From left: one of the dining areas at Ocean 48 at Fashion Island; the peanut butter pie; some of the restaurant's seafood, steak and side dishes

# Embracing Elegance

## TUCKED AWAY ON THE EDGE OF FASHION ISLAND, SEAFOOD RESTAURANT AND STEAKHOUSE OCEAN 48 BRINGS A NEW LUXE DINING EXPERIENCE TO NEWPORT BEACH.

### BY ASHLEY RYAN

Step into the warm, welcoming environment of the upscale Ocean 48 and you may be surprised at what you find. Several intimate dining rooms with elegant, modern interiors create cozy settings in which to dine, but it's the extra touches that make the restaurant truly spectacular: the glass-enclosed kitchen, fresh seafood displayed on ice, a tranquil reflection pool, crackling fireplaces, captivating artwork and—of course—the delectable menu.

Ocean 48 launched in the former Fig & Olive space in late summer by Prime Steak Concepts, a restaurant group helmed by James Beard-nominated brothers Jeffrey and Michael Mastro as well as their father, Dennis, and business partner, Scott Trolio. The family got its start in the industry by founding Mastro's Steakhouse and Mastro's Ocean Club before selling the company in 2007; Prime Steak Concepts launched a few years later, in 2010, and now encompasses a number of restaurants across the country including Dominick's Steakhouse, Steak 44, Steak 48, Ocean 44 and Ocean 48.

Brace yourself for a dining experience that takes you on a culinary adventure, with the wait staff providing unparalleled service and genuine hospitality along the way. Begin with a signature cocktail, like the Seaside Rita, stone fruit martini or orange rye Old-Fashioned,

**OCEAN 48**
151 Newport Center Drive
949-989-0048; ocean48.com
**HOURS:** 4:30-9:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 4-10:15 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 4-9:45 p.m. Sunday

to introduce some flavor to the palate. Diners can also indulge in pure osetra sturgeon roe, sustainably raised in Poland and Italy, that is placed atop small cones stuffed with horseradish creme fraiche and finished with gold leaf.

Classic and contemporary dishes are interwoven throughout the menu, which invites guests to enjoy starters like fresh oysters or Alaskan king crab legs from the raw bar, Pacific yellowtail hamachi crudo, wood-roasted clams, New England clam chowder or Sauteed Shrimp Vince, featuring prawns richly flavored by butter, garlic and chardonnay served with a Parmesan herb toast. As both the name and menu imply, seafood is a focal point at Ocean 48, but the Chef's Cut Hanging Bacon remains a definite favorite, whether due to its dangling presentation or the truffle honey it's accompanied by.

When it comes time to discuss entrees, salmon, sea bass, branzino and scallops offer further opportunities to enjoy the bounty of

the sea. But it's the Steak 48 options that really shine. For a deliciously flavorful meal, try the petite filet mignon, the bone-in rib-eye or the New York strip steak, hand-cut by the restaurant's master butcher. Elevated dishes such as the A5 Kobe wine-fed steak and a wagyu tomahawk are also available.

Complement your main selection with a wealth of craveable sides ranging from loaded baked potatoes to roasted Brussels sprouts and corn creme brulee, caramelized on top, as well as pasta shells and cheese filled with shrimp and crab. A luxurious wine list is the perfect enhancement, offering by-the-glass sips including cabernet sauvignons from recognizable California brands like Caymus and Daou Vineyards as well as interesting whites from Italy and French sparkling varietals.

But a culinary journey at Ocean 48 isn't complete without dessert. Choose from decadent dishes like red velvet bread pudding, peanut butter pie and Lou Lou's Homemade Cookies & Cream Gelato Cake or opt for a lighter selection, like blood orange sorbet or triple-layer Key lime pie. One more surprising option can be ordered most nights as well: the off-menu beignet tree, where the deep-fried pastries hang from each limb above a spread of chocolate-Nutella sauce and vanilla creme anglaise that ensure the sweetest of endings. **NBM**