

¿QUE PASA?

Columbia
Since 1905

GEM of
SPANISH RESTAURANTSSM

SUMMER 2009

Ybor City Sarasota St. Augustine St. Petersburg Clearwater Celebration Columbia Café

Columbia Restaurant on St. Armands Circle Celebrates 50th Anniversary Proud to be Sarasota's Oldest Restaurant



Fifty years ago the record label “Motown” was created, launching a new sound that went on to define a generation. A doll named Barbie made her debut to the delight of young girls. And The Columbia Restaurant opened on St. Armands Circle, bringing A Taste of Spain to locals and visitors.

The Columbia restaurant on St. Armands Circle was opened by the second and third generation family members of the Hernandez Gonzmart family. Casimiro Hernandez Jr. (second generation) and Cesar Gonzmart (who married third generation family member Adela Hernandez Gonzmart) opened this restaurant in 1959.

Menu favorites include Columbia’s Original “1905” Salad™ - named “One of America’s Top 10 Best Salads” by USA Today, Spanish bean soup, paella, snapper “alicante,” pompano en papillot, and arroz con pollo. All Columbia Restaurants are open daily for lunch and dinner, and accept reservations.

All Columbia Restaurants are owned and operated by fourth and fifth generation members of the founding family.

This year, The Columbia on St. Armands Circle celebrates its 50th anniversary, and is proud to be Sarasota’s oldest restaurant.

The Columbia Restaurant on St. Armands Circle is a sister to the 104-year-old family-owned Columbia in Tampa’s Historic District of Ybor City. The Columbia of Ybor City is the oldest restaurant in Florida. Other locations include the historic district in St. Augustine, The Pier in St. Petersburg, Sand Key in Clearwater Beach, Central Florida’s town of Celebration, and the family’s newest venture opened in 2009, the Columbia Café at the Tampa Bay History Center. All Columbia Restaurants are owned and operated by the Gonzmart family, fourth and fifth generation members of the founding family.





A Message from Richard

“There’s no such thing as failure, coasting to the bottom is the only disgrace.”

J. POPPER

I am having trouble understanding how General Motors failed; I do “understand” but HOW is it possible that the leaders

of what was once considered the barometer for business in the USA let themselves get into this situation? It probably goes back to a decision made over 40 years ago when the leaders of GM decided to make “concessions” to the UAW knowing full well that it was the beginning of the end of this once great organization by agreeing to those terms. Pride and quality slipped and the prices increased while the imports quality and design improved with better performance, reliability at a better value. These new competitors workforce are proud of their products and are working in a good environment with fair compensation and benefits.

It seems our current government believes the answer is dumping billions of dollars into a company that decided “coasting” into their current state was the right thing to do. This attitude will almost always be doomsday for any organization. In the 100 plus years of the Columbia we have tried to be a responsible employer and good corporate citizen. Our philosophy has always been to help those less fortunate and facing challenges in a responsible manner, we want to be leader in our industry while providing our staff a safe workplace that they proudly can say to others “I work at the Columbia Restaurant”.

Staying at the top of our game doesn’t come easily; it takes countless hours daily to review the trends and checking what decisions have been made by other companies and at the same time reviewing their success or failure of their decisions. Testing new items and giving our guest an experience that surpasses what they are seeking is our mission. There are so many other choices when it comes to dining out but by caring and sometimes taking risk usually results in positive experience, but realizing everything we try will not always work is OK too as long as we learned from the mistake.

Following these guidelines I have listed below is how I believe we can succeed in the years to come.

SERVICE:

Service is the life blood of any organization, everything flows from it and it is nourished by it. Customer service is not a department, it’s an attitude.

PASSION:

To love what we do and feel that it matters...how could anything be more fun?

QUALITY:

There is no finish line when it comes to the race for quality. Quality is the mother of success.

FOCUS:

Focus on the few items that will make a big impact, not the insignificant many.

EXCELLENCE:

“Excellence is not an act...it’s a habit” - Aristotle

HABITS:

If you make good habits, good habits will make you.

MAY I HELP YOU...

Are four of the most appreciated words in the English language, use them often!

INTEGRITY:

Wisdom is knowing the right path to take. Integrity is taking it!



Richard and Casey Gonzmart Named Recipients of the

Vicente Martinez Ybor Legacy Award

*Ybor City Museum Society Honors National Historic
Landmark District's Visionaries*

The Ybor City Museum Society hosted the 25th Anniversary Legacy Awards Brunch at The Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City on Sunday, June 7, 2009. The event celebrated the achievements of those who have made a lasting impact on Ybor City, one of only two active National Historic Landmark Districts in Florida. Richard and Casey Gonzmart were honored with the Vicente Martinez Ybor Legacy Award.

The Gonzmart brothers are the great-grandsons of Casimiro Hernandez, Sr. who in 1905 founded the internationally recognized Columbia restaurant in Ybor City. As fourth generation family members, they serve as President and Chairman, respectively, of the Columbia Restaurant. Both brothers studied hotel and restaurant administration in Madrid, Spain as well as other well-known culinary centers, and have brought their extensive knowledge and background in the restaurant business to Ybor City in order to help build it as a vibrant community. The Gonzmarts have effectively helped drive local and state tourism, are active in community and economic development organizations, and have supported many philanthropies throughout the area.

The Ybor City Museum Society serves to preserve, promote and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of Ybor City and support the Ybor City Museum State Park.

The Columbia Welcomes Their Newest Addition

Amelia Ann Turner, 6th generation of the Columbia Restaurant in Tampa's Historic Ybor City, was born on May 3rd, 2009 to proud parents, 5th generation family member Andrea Gonzmart and her husband, Sherrod Turner. Amelia Ann is their first child.

Amelia Ann weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Amelia joins a long line of family restaurateurs. Her Grandfather is Richard Gonzmart, who is the 4th generation family member and great-grandson of Casimiro Hernandez, Sr., the founder of the world-famous Columbia Restaurant in Tampa's Historic Ybor City.

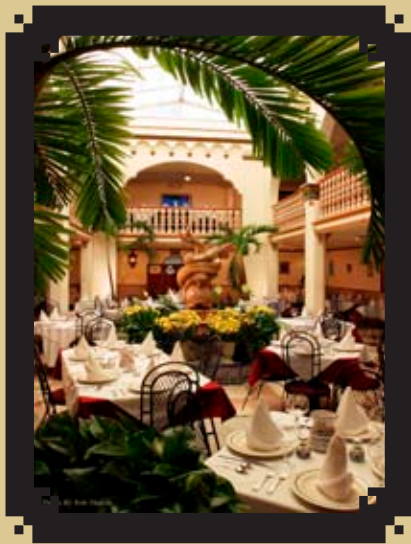




¿QUE PASA?

is a quarterly newsletter for
the Columbia Restaurant.

EDITOR: Angela Geml



Send story ideas
and comments to

A.Geml@columbiarestaurant.com

If you work for The Columbia
and would like to share

your story about
working with us,
please contact

Angela at

A.Geml@columbiarestaurant.com

Blindfolded Winemaker Dinner at The Columbia in Ybor City

Raises \$2,500 for the Lions Eye Institute of Ybor City

The Columbia Restaurant of Ybor City held a blindfolded winemaker dinner with Spain's legendary Torres Winery on Wednesday, May 27th, 2009. Fifty participants enjoyed multiple courses while using only their sense of touch, taste, smell and hearing to experience the meal and wines, and were able to "see" how lack of sight affects your senses. \$2,500 from the dinner was donated to the Lions Eye Institute of Ybor City.

The Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the recovery, evaluation and distribution of eye tissue for transplantation, research and education. The eye institute is one of the largest in the world. Since its inception, CFLETB has brought the "Gift of Sight" to over 30,000 men, women and children worldwide.





The Columbia Adds New Vegetarian Section to Menu

The Columbia Restaurant has added a new vegetarian section, along with some new menu items to their lunch and dinner menu in their six locations that include Ybor City, Sarasota, St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, Clearwater Beach and Celebration.

Sparkling wine lovers can enjoy a newly created dish; **Pollo y Pasta "Cristalino"** -- Sautéed chicken breast tossed with fresh pasta pockets stuffed with truffles and cheese simmered in a rich creamy sauce made with Spain's premium Cava sparkling wine, Cristalino. A new tapas item, **Croquetas de Langosta**, is two large croquettes made with Maine lobster meat, blended into a delicate roux, breaded with Cuban bread crumbs and served with a lobster sauce.

Vegetarians and those looking for healthier menu choices will find three dinner entrees to choose from, and a lunch entrée to try in our new vegetarian section.



New Vegetarian Dinner Entrees

Eggplant "Riojana"

Sliced eggplant breaded with ground plantain crumbs, smothered in our rich Rioja sauce of tomatoes, garlic, capers, olives and red wine topped with melted Galician Tetilla cheese.

Pasta con Trufas "Cristalino"

Fresh pasta pockets stuffed with truffles and cheese simmered in a rich creamy sauce made with Spain's premium Cava sparkling wine, Cristalino.

Vegetarian "Cubana"

Yuca, black beans, white rice, platanos, tostones and sautéed fresh vegetables.

New Vegetarian Lunch Entree

Eggplant "Riojana"

Sliced eggplant breaded with ground plantain crumbs, smothered in our rich Rioja sauce of tomatoes, garlic, capers, olives and red wine topped with melted Galician Tetilla cheese.



Other New Items

Tapas

Croquetas de Langosta

Two large croquettes made with Maine lobster meat, blended into a delicate roux, breaded with Cuban bread crumbs, served with a lobster sauce.

Dinner Entrees

Pollo y Pasta "Cristalino"

Sautéed chicken breast tossed with fresh pasta pockets stuffed with truffles and cheese simmered in a rich creamy sauce made with Spain's premium Cava sparkling wine Cristalino.





Margaret "Gigi" Miglio and Barry Strauss

of The Columbia Ybor City Honored with the Bern Laxer Award of Excellence

MARGARET "GIGI" MIGLIO AND BARRY STRAUSS, THE BARTENDING TEAM FROM THE COLUMBIA OF YBOR CITY WERE HONORED ON MAY 13, 2009 WITH THE "BERN LAXER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE." THIS AWARD WAS NAMED FOR BERN LAXER, THE FOUNDER OF TAMPA'S LEGENDARY BERN'S STEAK HOUSE. TAMPA BAY AND COMPANY CREATED THE AWARD, AND IT WAS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO RECOGNIZE FRONT-LINE STAFF FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN TAMPA.

Here is their story.

Some things just go together. Fred and Ginger.

Rhett and Scarlett. Florida, sunshine and orange juice. Café con leche and Cuban toast. Chicken and yellow rice. Scotch and soda. Martinis and olives. And the Columbia's own team of bartenders, Barry and Gigi.

Margaret "Gigi" Miglio has been with the Columbia Restaurant Group for 18 years, working as first as server, and now as a bartender. Barry Strauss has been with the Columbia Restaurant Group as a bartender for 15 years. Since they always work together as a team, we are nominating both Barry and Gigi together for the Bern Laxer Award of Excellence.

When you walk into the Columbia in Ybor City's Café dining room, you are greeted by the bartending team of Barry and Gigi. Gigi feels it is important to make all guests feel at home, and she greets everyone warmly. Barry is quick to recognize a guest who is in need of cheering up, and he is known for telling jokes and making guests smile.

Barry and Gigi are often asked by out of town visitors about what to do on their vacation. Gigi recommends taking the streetcar from Ybor City to Chammelside, to get an idea of the different sights. Barry recommends taking a walk down 7th Avenue in Ybor City to get an overview of all the area has to do.

With Gigi's 18 years on the job, and Barry's 15 years on the job, they are as much a part of a guests experience at the Columbia as the food! Their co-workers know they can count on them to be ready each day at work to make our guests visit an enjoyable and memorable experience. Barry says it is important to leave your troubles at the door so you can focus on your guests.

Gigi's favorite part of the job is making drinks for guests. She says many times people don't know exactly what they want to drink, but they have an idea. She will ask what flavors they like, and what kinds of alcohol they like, and she is happy to create a drink based on that guest's specifications.

They both have regulars who visit them every week, every month, and every year. They have guests who when taking people to the Tampa airport from Plant City or Lakeland, will stop in to The Columbia for lunch and a chat on their way back from the airport and their drive home. Barry and Gigi will tell you about Clyde and his wife who fly in once a year from Houston and eat lunch and dinner at The Columbia every day for 3 straight days. And Keith who visits every other month from Miami for business and stops in for a pitcher of sangria.

Recently a guest was eating lunch at the bar and asked for a newspaper. Another guest had the bar's copy, but Gigi didn't tell the guest that. She went outside and bought a paper for the guest with her own money.

We value Barry and Gigi's contributions to our family business as they are truly a part of our family. They both contribute every day to the success of our 104-year-old restaurant.



**L to R:
Richard Gonzmart, Barry Strauss,
Gigi Miglio and Casey Gonzmart**



“Andrea’s Sip for Life”

Raises Over \$35,000 for H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute

“Andrea’s Sip for Life” raised over \$35,000 for H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute in Tampa. The event took place on Friday, March 6th at The Tampa Bay History Center, and this was the first fundraiser held in Tampa’s newest attraction. Over 200 people enjoyed 250 premium wines from Spain, California and South America, along with Tapas prepared by The Columbia Restaurant.

“Andrea’s Sip for Life” was created by Columbia Restaurant President, Richard Gonzmart, as a way to combine his love of wine with his long-time passion to find a cure for cancer. 100% of the funds raised were donated to the Pediatric Sarcoma Fund at H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute in Tampa. The event was named after Andrea Dicks Hartley, a young Mother and Moffitt patient who lost her battle to pediatric sarcoma cancer in August 2006 at the age of 30, leaving behind her then 2 1/2-year-old daughter Emma.





“Andrea’s Sip for Life”



Columbia’s “1905” Salad Dressing Now Sold in Select Publix Super Markets

Publix Super Markets, Inc. and The Columbia Restaurant are partnering together. Publix is now selling The Columbia’s “1905” Salad Dressing in over 200 of their supermarkets in the Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach areas. In a few months, the plan is to add The Columbia’s “1905” Salad Dressing to more than 500 Publix stores throughout Florida.





Enjoy Waterfront Drinks, Tapas and World Famous “1905” Salad™ at the Columbia Café in Downtown Tampa

Enjoy drinks, tapas and World-Famous “1905” Salad™ with a waterfront view at The Columbia Cafe. The Columbia Cafe is inside the Tampa Bay History Center, next to the St. Pete Times Forum in Downtown Tampa.

The Columbia Café offers lunch and dinner daily with an outdoor terrace on the water, and waterfront indoor table and bar seating. The bar is a replica of the bar at The Columbia in Ybor City, founded in 1905.

The menu has been chosen to reflect some of the traditional Spanish and Cuban dishes that have made our family restaurant famous for over 100 years. The Columbia Café is open from 11:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m daily, with an entrance on the Channelside Riverwalk.



Special Dates



July 4, Saturday

Independence Day

Entire Month of September

Columbia Restaurant Community Harvest

September 7th, Monday

Labor Day

September 20th, Sunday

“1905” Day

November 6th, Friday

8th Annual Richard's Run for Life 5K

