

# KEYS Sunday

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## dining out



Key West's new Strip House restaurant's seductive interior features flirty black-and-white photos from the 1920s, a decor predominating in soft deep reds, and subtle lighting.

Photo by FRAN MARCHBANK

## Strip House opens at Reach

By FRAN MARCHBANK  
Keys Sunday contributor

A Strip House restaurant opened with a flourish earlier this month at the Reach Resort in Key West. This steakhouse, joining eight others in the growing chain of Glazier Group restaurants on the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico, is now open in the space formerly occupied by Shula's Steak House, but with an entirely different atmosphere.

Taking off from the name Strip House, the décor is now a bit naughty. Its deep red walls, soft lighting, and black-and-white photos of seductive beauties from the 1920s create an atmosphere of decadent excess — one that might have been encountered in the high-end pleasure houses of that era.

Penny Glazier — along with husband Peter and son Mathew — owns the Strip House restaurants, and she plays an active role in determining the restaurants' distinctive décor. The custom-designed flocked wallpaper celebrates the female form in red silhouettes — a design that is repeated in the specially woven napkins that provide a splash of color against the white tablecloths. Warm light glowing from red-

shaded sconces along with subtle recessed and indirect illumination create an inviting, intimate atmosphere. In keeping with this comfortable interior, service is attentive, but discreet.

The restaurant seats up to 100 people indoors and 120 on the terrace with fabulous views of the Atlantic Ocean. Diners can also enjoy the intimate bar and cocktail lounge with seating for 28.

"We welcome people who prefer the cozy atmosphere of the cocktail lounge and wish to order only an appetizer or two off the menu," says general manager Jason Gates. "The full restaurant menu will be available there, too, of course."

The menu tempts cholesterol-conscious and calorie-counting diners to throw caution to the wind with its selection of appetizers (\$8 to \$17), meat and seafood dishes (\$29 to \$54), side dishes (\$7 to \$11), and individual desserts (\$8 and \$9).

Its signature dishes include strip steak, black truffle cream spinach, goose fat potatoes, and a 24-layer chocolate cake.

The lobster bisque is a standout among the appetizers. Made with Maine lobster and ladled

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## Steak still centerpiece of newly renovated resort's restaurant

**STRIP HOUSE / From 9**

over crisp red pepper ravioli, it is an inspired combination of texture and taste. Another

starter one night was a daily special of large, plump Blue Point oysters. Their briny liquid tasting of the sea attested to their freshness. Other appetizers include salads, clams casino,

garlic bread with gorgonzola fondue, and jumbo shrimp with cucumber salad.

Foie gras torchon (\$19) served with toasted baguette and a seafood platter at market price are available for sharing at the table.

Meat entrées include filet mignon, a bone-in ribeye, chateaubriand, veal t-bone, and rack of lamb. As accompaniments, diners can choose among side dishes such as the signature spinach and goose-fat potatoes or potatoes served puréed, Romanoff style, baked with a large selection of accompaniments, or as garlic-herb French fries, as well as fried onions, wild mushrooms, broccoli, asparagus, creamed corn with pancetta, or green beans with garlic. These are served in portions large enough to share.

Seafood is not neglected here. Maine lobster is served broiled, steamed, or in a borde-

**If you go**

◆ **Address:** The Reach Resort, 1435 Simonton St., Key West

◆ **Reservations recommended:** Call 295-9669

◆ **Hours:** 5:30 to 10 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; 5:30 to 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Breakfast (8 a.m. to 11 a.m.) and lunch (11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) are served on the outside patio with their own menus.

◆ **Web site:** [www.striphouse.net](http://www.striphouse.net)

laise sauce with linguine. Sesame-crusting yellowfin tuna and pan-seared red snapper are other tempting choices. Pan-roasted grouper has been added to celebrate the Key West opening along with a Key lime pie, which joins the other desserts on the menu.

According to executive chef John Schenk, "The restaurant will be purchasing local seafood and perhaps tweaking the menu to accommodate new dishes as we learn more about the Keys, the availability of fresh products, and the preferences of our customers."

The portion sizes may be more than some diners can handle, and the restaurant is ready to accommodate. "Diners are welcome to share," says Schenk, "and no plating charge will be added to the bill."

A homemade assortment of sorbets and ice cream is offered daily along with a Tahitian vanilla crème brûlée, grand chocolate profiterole with milk chocolate, espresso ice cream and hot fudge sauce, Viennese apple strudel with whipped

cream and walnuts, and the Key lime pie, made from real Key limes. An especially heavenly dessert is the caramelized banana tart served with creamy vanilla ice cream. Not to be ignored, however, are the restaurant's signature chocolate cake and, in good New York tradition, cheesecake, both available as "table shares."

The wine list offers a variety of reds, whites, and sparkling wines by the glass ranging from \$11 to \$15. Bottles from the West Coast, Europe, and New Zealand range from \$28 for an A to Z Wineworks Rose from Oregon to an impressive \$270 for a 1999 Moët et Chandon Cuvée Dom Pérignon and \$150 for a Montrachet from Burgundy.

To round off your meal, you can choose from a judicious selection of port, grappa, cognac, cordials, calvados, armagnac and single malt scotch.

A private dining room that can accommodate 40 is available for special events with customized menus. Call general manager Gates at 295-9669 for more information.

Schenk has been associated with the Glaziers since 1994 when they hired him as chef of the Monkey Bar in New York. While there, he received the Food and Wine Magazine's Best New Chefs award. Later, he became executive chef for Houston's Strip House and eventually moved into his current role with responsibility for all restaurants in the chain.

From his home base in Las Vegas, Schenk travels constantly in order to provide oversight and ensure quality in all Strip House locations. He was in Key West for the opening and plans to return frequently.

Russell Brown, chef de cuisine in Key West, brings experience as chef at New York's Strip House and Michael Jordan's Steak House in Grand Central Station, both owned by the Glazier Group. He has relocated to Key West and will preside over the kitchen in the new restaurant full time, overseeing a staff of almost 50 — most of whom are local hires.