

SeaSalt brings Cape May contemporary flair

By ELISA LALA, At The Shore *pressofAtlanticCity.com* |

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In a town trademarked by its Victorian charm, Cape May's voguish new SeaSalt Restaurant seems completely out of place.

And its owner, Nick Nezaj, could not be more pleased.

"I wanted something more trendy and fresh," he says.

Located at 10th Avenue and the beach in the equally chic Ocean Club Hotel, SeaSalt Restaurant offers its customers upscale dining, drinks, dancing and a full schedule of live entertainment.

Nezaj opened the hotel and restaurant last July, replacing the former Atlas Inn. This summer will be its first full season.

Since its opening, Nezaj and his team have been progressively adding more offerings, including a menu delivery service to the beach, Friday evening Latin night in its main dining room, and, starting this summer, a weekly happy hour with live entertainment held on its upper level sun deck 4 to 7 p.m. Sundays.

As General Manager Neil Berger described it, "Cape May is more Victorian and we're more South Beach meets Manhattan. We have a different type of property than anything else in Cape May," he says.

Up-close performances:

SeaSalt Restaurant is an intimate dining area with a seating capacity of 160, so when big names come to perform in the space, it's a big deal.

"It's an unusual opportunity to be so up close," Berger says.

This summer, SeaSalt will feature live entertainment every Friday and Saturday night with something different planned for each week.

The season will kick off with a blues weekend May 11 and 12, featuring local legend Frank Bey on Friday and headlining Saturday night with three-time Grammy nominee and blues legend Johnny Winter. This will be Winter's only appearance in New Jersey or the area, Berger says.

The popular Friday Latin Night will continue featuring free salsa lessons and music by local Latin bands En Passant and Cintron. It starts at 8 p.m.

Tiki Ten35:

For a lighter fare and drinks poolside, the Ocean Club Hotel has Tiki Ten35, open to the public and offering a select bar menu by SeaSalt Restaurant's renowned executive chef, Lulzim Rexhepi.

The menu ranges from \$4 to \$14 and includes items like tuna tartar, fish tacos and an artisan cheese plate with fresh fig compote. It is open noon to 5 p.m. Fridays through Sundays starting May 3, weather permitting.