

ROYAL PALMS FOOD AND BEVERAGE TEAM KICKS IT UP A NOTCH WITH FARM-TO-TABLE COMMITMENT

Executive Chef and Iron Chef competitor, Lee Hillson of T. Cook's restaurant and Royal Palms Resort and Spa, takes the term "farm-to-table" far beyond the status quo.

- * It started with his private label **Pesto** and **Mediterranean Salsa** recipes several years ago. Both have been big sellers with T. Cook's fans, and Chef regularly uses them in many of his dishes. His bread service, which has become a restaurant signature, features the Pesto with slices of fresh ciabatta.
- * **Orange Marmalade** is a regular accoutrement on the restaurant's breakfast tables. When the citrus is picked from the trees adorning the resort's grounds in late January or early February, an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 numbered jars of signature marmalade are made available. For the balance of the year, the Royal Palms Marmalade is made to the chef's recipe using citrus from Arizona State University. Various menu items showcase the marmalade year-round. The Marmalade was such a hit that Chef has added house made apple cinnamon jelly and strawberry vanilla jam.
- * Large jars of Chef's **Pickled Vegetables** such as carrots, onions, cauliflower, mushrooms, beets and cucumbers colorfully line a cabinet in the restaurant, and he uses them liberally in his menus. The list of pickled items, of course, varies seasonally.
- * **Hand Made Cheeses** such as mozzarella, cheddar and fromage blanc are the Culinary team's latest kitchen venture.
- * What started as simply making their own pancetta evolved rapidly into what is now a large charcuterie room filled with rows and rows of cured meats such as link chorizo, boar prosciutto, pork loin, lardo, pancetta, soppressata, coppa, mortadella, and lamb prosciutto to name a few.
- * Royal Palms only serves **Seafood** that has been sustainably raised and harvested. Selections vary with the seasonal harvests, but include shrimp, Georges Bank scallops, Snug Harbor mussels, crab, clams, Maine lobster, organic Idaho-farmed trout, Irish salmon, halibut and more.
- * Supporting **Local Farmers and Producers** whenever possible is a commitment Chef Hillson fiercely adheres to. Just a few examples:
 - o Seasonal, organic produce comes from Singh Farms in Scottsdale and Duncan's Farms in Goodyear, Arizona. Food waste is sent to Singh for composting.
 - o Goat cheese is purchased from Fossil Creek Creamery in Strawberry, Arizona.
 - o Oils used throughout the resort's kitchens are bought from Queen Creek Olive Mill located in nearby Queen Creek, Arizona
- * Chef Hillson worked with microbrewery, Sonoran Brewing Co. in Phoenix, to create the **Royal Palms Olde Pale Ale** which reminds him of his favorite British ales with its full, rich flavor and lots of hops. Asked about his purpose behind the enormous effort he puts into creating his signature products and sourcing his specialty ingredients, he states: "Being able to cook and play with local and sustainable products is really cooking with the heart." And those who know Chef Hillson know his heart is huge.