



**QUICK TRIPS**

## SAVOR *Stock Island*

*The Perry Hotel in Key West prioritizes good food and gastronomic experiences*

By Mary Murray

Just when you think you've seen every inch of Key West, another part of this southernmost paradise unveils itself. Case in point: Stock Island. This working waterfront for shrimpers and fishermen has gone through a reinvention and is now home to The Perry Hotel, a culinary destination for travelers and residents alike.

Since debuting last year, The Perry has earned a reputation for its stellar food and beverage program that includes Salty Oyster, a relaxed bar with mammoth chicken wings, and Matt's, a higher-end (by Keys standards) resto run by a talented young chef. The hotel's industrial-meets-nautilus design has garnered acclaim, as well. Named one of *Architectural Digest's* 12 best designed hotels of 2017, The Perry feels like an elevated wharf building with interiors that marry ship-inspired wood and metal details with a cool, oceanic color palette.



**AESTHETICALLY, THE PERRY EMBRACES A MODERN NAUTICAL DESIGN. IT BRINGS THAT SAME PHILOSOPHY TO FOOD, AND ITS MAIN RESTAURANT, MATT'S, SERVES GREAT, APPROACHABLE GRUB WITH FINE-DINING NUANCE.**



COURTESY OF THE PERRY HOTEL

While Duval Street is a brief shuttle ride away, it's just as alluring to spend a long weekend at The Perry, sipping a craft beer poolside, indulging in a sunset cruise with Sunset Sail Key West, or snorkeling with charters such as Lost Reef Adventures. Those who wish to further explore the area can hop on a sightseeing adventure with Key West Jet Ski Tours and glide past such landmarks as Fort Zachary Taylor.

Back at The Perry, memories are made among friends and food. At Matt's, expect to see references to the island's fishing-centric past, like a seafood tower presented in a tackle box. You'll also notice a distinctly Lowcountry sensibility among these Keys ingredients, and that's all courtesy of chef Kalen Fortuna. Here, the 30-year-old South Carolina native cooks crave-worthy dishes, including a cornbread mash that will occupy your dreams for weeks.

Fortuna works closely with local monger Fishbustertz to ensure he's serving the best.

Whether it be grouper, hogfish, or snapper, Fortuna and his team will present it in a memorable way. His must-try creations range from blue crab beignets accented with Old Bay aioli, to a seafood chowder that screams for bread to sop up every last drop. End the meal with one of his beer floats—think: a raspberry Lambic paired with ginger ice cream—around the firepit.

The Perry's culinary commitment extends to special events. It regularly hosts one-night-only dining experiences on property and collaborates with area businesses and chefs for off-site projects, like the Lost Kitchen Supper Club, a pop-up concept that celebrates local food history and products. But regardless of how you dine during your stay at The Perry, one thing's for sure: Come hungry and ready to watch that "bikini body" grow. ([perrykeywest.com](http://perrykeywest.com)) ◀◀