



## TROPICAL LIFE

### FIRST LOOK



**STARTER:** Eel and foie gras with tostones.

## Island icon back open

BY SARA LISS  
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**The goods:** Key Biscayne's iconic Rusty Pelican has reopened after a five-month, \$7 million, top-to-bottom renovation.

**Ambience:** Additions to the massive restaurant, perched on the open bay, include a swanky cocktail bar; floor-to-ceiling bay windows; outdoor tables flanked by fire pits; a glass-enclosed wine corridor; and mid-century style furniture, wood paneling and cushioned booths creating a *Mad Men* vibe.

**The grub:** Modern American. Executive chef Michael Gilligan (W South Beach) churns out an extensive menu of small plates and hearty mains. Prices skew to the special-occasion diner: starters \$7-\$15 and mains \$17-\$42.

Dinner starts with a bread basket packed with cornbread sticks, cheese bread, ciabatta, butter and olives. Then there are 20 small plate starters, including eel & foie gras with tostones (pictured), wild mushroom cappuccino, tempura avocado "fries" and a GLT slider with fried grouper. Mains include a duck fat-fried lamb loin wrapped in phyllo dough and black sea bass over jasmine rice in a cinnamon broth. Grilled steak, lobster tail and pork chop arrive with roasted vegetables and a side.

Desserts include key lime pie, goat cheese cheesecake and a "chocolate sabotage," with mini-molten lava cake, panna cotta and mousse.

**Verdict:** A waterfront classic returns with mod '60s décor and a robust menu of American crowd pleasers.

*The Rusty Pelican, 3201 Rickenbacker Cswy., Key Biscayne, 305-361-3818*