians are known to play the steelpan, the instrument made from an industrial drum that originated in Trinidad and Tobago.  
 —Olivia Bibbee

**Five**  
 Things to Know About:  
**Steelpan**  
 WHERE: 999 N. FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH BLVD., FORT LAUDERDALE  
 PHONE: 954.302.5252  
 WEBSITE: STEELPANFTL.COM

**1** **TASTE OF THE ISLANDS:** The recent renovations at Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach didn't end with updated spaces like the pool area and fitness center. The resort also added Steelpan, a new Caribbean-American destination that's heavy on beachfront ambience and island-inspired spins on South Florida menu favorites, the latter courtesy of chef Kevin Baker, a native of St. Thomas, Jamaica and former sous chef at The Foundry in Pompano Beach.

**2** **FLAVOR FUSIONS:** Baker pairs herbs and spices from the islands with fresh local ingredients in starters, light bites and entrees throughout the menu. "[The dishes are] from my head and my heart—and my grandmother back home," he says of offerings like Calypso shrimp pasta with sautéed shrimp, shallots, tomatoes and spinach in a white garlic sauce; or the coconut shell ceviche with shrimp, fresh fish, coco malanga crispy chips and sea salt.



**3** **DRINK UP:** Steelpan has a full menu of handcrafted cocktails, including the Coco Loco with Mount Gay rum, cream of coconut, pineapple and orange juice; and the Steel Punch with Zacapa aged rum, fresh lime juice, simple syrup and bitters. The daily happy hour (4 to 7 p.m.) features 40-percent discounts on cocktails, beer, and wine by the glass; and \$7 items on the Beach Bites menu.

**4** **SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE:** Baker notes that the trend toward healthy dining influenced the menu at Steelpan. To that end, the restaurant offers vegan and vegetarian options, including yucca fries, the vegetarian Impossible Burger, and a whole snapper wrapped in banana leaf and served with mixed potatoes and quick-pickled vegetables.



**5** **WINGING IT:** Nowhere are Baker's hometown influences more evident than in the Caribbean jerk wings, which are marinated for eight hours in rice wine vinegar, soy sauce and dark brown sugar before being roasted enough to give them some crispiness. From there, the wings are lightly tossed in jerk barbecue sauce and finished on the grill. They are served with a papaya and picama slaw with a side of sweet pobano crema.



## SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

**KnoNap stands out**  
Developer of napkins that detects 'date rape' drugs wins showcase  
EMON REISER, 4



## Women leading the way

Meet five female innovators helping shape the region's business landscape

COVER STORY | PAGES 8-10

**THE LIST**  
WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES 11



**THE VIEWFINDER**  
A LOOK AT STEELPAN ON THE

**THE LIST**

12



### A look at Steelpan on the beach

Steelpan, a Caribbean American fusion restaurant and bar led by executive chef Kevin Baker, is now open at the Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach hotel. The 115-seat open air cafe features a breakfast bar, and also serves lunch, dinner and hand-crafted cocktails. A private dining room is also available.



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2019 \$5

# LODGING

## 50

### MANAGEMENT COMPANIES PROFILED

**SMART ADVICE FROM EXPERIENCED MANAGERS**

**USE CAUTION**  
MINIMIZING SAFETY RISKS

**TAKE CARE**  
THE BENEFITS OF A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

**FAST FACTS**

**Title:** Chef, Steelpan restaurant, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach

**Time with company:** Six months

**First hotel industry job:** McKinley Chalet Resort, Alaska

**Hometown:** St. Thomas, Jamaica

**Hotel must-haves:** Sharp knives and passionate associates

**Best advice he ever got:** There is no "I" in "team," but there is in "win." Find what you love to do and you'll never have to work again.

**How did you start your career in hotel restaurants? How did that path lead to the Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach?**

In the beginning of my career, I helped open two restaurants and worked at several hotels, including The Ritz-Carlton, Hawks Cay Resort, and Cheeca Lodge & Spa.

## Checking in Kevin Baker



**KEVIN BAKER'S FASCINATION WITH FOOD** goes back to his childhood in St. Thomas, Jamaica, when he would watch his parents cook. As he got older, Baker found that different dishes and tastes could affect people's moods, which inspired him to pursue a career in the culinary arts. As a chef, Baker has traveled all over the world, working in and opening several hotels and leading private restaurants. Baker's latest endeavor is opening the Steelpan restaurant at the Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach. He recently spoke with *LODGING* about the breadth of his culinary experience, and all of the details that play into opening a hotel restaurant.

I have also worked at private restaurants, the most recent being The Foundry in Pompano Beach, which is a busy, fast-casual, contemporary American restaurant. Throughout the years, my travels have taken me from Jamaica to Alaska, from New York to several countries in Europe, and now back to my roots—cooking island-inspired cuisine in a restaurant practically on the beach. My skills are best utilized in the hotel industry, and I enjoy opening new operations.

**What is your approach to the Steelpan menu?**

My approach consists of a fusion of Caribbean and American cuisines. In South Florida, you're able to easily source authentic products from neighboring countries. On a higher level, I have incorporated health-centric trends such as gluten-free and vegetarian choices, in addition to nutrient-rich and lighter options to create an overall well-balanced menu. At Steelpan, freshness is paramount and consistent.

**Have you encountered any challenges opening the restaurant?**

Storage and staffing always seem to be challenges in this industry. As the restaurant will be open day and night, we must constantly store a substantial amount of everyday items and ingredients. And construction delays pushed back our target opening date, so it was a challenge to keep my staff focused.

**Are there any trends you're seeing in the hotel restaurant space?**

There has been a return to casual and fast-casual eating with a modern spin. Cooking is now focused on telling a story

and putting a personal twist on the ingredients and cooking methods being used. Guests are also following patterns—making light and healthy choices at breakfast, but choosing more indulgent items on the weekend.

**What is your favorite part of working in a hotel restaurant?**

Working in a hotel restaurant allows you to see repeat guests and better serve them and their needs. As an example, if a guest is staying at the hotel for a week and has a special dietary need, I love to see their happy, smiling faces when I present them with a special menu designed with them in mind. This personalization creates a guest for life.

BOTTOM LINE

48

Chef Baker created 48 menu items for the Steelpan restaurant at the Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach.





It was the tantalizing aroma of curry goat paired with jasmine rice that ignited chef Kevin Baker's passion for food early on.

"Both my parents are very good cooks," the Jamaican-born chef says. "People in the neighborhood would always come to enjoy their meals."

He smiles, recalling how the culinary gift went further down the generational line, when the house would fill up with eager guests hoping for a sliver of his grandmother Cynthia's sweet potato pudding, a treasured Jamaican dessert. These Caribbean flavors that focus heavily on tropical fruits and seafood molded and guided Baker through his trajectory as a chef, landing him most recently at the newly opened Caribbean-American eatery Steelpan.

Inside Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach, Steelpan—named after the cooking vessel and the drums originating from Trinidad and Tobago that serve as the soul of Caribbean sound—aims to marry island flavors with Florida style. Strategically perched on the corner of Broward

Boulevard and A1A, the restaurant, which seats commanding views of Fort Lauderdale Beach, per opt to enjoy their meal alfresco on the patio. The eatery, with gray and white colors accented by contemporary indigo dishes and napkins chosen to harmonize with the ocean, Baker, who prides himself on his creativity, is rooted in his Jamaican upbringing while also his style. Take, for example, one of the restaurant's whole baked snapper. Popular in the Caribbean deep-fried. At Steelpan, the presentation is a bit "instead of making it a whole snapper deconstructed the fish, and it's roasted," Baker to fight it to enjoy it."

Indeed, those who may be put off by no bothersome spine and bones will appreciate a pre the delicate flavor worry-free. The snapper arrives leaf with mixed potatoes and pickled vegetables.

The menu brims with dishes incorporating fruit and South Florida. Starters like the Caribbean papaya and jicama slaw, and coconut shell ceviche

combination of shrimp and fish nestled inside a coconut topped with crispy malanga and plantain chips. Guava-braised short ribs, which marry the fragrant fruit with the heady, fall-off-the-bone beef tenderness, rest atop Peruvian garlic mashed potatoes, while the mahi sandwich arrives with pimento dust and mango salsa.

"The Caribbean carries itself with the naturalness of tropical fruits and the ocean," Baker says.

When asked to divulge his favorite dish, Baker remains as friendly and charismatic as ever, announcing he loves them all. "Every dish has a special meaning," he says, referencing the Blue Mountain coffee-dusted burrata served with grilled pineapple bread, which pays tribute to Jamaica's tallest mountain.

The jerk chicken and dumplings, an elevated rendition of the island's comfort food, has been a bestseller as well. The chef presents the jerk-spiced roasted chicken breast with curry pineapple slith and creamy potato dumplings that are lightly bread and served on the



CHEF KEVIN BAKER WEIGS TRADITIONAL Dishes FROM HIS NATIVE JAMAICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITH A MODERN MAINLAND TECHNIQUES.

# ISLAND FLAVOR

Chef Kevin Baker brings a Caribbean flair to South Florida cuisine with Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach's Steelpan restaurant.

BY ALONA ABBADY MARTINEZ PHOTOGRAPHY BY FELIPE CUEVAS





## Chef's Corner



## Many Islands, Many Flavors

The chef behind a new beachfront Caribbean-American restaurant has experience in many modern cuisines – and an even deeper background in the flavors of the Caribbean.



→ **CHIEF Kevin Baker** had worked in a variety of kitchens and cuisines around South Florida. On South Beach, there was 1826 Restaurant and Bar on Collins Avenue. He helped open the Foundry in Pompano, with its New American flavors, and worked at the Ritz-Carlton doing, well, Ritz-Carlton-style cuisine. But when he got the offer to run the kitchen at Steelpan Kitchen & Bar, the new restaurant at Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach, he had to look a bit further back for inspiration.

"I grew up sitting watching my parents, my grandparents cooking Caribbean food," the native of Jamaica says. At Steelpan, which bills itself as a "Caribbean-American fusion kitchen," and also offers live music several nights a week, he got to fuse the modern cuisines of his professional life with the Caribbean flavors from earlier.





SOUTH FLORIDA  
**SunSentinel**



"Fans of Floribbean food  
might have a new fave."  
April 17, 2019

BROWARD PALM BEACH  
**NewTimes**



"...menu of bright, complex and  
flavorful dishes."  
August 14, 2019

**EATER**  
**MIAMI**



"Steelpan has, as the name  
suggests, a strong Caribbean  
flair."  
August 14, 2019

# BROADCAST PLACEMENTS





**KEVIN BAKER**  
Executive chef, Steelpan

SOUTH FLORIDA  
**SunSentinel**





**CHEF KEVIN BAKER**  
STEELPAN AT SONESTA FT. LAUDERDALE BEACH

**SOUTH FLORIDA  
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

**SOUTH FLORIDA**  
**THE CW**



**INSIDE**  
SOUTH FLORIDA

**FOODIE FIX**

**STEELPAN**  
Sonesta Ft. Lauderdale

**SOUTH FLORIDA**  
**THE CW**  
sfcw.com



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS



Liked by sonestafortlauderdale and 965 others



Liked by alihart123 and 771 others



Liked by alihart123 and 1,234 others



14,738 views



13,802 views





Liked by kellygraceless and 1,265 others



Liked by sonestafortlauderdale and 5,063 others



Liked by sonestafortlauderdale and 400 others