

# HIGH PROFILE

## Andrea Anthony: The Lobster Queen of the Hamptons

BY TODD SHAPIRO

In 1965, The Lobster Roll aka LUNCH, to which it is commonly referred, erected its iconic sign and opened its doors to patrons. Nearly five decades later, the establishment sits among the most-frequented restaurants for year-round residents, summertime visitors, and even the not-so-occasional celebrity, enjoying the local fare of the South Fork.

Behind the operation at this unmistakable mainstay is Andrea Anthony. The co-owner, president, and chief operating officer of the restaurant is the mover and shaker who keeps the doors open and the integrity of its classic dishes intact. While much has changed on the east end over the last four decades, Anthony has remained a fixture at The Lobster Roll, and can largely be credited with its continued success.

While diners enjoy the delectable seafood dishes at The Lobster Roll, they experience an environment which fosters the feeling of nostalgia. The hot spots' signature picnic tables beneath its red-and-blue awning seemingly brings patrons back to the olden days. Paired with the simplistic beauty and relaxation that comes with visiting the South Fork, the combination keeps The Lobster Roll in business by design, thanks to Anthony and her diligent team of colleagues.

"The atmosphere of a restaurant is just as important as the food," she says. "We have embraced that 1960s vibe, because we want to keep this retro feeling. Nostalgia brings people to a place of comfort. We've been referred to as the 'quintessential summer restaurant' and, embracing that, we say that 'this is where summer never ends.'

"We are a lifestyle brand," Anthony adds. "When we train our employees here, we explain to our staff that when people come in, they are taking a break from reality. The people that come to our establishment come for great food, good times, and an escape for a bit. We all associate summer time with vacation and with fun, so it's a great brand to embrace."

With an expertise in restaurant operations and a passion for hospitality, Anthony's invaluable role has helped LUNCH sustain the test of



ANDREA ANTHONY

time. The loyalty of the restaurant's customers is earned each-and-every serving, which is why the brand now appears on tee shirts, hats, and other apparel. And now even in a new location in Southampton, located where the famed Southampton Diner once operated. Now, it can be said that The Lobster Roll has assumed the title of the "Gateway to the East End."

Behind the expansion, Anthony says, is a commitment to the residents and visitors of the East End, and a dedication to grow the brand to a bigger and better tomorrow. When asked what drives her inspiration, Andrea says: "the love of the hospitality business and the smiling faces."

"When I see happy customers, and see them come back again, that is the intrinsic value and the pleasure of the business," she adds. "Something that I always felt is 'keep your

eye on the game, and not always the scoreboard, and if you do that, only good will come."

"It is easier to train nice people than it is to train people to be nice... It's all about hospitality at The Lobster Roll and that is why my love for hospitality is my driving force," she continues. "This is a feeling that we try to emanate to our staff."

Andrea's passion for food has also landed her countless spots on television, including her own television show titled *Eat, Drink, and Bake with Andrea* that aired on the Optimum/Altice network for two seasons, as well as PBS National. She has been featured on ABC's *Good Morning America* and NBC's *Open House*.

In addition to co-owning her restaurant, she has helped mold the next generation of restaurateurs and industry workers, as an adjunct professor of restaurant and hospitality

management at Nassau Community College, New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) and Farmingdale State College.

The love of cooking and preparing dishes is equally gratifying as it is contagious. To help others, Anthony's figurative "footprints in the sand" are in her cookbook, *The Lobster Roll and Other Pleasures by The Beach*.

"My cooking shows were not as entertaining as they were instructional," she says. "I truly love cooking and when I am on TV, it feels personal. It always feels like I am helping someone to learn a skill, in a relatable way, and engaging the audience. Once I started, and got immersed in a recipe, I felt engaged with the audience even though I could not see them."

While Anthony is a superbly accomplished restaurateur, the dubbed "Lobster Queen of the Hamptons" is modest, saying that no person is an island, and that many have contributed to her success and the success of her restaurants.

"I am big on teams, no person can accomplish what we have accomplished as an individual," she says. "It is important to point out Paul D'Angelis, who has been part of our brand and one of the operating partners, has been integral in the growth and development. Fred Terry has had his input as a finance and numbers cruncher. Irwin Simon, a new partner, has tremendous strength within the brand and is moving our products into various markets. Simon Casconte, our regional manager, has played a vital role in our success."

"You are only as successful as the team you surround yourself with, and all of these players are essential to the success of our restaurant. Each of us has a different strength, fostering a synergy that adds to the team as a whole," Anthony concludes.

Whether visited at the beginning of a stay or one's return to the city, The Lobster Roll is an unforgettable experience and a pillar of the Hamptons experience.

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