



Collection of vegetables at Charleston Grill



Charleston Grill executive chef Michelle Weaver

can be prepared gluten-free or without dairy or animal products. But the overall feeling of the dining experience is as rich and hearty as the mountains themselves.

"I love the mountain culture of North Carolina," Timberlake says. "I love this whole place. And I had fun getting in here with my design team. I look forward to coming up and visiting. It's just a pure pleasure."

And it's a pure pleasure for diners who choose between several lakefront dining rooms or eating alfresco on the new stone patio complete with a large fire pit for those cool mountain evenings.

After indulging in everything from the corn bread to the harvest fruit pie, then retiring to my cozy room complete with roaring fire, it's easy to understand that in Cherokee, Chetola means "Haven of Rest." —Waynette Goodson

## THE THRILL OF THE GRILL

### FIND DIVINE FOOD AND LIVE JAZZ AT CHARLESTON GRILL.

★ | Charleston is an exciting food city, dotted with more fabulous restaurants than you can shake a fork at. At Charleston Grill, inside the Charleston Place Hotel, divine food and nightly live jazz have built a devoted fan base, because, unlike many whisper-quiet hotel restaurants, the Grill's energetic vibe spices up the meals.

"You can feel the life in the room when we've got a good crowd, the jazz is playing, and the wait-staff is bustling," says executive chef Michelle Weaver. "We have a perfect trifecta of phenomenal service, fantastic jazz, and great food."

The four-section menu offers something for everyone. Whether you prefer lavish, French-influenced fare, creative Southern cuisine (Weaver's specialty), Asian, or fresh, seasonal dishes, you'll find choices that inspire. A current guest and staff favorite: Thai Fish Tom-Yum-Goong — crisp-skinned whole fish with chili-garlic butter, shrimp broth, and grilled pineapple, a dish deemed "phenomenal" by general manager Mickey Bakst.

But any Charleston chef worth her whisk knows you must feature the area's cuisine, including its bounty of seafood. "If we ever tried to take the crab cake off the menu, regulars would probably burn the restaurant down!" Weaver says with a laugh. Bakst waxes poetic about Seared Flounder and Shrimp with Shrimp Butter Grits, proclaiming, "You've never had grits so lush and delicious."

He's also proud of the superb service. "We take care of the diner from start to finish, attending to every detail, but with real warmth, not formality," Bakst says. "I just love to pamper people. Every single day I get the sheer joy of making people feel good."

—Donna Florio

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