

Food flight

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New Yorkers in Miami for Art Basel week will no doubt see familiar faces, spend time at familiar spots and eat familiar dishes.

The Miami outpost of New York chef Scott Conant's Scarpetta, a favorite of both the foodie crowd and A-list regulars such as Alex Rodriguez, is celebrating its one-year anniversary. And what's true on West 14th Street in Manhattan is also true at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach: Conant's already legendary spaghetti with tomato and basil, which got him a four-star Miami Herald review, keeps bringing in the masses.

Over in South Beach, the redesigned Betsy Hotel (the site of a fund-raiser for Hedge Fund Cares tonight) is home to New York chef Laurent Tourondel's BLT Steak. And the downtown Viceroy Miami, which is hosting its own Art Viceroy fair, is home to the Eos eatery, from New York chef Michael Psilakis of Anthos and Kefi.

Conant, Tourondel and Psilakis have elevated the level of dining and service in a city that doesn't have much of a reputation for either. One of the things Miami is known for, though, is a hot crowd. And if you want to find that crowd now, W South Beach seems to be the place.

The hotel, created by New York developer David Edelstein, is hosting numerous Art Basel events, including dinners at its outpost of Mr. Chow (just down the block from its rival Philippe at Gansevoort South). The restaurant, despite some bad press and poor word-of-mouth among in-the-know locals, was a total scene when we visited recently, jammed with a bouncy throng at the bar, enduring long waits for tables.

But maybe it's unfair to say that Miami's hospitality industry needs NYC quality to thrive. (London quality at Alan Yau's Hakkasan and, um, Cleveland quality at Red, The Steakhouse are also responsible for some of Miami's most notable restaurants.) KNR, the Miami-based nightlife/restaurant group with venues that include W South Beach's Wall club and Solea eatery, might have something to show New York. KNR is in charge of the nightlife and food offerings (including the Quattro restaurant) at the forthcoming Trump SoHo.