

COASTAL LIVING®

HORSING AROUND:
BEACH POLO
PAGE 84

AMERICA'S BEST
SEAFOOD DIVES

Los Cabos,
Mexico

TOP TRENDS IN
SEASIDE DESIGN

COOL DOWN WITH
OUR FAVORITE
ICE CREAM RECIPES

A Hollywood Producer's
FLORIDA RETREAT

JUNE 2014

\$5.99US \$6.50CAN



06>

0 70992 10460 4



OUR FAVORITE

SEAFOOD DIVES

'Tis the season to grab a chilled beverage and some sublime seafood: Here's our annual batch of casual restaurants that care plenty about fresh fish, fried sides, and seaside locale. The decor? Not so much **BY STEVE MILLBURG**



ALABAMA

The Gulf
ORANGE BEACH

Who needs walls and floors when you have palm trees, sand, and the Gulf of Mexico? At this new spot in Orange Beach, you order at the artfully designed assemblage of repurposed shipping containers where the chalkboard menu lists a handful of ever-changing choices—usually a burger and a fish sandwich (deliciously local and served blackened or fried), soup or pasta, and maybe something a bit more conceptual, like crawfish tacos stuffed with jicama slaw. You dine at an open-air table—or

loungue in a chair right on the sand. When there's not live music, The Gulf spins records. Yes, actual vinyl. Expect to linger; facebook.com/thegulfal.

CALIFORNIA

Flying Fish Bar & Grill
HALF MOON BAY

The Flying Fish's whimsical retro-tropical feel survived the restaurant's 2011 move down the block to much larger quarters. So did the high quality of the food, including locally renowned fish tacos (try the grilled mahi version, with cabbage, white sauce, and a spicy-sweet mango salsa you'll

want to lick off your fingers) and crabby-cheesy bread (which is exactly what it sounds like). The bar specializes in such playful and colorful cocktails as blood orange margaritas and mint-cucumber mojitos; flyingfishgrill.net.

Lobster West
ENCINITAS

The food here lives up to the restaurant's moniker: Sustainable lobster arrives via overnight delivery each day and is the star of the menu. The Connecticut-style lobster roll is served warm—you'll need extra napkins to sop up the drawn-butter goodness. Or try the cold Maine-style roll, which



Choose between tables on the turf or a lounge chair in the sand at The Gulf.

overflows with tender chunks of seafood touched oh-so-lightly by mayo, lemon butter, and a spice blend. The shrimp rolls and blue crab rolls are also served on squishy, toasted, split-top buns and served with Cape Cod potato chips and a house-made, vinegar-based slaw. Bonus: Local beers and California wines are recent additions to the menu; lobsterwest.com.

■■■■■ **CONNECTICUT** ■■■■■
Johnny Ad's
OLD SAYBROOK

Johnny Ad's remains a roadside seafood shack at heart. Patrons still use the order and pickup windows of the old takeout stand, thought it's been augmented over the years by the addition of a sheltered waiting area and a dining room. You can also enjoy your lobster roll or hot-from-

the-kitchen fried seafood at the outdoor picnic tables. While you wait (because Johnny Ad's cooks to order), check out the vintage photographs that go all the way back to the restaurant's founding in 1957; johnnyads.com.

■■■■■■■■■■■ **FLORIDA** ■■■■■■■■■■
Key Fisheries
MARATHON

The fun starts before you even order here. First, give the person behind the window your thoughts on the question of the day (maybe your favorite television show or your favorite superhero). But remember your answer, because it will be the name of your order when it's bellowed over the loudspeaker. You'll claim a cafeteria-style tray filled with a trove of possibilities: stone crab soup, conch fritters, and other



Lobster West in Encinitas, California, serves the classic lobster roll warm or cold, both with chips and house-made slaw.

fresh catches from the Gulf and Florida Bay. And while you may not think seafood and sauerkraut are a perfect match, the "famous" lobster Reuben is sweet and tangy bliss; keyfisheries.com.

The Back Porch
Seafood & Oyster House
DESTIN

Giant open windows provide expansive views of white sand and emerald green water. The sea breeze tickles your hair as you lazily people-watch until the glory of a Gulf of Mexico sunset pulls your attention skyward. The Back Porch takes pride in popularizing amberjack, a firm white fish seldom found on menus before the restaurant began featuring it in sandwiches. (We like the "angry" version, with spicy mayo.) Also check out the shrimp-, fish-, and crabmeat-filled gumbo, and the tart Key lime pie; theback-porch.com.

■■■■■■■■■■■ **ILLINOIS** ■■■■■■■■■■
Fish Bar
CHICAGO

This corner spot in Lakeview is very local-fisherman-meets-beach-chic. The protein on the plate—from the cod in the fish tacos to the raw oysters—is sustainable, wild-caught, or responsibly farmed. Distressed wood covers the walls, and mismatched stools surround the bar, which is topped with various sauces and communal paper towel rolls. A shiny kayak hangs above dark wooden booths, where couples share the smoked whitefish spread with capers and lemon served in glass jars. But the