

## diningfeature

# Aqua Prime: A polished, casual atmosphere

**T** If you like Bonefish, you are going to love Aqua Prime. Why, you ask? For many reasons. For starters, and probably the most important reason, the head chef of Aqua Prime worked as a chef at Bonefish for six years. So take Bonefish and throw it on the beach and voila, welcome to Aqua Prime.

But let me say this, the reason I love Aqua Prime is because it's not Bonefish. Don't get me wrong, I love Bonefish's food but it's a little too stuffy for me. Those of us who live on the beach, we know that we are different from the real world. Yes, we are more laid-back. Yes, we wear sandals to all restaurants, regardless of how upscale, and, yes, we are hard-working professionals just like those who frequent Bonefish. We are just a tad cooler. No, we are.

And Aqua Prime owner Steve Wesphal, Executive Chef Jason Vargo and General Manager Johnny Morales know that. So while we are laid-back, we also are picky. We are perfectionists and we want the very best, which is exactly what Aqua Prime's top brass make sure they

deliver.

And truthfully, it's probably one of the best kept secrets on the beach, until now, of course. I absolutely love going there to have a couple of cocktails on their outside patio, or to have dinner. The atmosphere blows Bonefish's interior lounge away.

Because those of us who live on the beach do not want to be trapped inside a stuffy cocktail lounge, but we do like to be surrounded by other classy, intelligent beach folks.

Moving on. On my most recent visit, I stopped in to check out Chef Jason's new menu and, OMG, thank the Lord I did. For starters, I had the Mediterranean salad, a house mix blend with a variety of fresh greens, topped off with fresh roasted red and yellow golden beets, feta cheese, cucumbers, tomatoes and white bean salsa, served with housemade red potato salad with pepperoncini and a side of Balsamic herb dressing. Most people know I'm not a salad kind of guy, but it was delish.

**Aqua Prime  
213 Gulf Blvd.  
Indian Rocks Beach  
727-330-7724**



I also tried the seasonal meat and cheese platter with baby swiss, gorgonzola, hard salami, grilled Andouille sausage and more. A perfect accompaniment for a nice bottle of wine.

For an entrée, I had the seafood mac

pleasure of experiencing the Gulf grouper, which was a fresh, hand-cut filet grilled with Aqua Prime's signature seafood spice and topped with a creamy coconut curry sauce.

Oh my gosh, people. All dishes were out of this world. Chef Jason is the real deal. Bonefish lost a big fish, but fish have got to swim, and thank God he swam over to Aqua Prime.

Make sure you ask for Amanda to serve you. She is extremely pleasant and on her game as a server; she is exactly the type of server you would expect at Aqua Prime.

I was impressed not only with the amazing food Chef Jason



'n' cheese (Cavatappi pasta with lump crab meat and shrimp in a lobster cream sauce, with smoked Gouda cheese and toasted panko crumbs and fresh scallions). I also had the

creates, but also with the awesome service and atmosphere. Aqua Prime has also become known as a hot spot for some of the best local live entertainment in the area. I know, it's obvious I love the place. You will too!

*Bon appetit!*

