

Savor

Created along with developers Michael Simkins and Grove Bay Hospitality Group, Red Rooster Overtown includes defining features like interior fresco murals by London-based artist Grahame Menage and original commissioned artwork. Here, the private dining room.

HEART & SOUL

CHEF MARCUS SAMUELSSON BRINGS HIS SOULFUL BRAND OF COMFORT FOOD AND CULTURE TO MIAMI. **BY JEAN NAYAR** Gastronomes, history buffs and culture mavens, take note: Your tastes are about to be sated in inspiring new ways now that Red Rooster has come to town. Debuting this month in a reimagined pool hall in historic Overtown, the new restaurant is the latest manifestation of a growing coterie of eateries launched around the world by the ubercreative chef Marcus Samuelsson and promises to bring fresh culinary dimension—and a lot of multicultural spark—to an emerging cultural

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The outdoor dining space at Red Rooster Overtown



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As in Samuelsson's original Red Rooster restaurant in Harlem, the James Beard Award-winning chef will serve up his unique take on elevated American cuisine with dishes inspired by his roots in Sweden and Ethiopia. Here, however, the menu features not only his versions of Southern classics, like Hot Honey Yardbird and Obama's Short Ribs, but also a new selection of bright ceviches and grilled local fish dishes that draw on the Haitian and Caribbean culinary influences, such as *soupe joumou*, deep-fried *paté korde*, *griot* and *accra* fritters, that enrich the cuisine of this colorful Miami neighborhood. Also in keeping with its Harlem- and London-based sister restaurants, the accent at Red Rooster Overtown is not only on inventive food but also on music and art, especially works inspired by the diverse strands of the African diaspora.

Developed by Samuelsson and his business partner, Derek Fleming, who worked with Saladino Design Studio to create the restaurant's design, the new Red Rooster Overtown aims to revive what Fleming calls "a spirit of celebration." So the new 13,000-square-

foot setting was crafted as a multifaceted gathering space offering a variety of experiences that reference both the history of the building—a former neighborhood hangout known as Clyde Killen's Pool Hall—as well as the surrounding neighborhood. "In the 1950s and '60s, Clyde's pool hall was a notable hot spot, where people like Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, B.B. King and Sam Cooke would come after performing in local venues in Miami or the beach," says Fleming, noting the atmosphere of the new restaurant aims to echo the vibe of the venue during that lively era.

As such, the two-story structure's interiors and outdoor areas brim with a multiplicity of eclectic influences—tropical colors, modern murals, handmade Moroccan tiles, cheetah prints and an abundance of art and sculpture, including pieces co-curated by PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans—in a joyful melange that redefines the neighborhood's Caribbean roots with a fresh twist. The designers also worked with Samuelsson and Fleming to expand the experience beyond the expected "with approachable elements for people of every walk of life," says designer Sean Saladino. So, in addition to the

209-seat main dining room and a speakeasy-inspired, horseshoe-shaped bar, private dining spaces, rooftop terraces, an upstairs lounge and a pergola-covered outdoor space known as the "Coop" offer a variety of spaces in which to gather and dine, sip handcrafted cocktails and listen to a mix of gospel, R&B, Afrobeats, soul and jazz performed or played by local musicians and DJs. At the same time, extra components, including a bakery and creamery, provide accessible touchpoints for local kids and families to regularly stop by for an ice-cream cone after school or freshly baked bread after church.

"The new Rooster is a feast for the senses where soulful art, music and food live together, tell a story about the past and take us forward from where our forefathers left off," says Fleming. "A restaurant is a place to feel restored, to be welcomed and to enjoy life," adds Samuelsson. "That's the spirit of what we've built at Red Rooster Overtown." And just as it did in Harlem, that welcoming Red Rooster spirit is poised to transform the landscape of fine dining—and catalyze the powerhouse potential of an up-and-coming neighborhood—in Miami. ■