

TASTE

Q&A

SECOND ACT

Originally from Massachusetts, chef Glenn Rogers began his restaurant career at age 16 as a dishwasher at IHOP. After moving to Florida in 2012, he worked at Palm Beach restaurants such as Buccan and Meat Market. In December, he became executive chef of **Johnnie Brown's**, ushering in a new culinary era at this live music favorite along Delray Beach's Atlantic Avenue. *PBI* recently caught up with Rogers to discuss his background and vision for the restaurant. (johnniebrowns.com)—Mark Spivak

PBI: When did you decide to become a chef?

Rogers: It was just a job at first, but I fell in love with it after I came to Florida. The turning point was when I was on the opening team at Meat Market; they were doing such amazing things, both from a perspective of presentation and flavor. I realized then that cooking could be an art. Working with chefs such as Clay Conley and Pushkar Marathe had a great impact on me.

Johnnie Brown's is very different from the restaurants you trained at. Why did you decide to take on the role of executive chef?

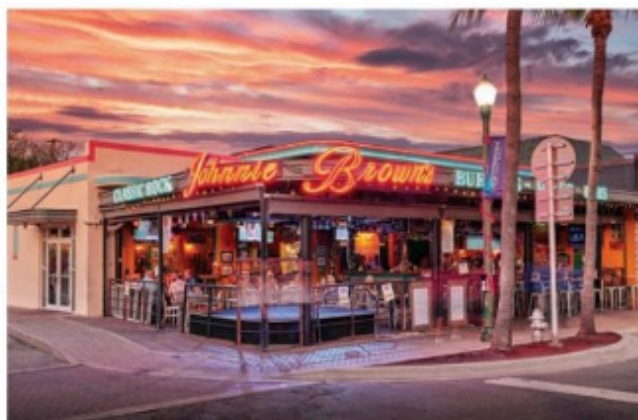
I was terrified when I was offered the job because I had heard horror stories. But then I did some research on Clique Hospitality, their new management group, and realized that our values were the same. They want to present the best possible product, and they don't cut corners.



GLENN ROGERS

What are some of the changes you're making?

We now have a tuna poke bowl on the menu, which is something you wouldn't have seen before. We also have a number of vegan options. But our staple is still wings—we have the greatest range of different treatments in the area. They're triple-cooked for tenderness; we first cure them to remove the moisture, and then they're baked and fried. You have your choice of seven or eight delicious sauces.



TUNA POKE BOWL

Do you sometimes feel that you're competing with the live music?

There's an element of theater to what we do in the kitchen. One of our specialties is the Shipwreck Platter, an assortment of appetizers served in a sushi boat. It comes to the table with a sparkler and a lot of fanfare.

What's your goal at Johnnie Brown's?

The restaurant is an iconic music venue, but we also want people to come for the food. From where we started to where we are now, it's literally night and day. But we're just beginning. We have a long way to go to elevate ourselves.

2

TO TRY

PURA VIDA

Can fast food be healthy? In December, the husband-and-wife team of Jennifer and Omer Horev, owners of Miami-based Pura Vida cafés, opened their first Palm Beach County location in Rosemary Square. Inspired by their travels and Israeli-born Omer's Mediterranean roots, the menu features all-day breakfast as well as an assortment of fresh juices, superfood smoothies, sandwiches, and organic açai bowls. "We want our dishes to be delicious, nutritious, and filled with rich, bright colors," says Jennifer. "We are constantly inspired by the bounty of South Florida, using fresh and locally sourced ingredients when available." (puraavidamiami.com)

CHARLIE & JOE'S AT LOVE STREET

Joe Namath proved there was life after football when he partnered with developer Charles Modica to open Charlie & Joe's at Love Street in Jupiter's Inlet Village. The complex encompasses three restaurants—Beacon (a contemporary American grill), Lucky Shuck (an oyster bar), and Topside (featuring rooftop tapas)—as well as The Tacklebox, a seafood market. A complete hospitality experience, Charlie & Joe's reflects the pair's love affair with Jupiter's waterfront lifestyle. "We're trying to enhance the community for the locals and visitors who come to our town," says Namath. Modica agrees: "We are not silent owners. We live in the community, and when we go there we have a sense of pride." (lovestreetjupiter.com)—M.S.

