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Taco Shack spices up Hollywood beach

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CHRIS CUTRO / FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

Chef Stuart Snowwhite, co-owner of the Taco Beach Shack in Hollywood, shows off some of his specialties.

You can enjoy a game of ping-pong, watch TV or relax on comfy couches while you feast on tacos, burritos and other casual fare at the breezy new Taco Beach Shack in the Hollywood beach area.

At the Hollywood Beach Suites Hostel and Hotel, on Arizona Street between State Road A1A and the Broadwalk, the Shack offers eat-in and take-out service, and you can stroll in wearing sandals and swimsuits. Open since early November, the place is already drawing plenty of regulars.

“We just wanted to open a simple taco stand with good food and it turned into a zoo,” joked co-owner Nathan Lieberman, 31, of Miami Beach.

At the Shack, real estate magnates Nathan and his father, Alan Lieberman, teamed up with Stuart Snowwhite, who has been a personal chef for the Miami Heat’s Dwyane Wade, Joe Johnson of the Atlanta Hawks and other athletes. The Liebermans met Snowwhite while he was cooking for Johnson at one of their properties, a \$12 million mansion.

The Liebermans’ South Beach Group owns 9 hotels (five have restaurants and bars) - the Hollywood beach hotel and eight South Beach hotels, including its flagship, the Catalina Hotel & Beach Club, and its sister hotel, The Metropole South Beach, which housed the cast of MTV’s The Jersey Shore during Season 2. Snowwhite said the goal at Taco Shack is to serve affordable food that’s appealing to all ages.

“I always wanted my own restaurant and I really love tacos and I wanted to do something different,” said Snowwhite, 41, of Aventura. “Every product that we have is homemade and fresh.”

Snowwhite said he went to Mexico to sample many dishes and diverse flavors before creating the menu.

The result is an array of festive items. The menu offers five hot sauces, including Snowwhite’s “magic sauce” to spice up fillings like chicken, beef and fresh fish. He also offers

specialty items like an Alaskan king crab taco with seaweed slaw and a Korean short rib taco with kimchee slaw.

Snowwhite said the Shack offers healthy options, like whole wheat and low-fat ingredients.

Added Nathan: "It's great food rolled up. Good to pick up and take with you."

One popular dish is a Mexican-style pizza that customer Ashley Kneafsey, 24, of Philadelphia, said was "absolutely delicious."

The most popular item is the grilled corn on the cob - it's brushed with their antro butter, then grilled and rolled in Mexican-Parmesan cheese.

"I tried it yesterday and I wanted to bring my wife," said Claude Hebert of North Montreal. "It was very good."

Whipping up tacos, burritos, nachos and more for a hungry beach crowd, Snowwhite noted: "We're off to a good start."

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