



High Dive Dive 'n' Boar's newest chef makes a splash with his fine-dining cuisine / by M. Linda Lee // photography by Paul Mehaffey

The small fried spheres of trout brandade are a play on texture—crispy on the outside, yielding to a smooth emulsion of smoked trout and potatoes within. A take on the classic Mediterranean dish, traditionally made with salt cod, these white-anchovy-crowned orbs provide a scintillating hint of the new menu at Dive 'n' Boar. As of mid-September, a new chef and a new look are also key elements to the revamp of Southern Culture's little sister on Pleasantburg Drive. Call it Dive 'n' Boar 2.0.

Gone is the graffiti on the poplar-plank-lined walls, which now boast local artwork. Jars of house-made pickles stock shelves over the wraparound bar—setting the stage for the craft-cocktail program—and a kitchen counter welcomes diners to watch Chef Adrian Carpenter (former executive chef at the late High Cotton) and his team craft their next plate. Built out of 100-year-old reclaimed wood, low tables stand in for the former high tops. And at the back of the restaurant, garage doors open to reveal a narrow dining porch decorated with tall herb-filled planters.

Gone are the chicken wings and nachos, replaced on the menu by crispy frogs' legs and gougères stuffed with a goat cheese mixture whimsically dubbed "boarsin." Hot buttered buns, lightly toasted bread specially made for the restaurant

by Upcountry Provisions in Travelers Rest, enfold a refreshing blue crab salad or house-cured peppered lamb pastrami.

Carpenter, who recently returned to Greenville after a four-month sojourn through the Southwest, thoughtfully executes gastropub fare—think April Bloomfield's The Spotted Pig in New York City—with an emphasis on tapas-style shared plates and local, organic ingredients. The menu is divided into categories and holds a well-balanced variety of meat, fish, and vegetables. The beauty of it is, you can mix and match as many or as few dishes as your appetite dictates.

As an experienced chef, Carpenter's cuisine dazzles with its finesse and classical technique. Duck rillettes cozy up to port-poached figs; tuna carpaccio, strewn with chunks of sweet potato and crispy hominy, is

New Skill(ef)s: Chef Adrian Carpenter (above) is bringing fine cuisine to Dive 'n' Boar's high class cocktail menu. His diverse dishes include (from far left) Eggplant & Butternut Squash with golden raisins, capers, and pumpkin seed pesto, gougères of goat cheese "Boarsin," and Crispy Frog Legs with charred okra and Tabasco brown butter.

drizzled with aji Amarillo chile crema. Blackstrap molasses gives an earthy-sweet punch to a fluffy buttermilk biscuit served in a mini cast-iron skillet. Next to it on the plate, a tangle of tender young collards spiked with country ham appreciates a dose of house-made red jalapeño vinegar. Golden raisins, briny capers, and a smear of pumpkin-seed pesto complement tiny light bulbs of baby eggplant and cubes of roasted butternut squash, while intrigue colors a heap of blistered "mystery peppers," so-called because one in every dozen is a fiery one.

For less adventurous palates, the basics are not lost. The Large Plates list includes a burger—a daunting double cheeseburger, to boot—as well as a bistro steak, gussied up with charred red onions, chimichurri, and fingerling potatoes.

Dive 'n' Boar's owner, Omar Naji, connected with Carpenter through a mutual friend while the chef was traveling. "I wanted to bring some heart and soul to the restaurant," Carpenter says, "and Omar is open to doing things outside the box." As for Naji, he is pleased to have realized his true intention for Dive 'n' Boar: "It's all about the food." 🍴