

JANUARY
2025

BANK & ENTREPRENEUR | FOODPRENEURS AFRICA (ATLANTA EDITION)



Bank & Entrepreneur

JANUARY 2025

AFRICA

ONE STREET
OVER
-
ROCK-STEADY
ATLANTA

ATLANTA'S
AFRICA-INSPIRED
RESTAURATEURS OFFER A
RICH TAPESTRY OF
CULINARY TRADITIONS.



ZIMBABWE'S
EXPORT
CHEF GRACIA BVUTE'S CUISINE IS DEEPLY
ROOTED IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

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From The Editor

THE FOOD AGENDA



Anne N. Agbakoba
Editor-in-Chief

The recent Agriculture Summit Africa (ASA) 2024, themed "From Scarcity to Security," brought together leaders from 30 countries to address food security and agriculture transformation across Africa, and aiming to turn Africa's agriculture into a multi-trillion-dollar industry.

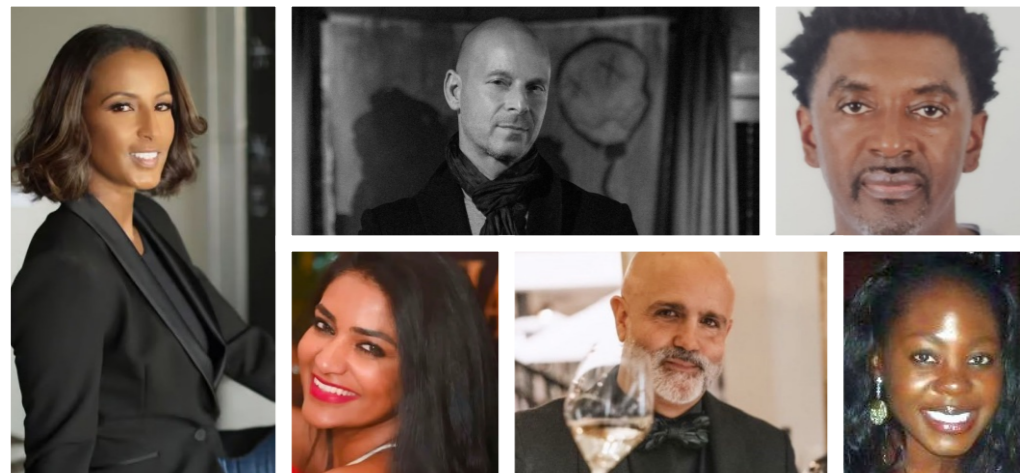
Against this backdrop, the January 2025 issue of *Bank & Entrepreneur Africa* (whose focus is African foodpreneurs in the Atlanta-USA region), is inextricably tied to several fall-outs from ASA 2024 which directly affect the food service industry - access to reliable supply chains, sustainable farming, and adopting emerging agricultural trends that restaurateurs can incorporate into their offerings (such as farm-to-table dining).

It is especially pleasing to hear our Cover persons (Franco-Congolese Chef **Mick Élysée** and Zimbabwe's Chef **Gracia Bvute**) talk convincingly gastronomy, zero waste, resilient crops, as well as food security and diversity.

Our main feature highlights five high-achieving food service providers (**The Butter Crumble**, **Verdure Kitchen**, **10 Degrees South**, **One Street Over**, and **Rock Steady ATL**) - all leaders for their combined skill set of eco-dining awareness, craftsmanship, and a mastery of culinary presentation.

Enjoy the read – and photos – as they expand your culinary choices over several holiday seasons.

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■ INTRODUCING CHEF GRACIA BVUTE

Gracia Bvute is a self-taught chef and entrepreneur who has swiftly become a leading figure in Zimbabwe's culinary world. Celebrated for her innovative reimagining of traditional Zimbabwean cuisine, Gracia has earned international acclaim, with features in *GQ* magazine and appearances on the popular food review series *Best Ever Food Review Show*.

As the founder and director of Pabvute Gourmet, Gracia specialises in delivering unique, culturally immersive dining experiences. Her catering company blends traditional buffet-style service with Zimbabwean cultural elements, offering patrons a distinctive culinary journey. Pabvute Gourmet's creative approach earned top honors at the inaugural UN Tourism Gastronomy Forum for Africa, where they triumphed in a competitive pitch against businesses from across the continent.

Gracia's culinary talent is matched by her business expertise. She holds dual degrees

business and explore new partnerships. With her commitment to excellence and cultural heritage, Pabvute Gourmet remains a trailblazer in Zimbabwe's culinary industry.

We said to Gracia: "It is fascinating that you are self-taught, yet you have won awards and attracted global attention. What lessons can aspiring foodpreneurs learn from this?" Her answer was swift:

I believe that our passions often lie in unexpected places, sometimes disguised as hobbies or everyday tasks. My journey began with selling food from my dorm room in university, and it was there that I discovered a deep-rooted joy in culinary pursuits.

The Internet has been an invaluable resource for learning new techniques and expanding my culinary knowledge.

Additionally, I've found great value in seeking guidance from experienced individuals who can share their cultural traditions and business insights.

SELF TAUGHT

in International Hospitality Management from Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, and International Business Administration from Brighton University. Her entrepreneurial skills have been further refined through the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program, and collaborations with prominent African YouTuber Wode Maya.

Driven by her passion for culinary innovation and her dedication to showcasing Zimbabwean cuisine on a global stage, Gracia continues to grow her

Incorporating elements like traditional food preparation methods and indigenous ingredients into my business has helped me create a truly unique and authentic brand. Remember, having a clear goal and understanding your brand's purpose is essential. While you may feel less qualified than professional chefs, passion and dedication can go a long way. Don't be afraid to embrace your individuality and let it shine through in your work."

 @pabvute_gourmet



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THE TRAILBLAZER

G

Gracia Bvute's passion for showcasing the rich flavours of Zimbabwean cuisine globally has positioned her as a gastronomic ambassador for her country, inspiring others to appreciate and innovate within their own traditional food offerings. In this interview, Anne Agbakoba tries to unravel the thoughts of one of Zimbabwe's most valuable exports:

You recently received a United Nations Startup Award. What was that about?

We were honoured to participate in the inaugural UN Tourism Gastronomy Forum for Africa in Victoria Falls. During this event, we entered a competition meant to showcase innovative businesses within the African food tourism industry and highlight their local impact.

Our company, PaBvute Gourmet, competed against four other African businesses from Ghana, Rwanda, Morocco, and another Zimbabwean company. We emerged as the winners after a rigorous pitch presentation and evaluation by a panel of judges. Our

unique selling point was our innovative pop-up buffet style dining experience, which incorporates traditional Zimbabwean cultural elements such as clay pots and charcoal heaters to create a truly authentic and memorable culinary journey.

We hear you mention peculiar foods such as Matemba, Nzungu, Madora, Mazhanje. What, in your mind, are the most authentic and must-have Zimbabwean platters and flavours.

Zimbabwean cuisine is renowned for its diversity and its commitment to utilising every part of an animal, reflecting our cultural heritage. From head to hoof, no part goes to waste. One example is the chicken head and feet, which can be transformed into a delicious canapé.

Insects, such as **Ishwa** (termites), **Madora** (mopane worms), and **Dzambarafuta** (Carebara vidua) are also integral parts of our culinary traditions. Additionally, we have a wealth of traditional fruits, including **Mazhanje** (Uapaca kirkiana), **Masawu** (Ziziphus Mauritania), **Mawuyu** (Baobab fruit), and **Nyii** (Bird plum).

At PaBvute Gourmet, we have reinvented these traditional seasonal ingredients, combining them to create unique Zimbabwean-style grazing stations or boards. One of my personal favourites is peanut butter rice, which pairs perfectly with oxtail, a highly prized delicacy in Zimbabwe. By showcasing these authentic flavours and culinary traditions, we aim to celebrate the rich heritage of Zimbabwean cuisine.



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*PaBvute's unique selling point is our ability to tell the Zimbabwean story through our distinctive cultural displays. We incorporate traditional elements like **Rukukwe** (African reed mats), **Rusero** (winnowing baskets), and **kaduri nekamutswi** (baby pestle and mortar) into our buffet station setups. The combination of traditional décor, live charcoal-fired cooking, and clay pot dishes creates a truly immersive dining experience. Remember, sometimes the most authentic and memorable elements of your business are the ones that have been part of your life from the beginning*

PaBvute Gourmet also tend to serve Nigerian dishes - Egusi, Efo-riro, peppered goat etc. What is the business case for offering a choice of foods from other African countries?

We are dedicated to celebrating African culture and tradition in all its forms. One of our most popular services is our traditional wedding setups, which often involve guests from diverse cultural backgrounds. Offering a variety of African cuisines allows us to cater to the unique preferences of our clients and create a truly memorable experience. My personal experience with West African cuisine, gained from cooking for friends and exploring the flavours of countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon, has given me a distinct advantage over local caterers. By offering dishes like Jollof rice, egusi soup, peppered goat, and Efo-Riro, we can provide our clients with a truly authentic and diverse culinary experience.

From your personal experience, how does one successfully start and grow a food business - and stand out while at it?

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*Food is a universal language, and every food business has the opportunity to create memorable experiences. A prime example is my collaboration with Sonny from the *Best Ever Food Review Show*, a popular food vlogger with over 10 million subscribers on YouTube. By hosting him in Zimbabwe and showcasing our diverse cuisine, we were able to gain significant exposure and highlight the unique offerings of Zimbabwean gastronomy*

While starting a food business can be relatively easy, differentiating yourself from competitors is crucial. Staying true to your passion and goals is essential. Social media platforms provide a powerful tool for visual storytelling and sharing your brand's unique journey. Remember, sometimes the most authentic and memorable elements of your business are the ones that have been part of your life from the beginning.

Whether a foodpreneur runs a fine dining restaurant, a food truck business, or take-away store - what common opportunities do they all have in terms of 'wow-ing' the customer?

Food is a universal language, and every food business has the opportunity to create memorable experiences. A prime example is my collaboration with Sonny from the *Best Ever Food Review Show*, a popular food vlogger with over 10 million subscribers on YouTube. By hosting him in Zimbabwe and showcasing our diverse cuisine, we were able to gain significant exposure and highlight the unique offerings of Zimbabwean gastronomy. Harnessing creativity is essential for making your brand stand out. By offering unique menus, exceptional branding, and a memorable dining experience, you can go beyond simply satisfying hunger and create a lasting impression on your customers. The goal is to provide more than just food; it's about sharing your story and creating a truly enjoyable experience.”

■ ON THE MENU



PaBvute's distinctive traditional buffet station, showcasing Zimbabwean cultural ware: clay pots and mud heaters



Famous, unique: PaBvute creates traditional Zimbabwean fruits grazing station (Mazhanje)



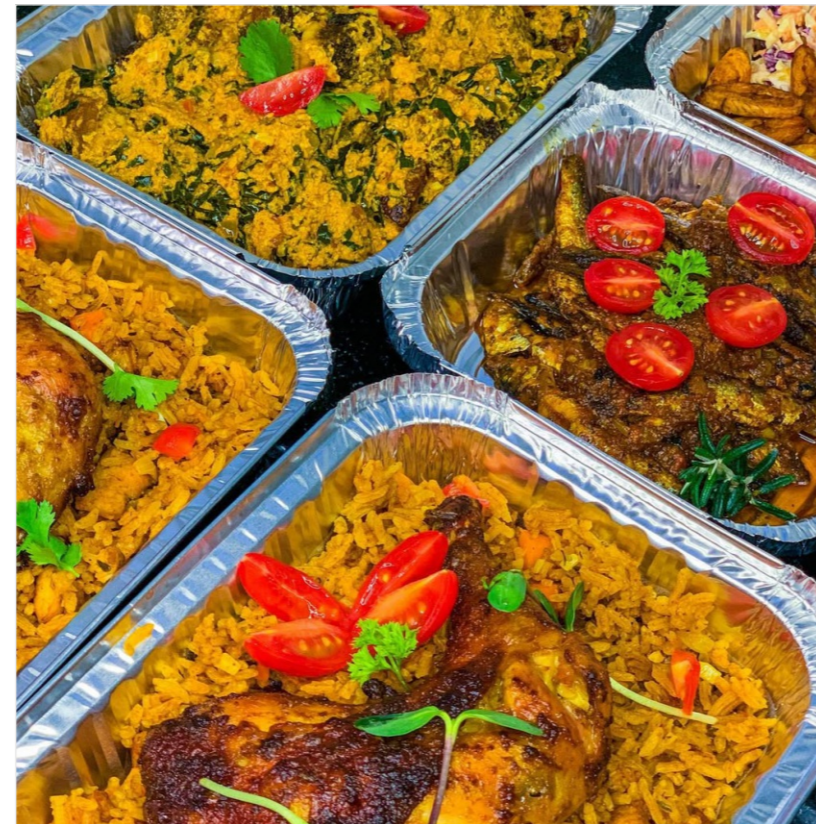
Slow cooked oxtail paired with cream cheese mashed potatoes



Nigeria-meets-Zimbabwe: Small chops bar, wedding cocktail hour (Amarula puff puffs, Suya Kebab, spicy chicken samosas, veggie samosas, roasted ground nuts)



Kapenta/Matamba: A type of dried freshwater sardine called Lake Tanganyika Sardine.



A taste of West Africa: Jollof rice, egusi soup, Okra soup



Honde valley style Zondo (cow foot) in a Red wine reduction sauce, with a side of Samp (Manhuchu).



Sushi, the PaBvute Gourmet way

CHEF GRACIA BVUTE: HOMAGE TO CULTURE

Exquisitely seared strip steak infused with Nigerian Suya flavours, accompanied by sautéed spinach and a luscious creamy sauce enriched with Ashanti pepper (a botanical treasure from the West African coast), also known as Melegueta or Alligator pepper

■ FEATURE: VERDURE KITCHEN & COCKTAILS

Cultured Dining

Chef Jean-Louis Sangare, originally from Côte d'Ivoire, fulfilled his dream of highlighting African cuisine by opening Verdure Kitchen & Cocktails in Atlanta's Midtown in July 2024, alongside partners Aïda Lemma and Jacob Ilkner.

After nearly two decades at Le Bilboquet in New York and Atlanta, Sangare brings a French-trained approach to African-inspired dishes.

Verdure's menu creatively celebrates flavours from countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Ghana, offering a creative and elevated menu of signature dishes that include Chicken Yassa and creamy lobster mac and cheese, Egusi hummus, charred okra with Ethiopian berbere aioli, pan-seared branzino

stuffed with heirloom tomatoes and spices, and a crispy octopus that sits atop corn purée (a tribute to corn's prominent use in Africa, says Sangare)..

The restaurant's ambiance complements its cuisine, featuring lush botanical designs and a striking cocktail program led by Betty Tesfaye, who draws inspiration from Ethiopia's Lake Bishoftu Resort.

Located near Piedmont Park, Verdure has quickly gained attention for its distinctive cuisine, thoughtful service and inviting atmosphere, which enhance the dining experience of guests. It is an exciting addition to Atlanta's culinary landscape, led by Sangare who has a deep passion for creative and globally influenced cuisine.



Tender octopus with a perfectly crispy exterior, accompanied by a velvety corn puree, fragrant green herbs, spicy pickled onions, and finished with a drizzle of Verdure oil.



Chef Jean-Louis Sangare
[Photography by restauWant]

Justin Anthony
(Founder, 10 Degrees
South - part of the
True Story Brands
Group)

■ FEATURE: 10 DEGREES SOUTH

On your mark. Steady. Go.

O

Originally born and raised in South Africa, Anthony Justin was 23 years old when he relocated to the US where he played professional soccer, hitting the fields as a striker for the Atlanta Ruckus. This was in 1996, and he certainly did not see himself as a future Foodpreneur – not until a knee injury forced him into early retirement.

As a sidelined 23-year-old living in a foreign country, Anthony's began to think that his income-earning options were limited. Whenever his mind wandered, he recalled his days as a professional ball player in London, and

how the existence of a South African sports pub located nearby made him feel a little less homesick for Johannesburg.

That was a lightbulb moment for Justin – he looked around at all the expatriates in Atlanta, and saying to himself: “Let’s create something special for them”- he went ahead to open the first authentic South African restaurant in the United States, 10 Degrees South. This, in 1998, alongside his parents, Derek and Diane.

Today, Restaurateur and entrepreneur Justin Anthony is known to have founded True Story Brands as a South African inspired hospitality group comprising iconic Atlanta dining destinations: 10 Degrees South, Yebo Beach Haus, Biltong Bar and The Cape Restaurant & Beach Bar.

Beyond simply serving remarkable food and drink, True Story Brand’s mission is to take people on a culinary safari, showing them the best of South African food and culture. This philosophy of being welcoming, kind and inclusive is best summed up in a uniquely South African saying — **JUST BE LEKKER.**



The Cape Kingklip, a grilled South-African fish dressed in a lemon butter sauce with basmati rice and sautéed vegetables on the side



Lobster spring rolls, prepared with mildly-spicy lobster meat and topped with house-made Peri-Peri Aioli



Best-selling pies. By. Adaobi

Adaobi Ofor is the founder of The Butter Crumble, a unique bakery in Atlanta known for its Nigerian-inspired handheld pies. Emphasising fresh, handcrafted pastries, The Butter Crumble offers both sweet and savoury options, such as the classic Nigerian beef pie and innovative flavours like blueberry. All pies are baked daily using high-quality ingredients to ensure rich and authentic flavours.

Inspired by traditional Nigerian cuisine, the Butter Crumble café offers a range of unbelievably tasty sweet and savoury pie options, such as their signature beef pie, filled with Angus ground beef, vegetables, and spices - as well as vegetarian, chicken, and seafood pies. For those with a sweet tooth, their dessert selection features blueberry cream, apple tart, peach cobbler, and pecan pies.

The bakery prides itself on crafting fresh, handmade pies daily and serves as a popular spot for a taste of African-inspired comfort food.

Ms. Adaobi Ofor, has successfully blended a passion for creating unique culinary experiences with her Nigerian cultural heritage to make the café a go-to spot in Atlanta.

This is reflected in an Instagram exchange between the bakery and a friendly client, @chow_a_la_carte:

@chow_a_la_carte:
Did we tell how much we love Adaobi? Come and taste her delicious pies! For the amount of pies I consume, I might need intervention ☐

thebuttercrumble:
@chow_a_la_carte no intervention needed!

thebuttercrumble.com/



FUSION MAGIC

M

Mable Abraham and Faven Resson are co-Founders of Maven Hospitality and joint owners of One Street Over. Born and raised in India, Mable is an accomplished deal maker and business leader with a demonstrated history of working in both established and hyper growth

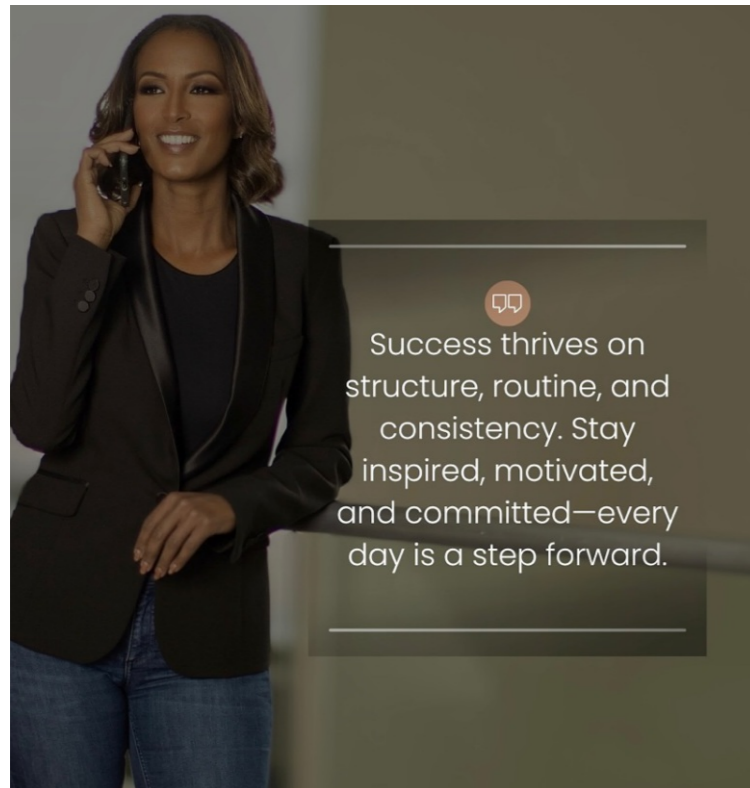
environments. On the other hand, Faven is originally Ethiopian, imbued with a contagious zest for life, and has racked up over 23 years of high-energy experience in the hospitality industry. She is described as the dynamic force driving the success of the Maven Hospitality Group.

Faven and Mable have established One Street Over in Atlanta as an opulent, cozy and vibrant spot that stands out for its inviting atmosphere and creative menu, offering a unique fusion of Indian, Ethiopian, and Eritrean flavours.

The menu features a variety of small plates, such as tapas, salads, entrées, and desserts, with some of the popular dishes including the braised chicken (inspired by Ethiopian Doro Wat), tikka chicken flatbread, salmon tandoori, spiced corn ribs, and indulgent desserts..

What sets this restaurant apart is its emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients that inspire unique dishes. The menu often changes to reflect the season, ensuring a dynamic dining experience with every visit.

onestreetoveratl.com



Faven Resson
Co-Founder, Maven Hospitality &
Owner, One Street Over



Mable Abraham
Co-Founder, Maven Hospitality
& Owner, One Street Over



Berberé Ribs Taco: Ribeye cubes coated in Berbere (a spice mix that is a key ingredient in Ethiopian and Eritrean cooking), garnished with Arugula lettuce, grilled onions, Avocado Crema, and flour tortilla



Founder of Rock Steady Atlanta, Joseph Russo

Pleasing Demanding Palates

Joseph Russo is the founder of Rock Steady, an Afro-Caribbean restaurant and lounge located in Atlanta's West Midtown neighbourhood. He has over 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, with a career shaped by extensive travels through South America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. These experiences inspired Russo's vision for creating venues that blend music, culture, and food to foster inclusivity and vibrant connections.

His Atlanta venture, Rock Steady, is a modern dining experience with a menu that marries West African and Caribbean influences, sending diners on a special gastronomic journey.

The establishment's chefs, acclaimed masters, have crafted a plethora of flavours spanning Jamaica, Haiti, and West Africa. Whether it's an innovative oxtail pasta dish tinged with traditional spices, or the hearty warmth of goat stew,

and specialties such as the Haitian Whole Fried Snapper and Jerk Grilled Chicken (which pay homage to Haiti and Jamaica), Rock Steady promises that each bite will be a revelation, celebrating the depth and breadth of Afro-Caribbean culinary influence with a modern twist.

The restaurant's entire ambience is enhanced by curated Afro-Caribbean music and a design inspired by diasporic art and textiles.

Before opening Rock Steady, Russo had established several successful venues in Chicago, such as The Shrine, a live music venue, and Coup d'Etat, a cocktail lounge. These spaces were celebrated for attracting diverse audiences and hosting artists from genres like Reggae, Afrobeat, and Hip-Hop.

rocksteadyatl.com



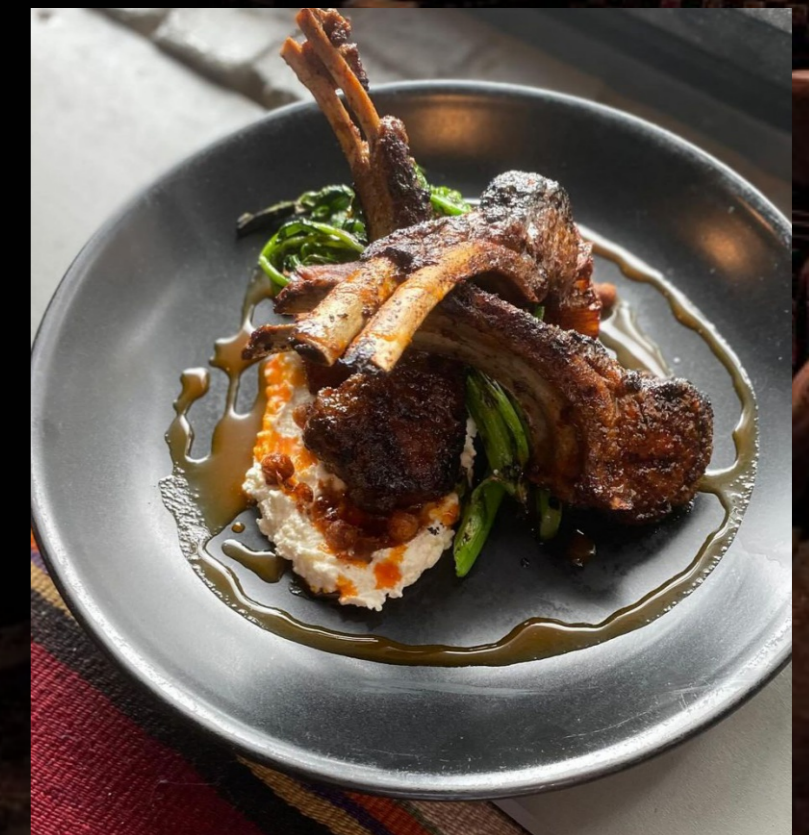
Goat, rice, Bannan Peze (fried unripe plantain), Pikliz (a spicy, crunchy, and tangy Haitian condiment made from pickled cabbage, onions, carrots, and bell peppers)



Haitian whole fried snapper for dinner. Fried, epis-marinated whole red snapper, Pikliz, Djon Djon rice (Haitian mushroom rice and peas), fried sweet plantains, charred lime



Beef patties - made with Caribbean spiced beef, house-made curry dough, Pikliz de Gallo, and topped with Mojo Rojo sauce



#ChefsSpecial: Berbere lamb chops, herb potato cake, charred rapini, whipped feta, saffron-carrot glaze, spiced chickpeas