

OCTOBER HARVEST FOR THE ARTS

Steamer donates 5 percent of each check in October to the Arts Center

Steamer Seafood in Coligny Plaza is offering customers a special treat for the month of October: The chance to raise money for the Arts Center.

The fundraiser, called October Harvest for the Arts, was the brainchild of Steamer owner Dale Augenstein. Five percent of each bill for the month will go to the Arts Center.

"I was at a restaurant in Tampa last fall, and they were doing a similar promotion," Augenstein said. "I liked the tie-in to fall and October. And I just liked the idea of having an opportunity to raise money for a local non-profit."

Augenstein called Steamer Seafood "quietly philanthropic," saying the restaurant had raised money for local groups in the past, most notably St. Jude's hospital a few years ago. Over the years, Steamer has hosted numerous cast parties for the Arts Center and has supported several Tee Off Fore the Arts golf fundraisers.

"I moved here 26 years ago, and the Arts Center has been a part of my local life ever since it opened 16 years ago," he said. "It just seemed like a natural for us. It's a very integral part of both the local and visitor experience."

Celebrating 20 years, Steamer was launched on Sept. 1, 1991, at the old Seacrest Motel. It moved to its current Coligny location six years later. Consistently rated the island's most popular family seafood restaurant, Steamer is open

seven days a week and serves lunch and dinner. The restaurant includes a 70-seat raw bar, a 160-seat dining room and 175 chairs outside on two newly renovated decks (that also feature live entertainment seven nights a week).

Popular dishes include Steamer's seafood platter, king crab legs, buckets of steamed oysters, fried shrimp and its world-famous Bull Bites – and in October, each dish that is bought contributes to the Arts Center.

"We sell six-to-eight varieties of fresh fish every day, along with every kind of seafood imaginable," Augenstein said. "But our shrimp and grits is my absolute favorite. I'd put them up against anyone else's in the world, because they are tremendous."

Augenstein said Coligny Plaza has really grown over the years, becoming the most popular tourist destination in the spring and summer. In the fall and winter, it's a downtown where locals can hangout.

"We've served more than 100,000 guests a year, visitors and locals like," he said. "And we cautiously tell people how to enjoy their time on the island – but the Arts Center is one that constantly comes to the forefront each season."

For more information about Steamer Seafood, call 843-785-2070; or to view a menu, visit www.Steamerseafood.com.

