

Riverpark Terrace

Beth Bay and Mary Finn, Proprietors

Michael Krasoski, Executive Chef

Nicholas Douchand, Sous Chef

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Twenty-five years ago, Beth Bay, *Riverpark Terrace* co-owner, arrived in New Smyrna Beach not knowing what to expect. Like many in our community, she purchased a timeshare with thoughts of ensuring future vacation and travel. Not surprisingly, she fell in love with NSB and instead of visiting elsewhere, Beth found herself watching for dolphins, enjoying the ocean and trying out the great dining establishments. She would bring friends to this little paradise “she” had discovered. Enter, Mary Finn, *Riverpark Terrace*’s other co-owner. Over wine and Florida sunsets, Beth and Mary began talking about opening a restaurant together. Both had experience in the hospitality industry and shared ideas about the sort of eatery they hoped to present.



For then NYC residents, the decision to make New Smyrna Beach the location of their enterprise provided a fortuitous path. A primary goal was to maintain the charm that’s at the heart of NSB, while offering patrons a fresh, new dining journey. A friendly hostess would welcome patrons upon arrival, leading them into a unique dining atmosphere. There, foods made fresh daily would be enjoyed, accompanied by innovative wine and beer offerings.

Through years of NSB vacations, **The Clay Gallery** became a familiar spot. Beth and Mary learned of Teresa Bowen’s hope to have her property maintained in the spirit of its design: a community spot where folks could gather, socialize and simply enjoy. Beth, Mary, and Teresa saw the match... and a visionary restaurant joined Teresa’s beautiful landscape.

Unbeknown to Mary and Beth, this proved to be the easy part. What lay ahead to make the dream a reality turned out a bit more challenging.



A restaurant is never easy to launch. Further, most aren't renovating a structure built just after World War II, cobbled together from the lumber of a demolished hardware store. While the Clay Gallery was sturdy, it was built in another era and not with contemporary food service in mind. As with most renovations of older structures, it was impossible to know what problems would arise as the necessary work began. Through these obstacles, Beth and Mary stood determined to move forward. Electricity and air conditioning were upgraded. Add on spaces were built to house refrigeration units. Possibly the most daunting job: to get the hood into the kitchen, the roof had to be lifted off and then reattached, all while meeting strong building codes.



The resulting spaces, both inside and out, do indeed preserve the charm of the original setting while enhancing it to include a contemporary kitchen, food storage, and varied indoor and outdoor dining areas. The new proprietors (with helpful & creative friends) fabricated several items, such as the interior dining room tables, and the notable pallet wall. Other aspects (lovely lavatory sinks and several beautiful inlaid cement countertops) were carefully preserved. Throughout Riverpark Terrace's physical development, Beth and Mary interviewed (and

tasted foods by) up-and-coming chefs whose culinary ideas fit an additional goal: fresh ingredients, locally sourced where possible, creatively prepared each day.

Executive Chef Michael Krasoski and **Sous Chef Nicholas Douchand** skillfully transform disparate ingredients into satiating nightly specials, shifting the menu as the calendar turns. While some general items remain constant—there's always burger, fish, chicken, salads—the styles and flavoring flow from the freshest ingredients of the day. (Vegan and Vegetarian choices always available.) Officially opened in March of 2017, it's a great place to meet friends in a relaxed atmosphere; share a meal or cocktails after work; or splurge for weekend brunch while enjoying some jazz music.



The restaurant established its reputation through social media and community culinary events. They participate in the *NSB Craft Beer Walks*, *First Saturday Art Walks*, and the *Jazz Festival*, along with other city events such as the *Seafood Festival* (prize winner), and the *Taco Fiesta* (first place). They provided gift certificates to be auctioned at the ACA's *Horsin' Around* and support other non-profit activities. While still under renovation, a community-wide invitation went out to a complimentary July 4th party to enjoy a front-row river view of the fireworks. They also supplied yummy cheeseburgers for the Rotary Club's *Cheeseburgers in Paradise*, and hosted the *BIG Life fundraiser* for brain injury victims.

Both locals and visitors quickly recognized the quality of menu items and the unique ambiance of Riverpark Terrace. I'm sure this writer wasn't the only food lover who first spoke with Beth and Mary during last year's IMAGES Art Festival, a few weeks prior to the restaurant's soft opening. (Subsequently, I dined there three times in its first open month!)

Currently open for dinner (except Mondays) and weekend brunch (Saturday and Sunday). Look forward to the addition of daily lunches with a river facing view in early 2018. Riverpark Terrace is also available for parties and events—so keep the garden & dining room in mind for your next special day!

A personal note from the owners: Mary and Beth are very excited to be in the town they love so much. They expressed their fortune of having local community support during their initial opening and two hurricanes! They look forward to continually raising the bar on the New Smyrna Beach dining experience.