

# CAFÉ SOCIETY

*Restaurateur Adrian Gonzalez has revitalized his family's iconic Cuban eatery, David's Cafe.*

*By Humberto Guida*

**A**drian Gonzalez never really wanted to be part of the family business. An avid boater, the 36-year-old Miami native first considered a career in marine biology. But then he realized what he had: a successful business that doubles as a family tradition as rich as the sugary froth that percolates on top of their world-famous café Cubano.

Gonzalez's family owns David's Cafe, the pair of restaurants (one on Collins Avenue, the other off Lincoln Road) serving South Beach's yummiest Cuban comfort food for more than 30 years. And Adrian, born the youngest of three brothers, has taken the reins. So what is this scion of one of Miami Beach's longest-running and most beloved Cuban eateries celebrating these days?



Arroz con pollo



The new 9,200-square-foot David's Cafe



Adrian Gonzalez

A new and updated David's Cafe, right where it all began.

The new spot is actually the original location on Collins Avenue. A very lengthy expansion process took it from a 1,000-square-foot space with 17 barstools and a to-go window to a 9,200-square-foot restaurant with a courtyard and market, plus an upstairs outdoor terrace available for private parties.

Making over an established brand isn't easy, however, especially when you're bouncing between two busy restaurants. So Gonzalez got advice from his toughest boss, his father, Alfredo, who, with wife Maria, founded David's Cafe in 1977. When the couple bought it, the establishment was a Jewish delicatessen. They kept the original name because, back then, introducing Cuban cuisine to what was essentially a snowbirds' retirement community was risky. But the couple—who had fled Cuba years before in search of the American dream—made it work. By 1993, they'd opened the second location on Meridian Avenue off Lincoln Road. Now, Gonzalez hopes to pick up where his parents left off, taking both restaurants to new heights as businesses and assets to the community.

Ultimately, however, David's Cafe is known for its delicious, authentic, rich Cuban

dishes—favorites such as bistec de pollo (chicken steak), churrasco steak, and masas de puerco frito (fried pork). Gonzalez talks about the food his restaurants serve—dishes crafted over the years by his parents—with pride. And he insists that it's more than a family thing—it's a Cuban thing. After all, Miami's prevalent ethnic cuisine reflects the diversity of influences that passed through Cuba over the centuries: European, African and Latin American tastes have each added their own flavors to one of the world's greatest and liveliest cultures. As Gonzalez puts it, "Cuban food is so close to many different nationalities; everyone who eats it can relate to it. It's very simple, basic food that tastes great. And it goes without saying that Cubans make the best coffee in the world." **DD**



Medianoche with plantain chips

## THE PROPER WAY TO PREPARE CUBAN COFFEE

"The key to getting the caramel color and flavor is to add some sugar into the cup before the coffee. Once a little coffee has been added, start stirring in the rest. Also, one must use freshly ground beans. Drinking Cuban coffee traditionally was the way we spent time with family and friends. Sharing coffee meant sharing stories and the day's experiences."—ADRIAN GONZALEZ

