

# CRUST

## KLIME KOVACESKI

executive chef and co-owner

## ANITA KOVACESKI

co-owner



Chef Klime Kovaceski spent most of his career in fine dining, having steered the kitchen at Miami Beach's Crystal Café for years and then working as a consultant for upscale restaurants. In 2015, the Macedonia-born chef decided to launch a casual pizza joint on the Miami River called Crust, with the goal of doing mostly takeout and delivery service. His Aussie wife Anita gave up her advertising job to run the front of house and the two embarked on running what they thought would be a humble neighborhood spot.

"Crust was designed to be 80% take-out and delivery and 20% a dine-in restaurant," Klime explains. "But it turned out to be the other way around!" The warm, welcoming spot quickly became one of the most popular restaurants in the city, with rave reviews on social media sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp and a flattering profile by *The Wall Street Journal* highlighting

the restaurant's success in an industry where many others fail.

The power couple's attention to detail is legendary, from personally greeting every table to answering social media queries to Klime working the line in the kitchen and training each employee. They are committed to making every guest's dining experience special, and that dedication has paid off. Diners flock to the restaurant for generously portioned Italian classics served with the kind of easy hospitality guided by the owners' personal compass.

"Crust is a stable business, with a nice mixture of regulars, locals, and visitors," says Klime Kovaceski. "We're grateful that the restaurant is pretty busy year-round."

**FACING** Shrimp cakes



### SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS

3 Tbsp butter  
1 lb white button mushrooms, sliced  
2 Tbsp mixed chopped herbs, such as basil, oregano, and/or thyme  
½ Tbsp salt  
½ Tbsp black pepper

### TOMATO COULIS

¼ cup canola-olive oil blend  
½ onion, chopped (½ cup)  
¼ cup chopped garlic  
1 bay leaf  
4 cups canned whole tomatoes  
2 Tbsp sugar  
2 Tbsp salt  
1 Tbsp black pepper  
1 Tbsp chopped basil  
½ cup (1 stick) butter, cubed

### GARLIC AIOLI

2 egg yolks  
2 cloves garlic  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 tsp lemon juice  
½ cup vegetable blend oil or canola oil  
½ cup olive oil  
½ cup chopped fresh spinach  
½ cup chopped fresh basil  
Salt and black pepper, to taste

### SHRIMP CAKES

2 lbs shrimp, peeled, deveined, and chopped  
2 leeks, white and light green parts only, chopped  
2 Roma tomatoes, chopped  
3 organic eggs  
3 Tbsp chopped basil  
2 cups panko breadcrumbs, plus extra if needed (divided)  
¼ cup canola oil  
Salt and black pepper, to taste

## Shrimp Cakes

**MAKES 12** A riff on the classic crab cake, this dish is an easy go-to when you're looking for an elevated quick-fix or a hearty brunch course.

**SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS** Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add mushrooms and herbs and sauté for 6 to 8 minutes, or until mushrooms are tender. Add salt and pepper and cook for another 5 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and set aside.

**TOMATO COULIS** Heat oil in a large saucepan over low heat. Add onion, garlic, and bay leaf and sauté for 7 minutes, until onions are translucent. Add tomatoes, sugar, salt, pepper, and basil and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until all the excess moisture has evaporated. Remove bay leaf.

Transfer mixture to blender, working batches if necessary, and purée until smooth. Whisk in butter and set aside.

**GARLIC AIOLI** In a food processor, blend together egg yolks, garlic, Dijon mustard, and lemon juice. Drizzle the oils in slowly until the mixture reaches a mayo-like consistency. Add spinach and basil

and blend until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

**SHRIMP CAKES** In a large mixing bowl, combine shrimp, leeks, tomatoes, eggs, and basil. Stir in 1½ cups panko breadcrumbs and set aside for 5 minutes to soak up moisture and thicken up enough to hold together. If needed, add more breadcrumbs.

Divide mixture into 12 equal portions. Shape each into a 3-inch patty, about 1 inch thick. Put the remaining ½ cup panko breadcrumbs in a shallow bowl. Add cakes and coat all over.

Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add shrimp cakes, working in batches if necessary, and pan-fry for 5 minutes on each side, until golden brown and cooked through.

**ASSEMBLY** Spread 3 tablespoons of tomato coulis onto the center of each plate. Spoon a tablespoon of garlic aioli onto the middle of the tomato coulis. Add mushrooms, then place three shrimp cakes on top. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

### SEAFOOD

1 Tbsp canola-olive oil blend  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
2 Tbsp chopped shallots  
2 Tbsp chopped leeks  
½ cup clam juice  
½ cup chicken stock  
¼ cup canned crushed tomatoes  
Pinch of saffron  
¼ lb shrimp, peeled and deveined

¼ lb mussels, rinsed and scrubbed clean  
¼ lb scallops  
¼ cup sliced squid  
¼ cup chopped clams  
1 tsp chopped basil  
1 Tbsp butter  
Salt and black pepper, to taste

### RISOTTO

1 cup arborio rice  
2 cups warm chicken stock, plus extra if needed  
1 tsp chopped basil  
Seafood (see here)

## Seafood Risotto

**SERVES 2** This isn't a traditional risotto but it's just as tasty, with a medley of seafood that works well with the richness of the creamy rice. Complete the meal with a salad, bread, and crisp white wine.

**SEAFOOD** Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic, shallots, and leeks and sauté for 1 minute. Add clam juice, chicken stock, tomatoes, and saffron. Bring to a simmer and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until reduced by a quarter.

Add shrimp, mussels, scallops, squid, clams, and basil and cook for 3 minutes, until mussel shells open up. Stir in butter and season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and discard any unopened shells. Set aside.

**RISOTTO** In a large skillet, combine rice, stock, and basil over medium heat. Simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is al dente. If needed, add more stock. Add seafood to the rice and cook for another 3 minutes.

Serve in shallow bowls, arranging the pieces of seafood on top of the rice.