

## MoonDoggies: Same As It Ever Was

Written by Mark Shaffer  
Tuesday, 17 May 2016 12:28

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 Venerable Port Royal Eatery Deserves Her Stars

Story and Photos by Mark Shaffer



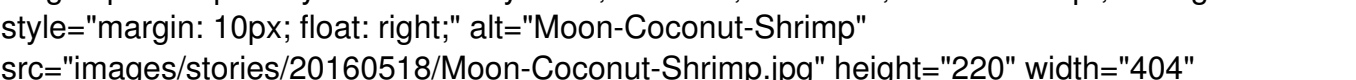
Going to MoonDoggies always seems like visiting an old friend's home the fun one where everyone hangs out in the kitchen. Maybe that's because it's a family affair or maybe it's because the building is an old converted house. And like any authentic Lowcountry home of this vintage, it is steeped in character. Most of the first floor is wrapped in a rambling screened porch covered in English Ivy from floor to ceiling. The main dining room - the Lodge Room - is a vaulted chapel of exposed beams and windows, wonderfully rustic and airy. Even the floors have character. It's all tongue and groove heart pine the original owner salvaged out of old boxcars, polished by the cargo of time. And to complete the Lowcountry ambience, it's all nestled snugly beneath towering live oaks dripping in Spanish moss barely a stone's throw from the salt marsh and Sandy Point in the heart of Port Royal.

As for the name, MoonDoggies has nothing to do with Gidget's boyfriend of the same name from the 1960's surfer movies. However, co-owner/ chef Jeff Harris did grow up surfing in northern Florida and there is a bit of a surf vibe to the place. But the name comes by way of Harris' beloved Weimaraner, Miss Tascha (registered as Tascha's Moon Cyndre) who celebrated Super Bowl Sunday, 1994, by whelping ten pups. Apparently Miss Tascha was a big Cowboys fan. She lives on in the restaurant's logo and in the dining room's famous mural as she watches over her daughter, Dallas Alice, from above on a Lowcountry crescent moon.

Today's edition of the Moveable Feast includes yours truly, Lowcountry Weekly Publisher Jeff Evans and Habersham-based Builder Leo Gannon. The ladies are otherwise occupied it seems. Fine. More of Chef Harris' famous crab cakes for us.

We claim a table outside on the deck and order a round of cervezas as the first plates hit the wood. Today is Chef's Choice and we start with two of the most popular items on the menu: Crispy Fried Pickle Chips with Horseradish Sauce and Coconut Shrimp with Orange Marmalade Horseradish Sauce. The shrimp are large, lovely and loaded with flavor and that can mean only one thing in this part of the world.

They're obviously fresh and local, says Leo. Very tasty, very tangy.

 You can definitely taste the difference, says Jeff. The breading's very light and the coconut pops. Not a hint of grease. And there's just the right balance of sweet and heat in the sauce.





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arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 10pt;">◆ Fresh local seafood & hand cut steaks◆

<p><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 10pt;">Serving lunch and dinner, Tuesday through Saturday from 11:30 AM until 9 PM</span></p>

<p><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 10pt;">Reservations 843-522-1222</span></p>

<p><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 10pt;">Rates 4 1/2 stars out of 201 reviews on Tripadvisor.com</span></p>

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