

BY E.C. GLADSTONE Photos by Sabin Orr & Beverly Poppe

Oceans of Devotion

Famous flavors, freshest food draws the faithful



Cracked king crab legs

Here's the thing about being a "legend"—you still have to prove it every day. And while Joe's may be relatively young in Las Vegas, it is the direct offspring of the original Joe's Stone Crab in Miami Beach, with a legacy dating back 96 years. That kind of pedigree is hard to find these days, so it's a good thing Joe's tuxedoed staff takes it seriously.

Not to imply this is a stuffy place. Joe's actually offers three distinct environments: a bustling people-watching "patio" in the Forum Shops' rotunda, a more casual, high-ceilinged bar, and a classic wood beams-and-banquettes dining room straight out of the 1950s. There are also swank function rooms overlooking the Strip and a gorgeous private "boardroom." Coat and tie aren't required in the latter, but they are common, reflecting how venerated are both the Miami Beach original and its first child in Chicago. In fact, Joe's has long been a magnet not only for high-rollers, but also competing casino executives, politicians, athletes and actors. The celeb guest list is so long, let me just read the K's: Jason Kidd, Larry King, Heidi Klum, Keira Knightley. Mm'kay?

They come here, of course, for the food, as should you. Joe's focuses on quality ingredients, and it shows, starting with a signature stone crab claws, sustainably harvested in the Gulf of Mexico, cooked on dock and flown to arrive here no more than 24 hours from the water. Chilled and cracked for you tableside, the light, flaky flesh is hard to resist.

Now that the fall season for king crab has started, that, too, is available, flown fresh to arrive less than 18 hours from the waters of Alaska. This is a must—velvety, sweet and creamy, without a hint of brine or mealiness that you get from lesser crab.

Joe's also offers scallops, shrimp, lobster and several fish in several old-school styles. On my most recent visit, I shared a Dover sole that was lightly breaded and gorgeously sautéed to a golden hue; our waiter deftly deboned it at the table and served it with a slightly caramelized lemon butter.

The menu has many surprises beyond seafood, too: an excellent chopped vegetable salad, good garlic creamed spinach, rustic roasted corn and a bone-in filet mignon that is seriously among the very best I've had anywhere in Vegas. Fried chicken is another unexpected pleasure, a hefty four pieces, lightly battered and deep-fried to order, the crispy crumb batter giving way to moist flavorful meat within.

If you manage to save room, dessert pies are offered in half portions should you want to sample more than one. Seeking a safe harbor from the fast-paced fusion-focused food scene—somewhere more simply satisfying? This is the place.

Signature stone crab claws



Bone-in filet mignon



Joe's Seafood, Prime Steak & Stone Crab

The Forum Shops at Caesars

11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Sun.-Thurs., 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Fri.-Sat. 702.792.9222