

THE PALM BEACHER

Chef Daniel Boulud Tells Us What He Thinks Makes Palm Beach Special Ahead Of December's Food And Wine Festival

by Lyssa Goldberg | Nov 13, 2015 11:31 AM



World-renowned chef Daniel Boulud is about as accomplished as it gets—three James Beard Awards, two Michelin stars, and eight restaurants and bars in New York City alone. Here in South Florida, we're lucky enough to be able to enjoy two others: Café Boulud in Palm Beach and db Bistro Moderne in downtown Miami.

Even better, the French culinary superstar will be returning to Palm Beach in December for Palm Beach Food and Wine Festival. No stranger to the annual event, he'll again be hosting his Sunday brunch, Daniel & Friends, at the newly renovated Café Boulud Palm Beach on Dec. 13. The *al fresco* event will feature tastings of classic and non-traditional brunch dishes, inventive cocktails and towering dessert displays.

In advance of the event, we spoke to Boulud about the differences between Palm Beach and Miami, his favorite ethnic cuisines, and his involvement with the James Beard organization Citymeals-on-Wheels, which makes food deliveries to the homebound elderly in New York.

What differences do you see between the Miami restaurant base and the one in Palm Beach?

It's different, and yet, it's the same. There are more people working in Miami than Palm Beach. Palm Beach is a little more for leisure, so it's different in terms of how they entertain themselves. But in Palm Beach, we have a lot of regular customers. It's very well-established. We are celebrating our 15 years now.

Tell me a little more about the changes happening at Café Boulud.

We are revamping the whole restaurant and the menu and all that.

And you also have Palm Beach Food and Wine coming up in December.

Yeah, I always participate, and I do the brunch on Sunday, so that's a fun thing. We have ... Dena Marino and then Marc Murphy, Mike Lata, and then our team at Café Boulud.

Do you have any special plans for this upcoming brunch?

We have different stations in the garden and all over the place. It's going to be fun. It's usually very successful. That festival is *very cool*. Because I mean, Miami is Miami, Palm Beach is Palm Beach, and I think the festival there is to the scale of Palm Beach, so it's really intimate and nice.

THE PALM BEACHER

Chef versus restaurateur—which do you prefer?

I never really compare the two. ... I'll never be only a restaurateur, but I'll always be a chef.

If you weren't a chef, what would you be doing?

I don't even think about it.

What's your favorite type of cuisine—besides French?

Depends where I am, what I do. There's too many cuisines I love. As long as I feel there's integrity of soul and ingredients and technique and taste, all these things are important in cuisine. Today, I love Mexican cuisine, I love South American cuisine, and I think Miami has some of the best talent in South American cuisine here.

It's definitely nice to have all of the cultures come together here.

Yes, it's nice, and you need them all. They can't live only on South American cuisine. I think Miami is coming a little bit out of this Floridian cuisine. There's definitely a lot of support with the local suppliers and all that, but then at the same time, I think there's a real resurgence of South America. We have a chef from Uruguay, from Argentina, we have chefs from Peru, chefs from Mexico opening in Miami, and that's pumping up big time. I'm proud of them. I think it's great.

What kind of food or restaurant concepts do you see there being a lot of room for in today's market?

If I had a crystal ball, I'd be much richer than what I am. ... It's like the stock market. Are you looking for the long haul or are you looking for the short buy and sell, and all that? I think trends come and go, so what will be the next trend? For sure, South American, yes, but a little bit more specific is better.

You're involved with Citymeals-on-Wheels and other food organizations. Could you tell me a little more about a food issue that's important to you?

Many people are lucky to have a family who can take care of themselves, but many people are not so lucky to be taken care of. I think Citymeals, it's about taking care of people who are not abandoned, but they can't afford to cook or shop or take care of themselves, yet they want to live in their apartment. So we deliver 18,000 meals a day in New York with Citymeals, and that's a very big program. Anything related to hunger relief is a good one.