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Norman Van Aken opens Tuyo atop Miami Culinary Institute

By Sara Liss
Miami.com



Key West yellowtail in a citrus butter sauce

The goods: South Florida culinary luminary Norman Van Aken returns to the local dining scene with Tuyo, a cushy new spot atop the Miami Culinary Institute. Van Aken pairs his allegiance to fresh local ingredients with an all-star team of sous-chefs: Travis Starwalt (Sugarcane) and Jeffrey Brana (Restaurant Brana).

Ambience: A live piano player and floor-to-ceiling windows framing views of downtown create an old school charm. There's no bar to wait at, but you'll be served by a tuxedo-clad server.

The grub: Van Aken's globe-trotting cuisine. A little Peruvian influence here, some Caribbean there, a touch of Asia scattered about. The concise menu features just six starters and seven mains while starters average \$9-\$18, mains \$23-\$42 and desserts \$8-\$9.

Begin with house-made ciabatta, then move onto starters like Brazilian creamy conch chowder spiked with saffron and star anise or shrimp and octopus ceviche topped with popcorn. Mains include Key West yellowtail in a citrus butter sauce; black grouper bathed in salsa rosa and Benton's ham; pork Havana with smoky plantain crema, black bean and corn salsa; and a meat-free paella with wild mushrooms, radicchio and garbanzo beans. Desserts lean towards Latin staples like guava cheesecake and coconut flan.

The verdict: Miami's culinary star Norman Van Aken returns with a glossy, upscale ode to local ingredients and fusion cooking.

Tuyo, 415 NE Seond Ave., Miami; 305-237-3200

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