

by Charles Marcanetti

A Secret No More Jet Runway Café

From 1920 to 1933 America was an alcohol-free country (yeah, sure). Still, America's thirst for inebriants flourished and hidden clubs grew up everywhere, the entering into which was prefaced by whispering a password. And so, the Speakeasy was born. After America came to its partying senses, some enterprising restaurateurs began hiding themselves in semi-secret locations ensuring that the mystery and uniqueness of their eateries were heightened.

Some 76 years later came the birth of Jet Runway Café at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. Hidden among hangars, parked airplanes, and helicopters, it continues, now seven years later, enchanting its patrons with astounding fare and remarkable views of the landings and takeoffs of planes old and new, and the comings and goings of support personnel and vehicles.

Not only is this a superlative breakfast and lunch experience, Jet Runway Café can, and frequently does, cater on-site parties up to 150 people and larger events on-site and off-site, indoors and outdoors literally touching the runways.

OMG. The same chefs and sous-chefs as watch over the day-to-day diners create the many dishes offered for the gatherings. And yes, there seems to be no shortage of pilots and passengers flying in for a meal ... and take-out.

One of the clues we food critics use in determining if a restaurant is "solid"



is the staff turnover. At Jet Runway Café the shortest time employee is 4½ years and our server for our luncheon, Luanda, has been there six years. She loves what she does and where she does it. And her colleagues and, most of all, her customers can tell from her first smile to her modest approach to delivering the check that this is her turf. Of course, Luanda and any and all the other servers would have a hard time existing at one location if the food wasn't top-notch. It is. And now, let's check out some of the offerings.

We started off with Margarita Flatbread consisting of grape tomatoes, mozzarella, basil pesto, and balsamic glaze, and Pulled Pork Flatbread made with mojo pork, shredded mozzarella, and cilantro chimichurri. I would love to get the recipe because each was light but full

flavored and I could have made a meal of it. But I'm glad I didn't because we next savored two remarkable salads: Silver Lining Salad made with mixed greens, grilled chicken, candied pecans, sundried cranberries, mandarin oranges, grape tomatoes, and gorgonzola drizzled with balsamic vinaigrette; and, my favorite salad, the Crispy Goat Cheese Salad created by melding blackened shrimp, baby spinach, candied pecans, strawberries, blueberries, and a balsamic vinaigrette. It's like having dessert for lunch.



Jet Runway Café offers a different soup daily, so check it out on the day(s) you're going. We went on a Monday, French Onion Soup day. The soup was just as it was supposed to be and for French Onion Soup that is saying a lot, as too often the only thing French about it is the name. Here it was French, French Onion Soup and delicious. Tomato Bisque is on the menu every day. So just to be polite (LOL) I sampled it. I loved it.



They serve half-pound burgers with lots of accoutrements and in many different styles. I had none, but judging from the aromas and the look on the faces of the patrons eating them I can say you will likely be very impressed. But why would I not have a burger for lunch? Simple, because I saw what the main courses were and I opted for the gourmet, as opposed to the gourmand.

Steak Chimichurri was fabulous, made as close to perfection as I have experienced in a long time and the skirt steak is served with grilled onions, black

on toasted brioche, plus the Crab Cake sandwich made from lump crab and cilantro-lime aioli and served with guacamole, lettuce, tomato, and pickle on a toasted brioche bun, and finally the Cuban sandwich made with roasted pulled pork, Virginia ham, Swiss cheese, kosher pickle, and mustard served on soft white hoagie. None of these creations is typical fare but they are perfect for lunch and later on in the day when you take lots and lots of the items home.



beans, yellow rice, and roasted vegetables. I also had a giant portion of the Honey Lime Salmon made with Atlantic salmon with a citrus glaze and served with whipped garlic potatoes and mixed vegetables.

We also could not resist the Mahi-Mahi sandwich served with guacamole, lettuce, tomato, pickle, and chipotle mayo served

Even if you don't believe me I tell you truly that we also had every one of their side dishes -- the Mac-N-Cheese, Sweet Potato Fries, Seasoned Fries, and Sweet Plantains -- and each was mouth-watering. For dessert we had the Bag of Cookies and the Chocolate Cake and I will not have a craving for sweets for years to come.

Lastly for the food let me say that Jet Runway Café serves the best sweet raspberry iced tea I have ever had.

My experience at this totally enjoyable eatery has assured them of my becoming a regular customer and a person who proudly offers his word of mouth to all who would hear. 📍

5540 NW 21st Terrace
Fort Lauderdale
954-958-9900 (restaurant);
954-990-1939 (catering)
info@jetrunwaycafe.com

