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<https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2024/09/09/bob-basham-chris-ponte-tampa-restaurant.html?b=1725901941^22449406>

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Commercial Real Estate

Bob Basham, Chef Chris Ponte to open waterfront restaurant in Tampa




Image: ACRE Commercial Real Estate

Drone photography shows the parcel next to Salt Shack on the Bay, where chef Chris Ponte and restaurant veteran Bob Basham plan to open an 8,000-square-foot casual seafood eatery.

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By [Ashley Gurbal Kritzer](#) – Real Estate Editor, Tampa Bay Business Journal
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Two veterans of Tampa's hospitality scene have teamed up again – this time to open a waterfront restaurant on Rattlesnake Point.

Bob Basham, a cofounder of Outback Steakhouse, and Chef Chris Ponte, whose restaurants include Olivia, On Swann and Ponte Modern American, have formed a partnership to open an 8,000-square-foot restaurant next to Salt Shack on the Bay. Basham and Ponte are leasing a 1.69-acre parcel from apartment developer MAA, which [built the 495-unit MAA Breakwater](#) apartment complex that surrounds the waterfront parcel where the restaurant will be built.

The concept is still in the design phases and is yet to be named. While Basham and Ponte are also [partners in Bare Naked Kitchen](#), the Rattlesnake Point restaurant is an entirely new concept. It will seat over 300 people, serve coastal fare in a casual environment and create 100 to 150 jobs.

The restaurant, Basham told the Tampa Bay Business Journal, will "celebrate the sunset" with its western-facing views of Tampa Bay. It's too soon, he said, to say what the total investment in the project will be.

John Fahey, senior vice president and managing principal, represented Basham and Ponte in the lease transaction. Willow Ferrelli, managing partner at ACRE Commercial Real Estate, represented MAA.

Basham said a fall 2025 opening date is targeted but is subject to permitting and construction timelines and delays. He said MAA approached him and Ponte about the property and that he was impressed by the population growth South of Gandy.

In addition to MAA Breakwater's 495 units, Atlanta-based developer Southeastern is [planning over 600 apartments](#) in the same area.

"That's going to be a very exciting and vibrant area to live in," Basham said, "and that's what we got excited about."