



*Terrapin has received the prestigious AAA Four Diamond Award Consecutively since 2008*

AAA World • March/April 2014



Chef Rodney Einhorn

## A Sense of Place

*In Virginia Beach, farm-to-fork Terrapin offers up a true taste of the Hampton Roads region.*

**Virginia Beach has beckoned** vacationers for decades with its wide swaths of sand, surf-ready waves and bustling three-mile-long boardwalk. But when it came to food, the oceanfront tourist zone—"the Strip"—often fell short for locavores. Sure, there were the obligatory seafood joints with their ubiquitous fried seafood platters and party-friendly pubs, all nestled between the nightclubs and T-shirt shops, but for visitors—and locals—who desired a fine meal made from farm-fresh local ingredients, the choices were scarce.

That is until 2006, when chef Rodney Einhorn opened Terrapin. Located just four blocks from the boardwalk, the stylish farm-to-fork bistro—with only 14 tables in addition to a small bar and outdoor patio—makes diners feel as though they're a world away from the Strip.

Raised on a 76-acre farm in Chesapeake, Virginia, third-generation restaurateur Einhorn—his grandparents owned one of the first fine-dining restaurants in the Hampton Roads area—always knew that he wanted to be a chef. Following an education at the world-famous Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, Einhorn worked at such prestigious East Coast establishments as Le Cirque in New York City and Le Bec-Fin in Philadelphia before heading to Aspen, Colorado. After his grandmother's death, he returned home with a strong desire to open his own place.

"What inspired me was the fact that there wasn't a lot of competition here on this level," says Einhorn. "Farm-to-fork was really in its infancy back then. But we have this huge farming community in the Chesapeake Bay as well as the ocean, and I thought 'wow, I could really have fun here.'"

In the eight years since Einhorn opened Terrapin, the catchphrase "farm-to-table" has become somewhat of a cliché in the restaurant business. Everyone uses it, but not everyone adheres to it. At Terrapin, diners can eat assured in the knowledge that they are enjoying some of the region's freshest—and best—ingredients available.

## IT STARTS WITH THE MENU

The first thing that diners notice when they open a menu at Terrapin is not the constantly changing list of items—Einhorn changes it about every three days. Instead, they're presented with Einhorn's "mission statement," in which he notes that in no uncertain terms does he ever use partially hydrogenated oils or high-fructose corn syrup.

"I'm talking in my fryer, in my Worcestershire sauce, in every single ingredient," notes Einhorn. "I make my own vanilla extract in-house because I couldn't find any without high-fructose corn syrup. My pastry chef hates me because she can't use corn syrup or Crisco or anything like that. I want people to feel good about my food and to feel good that what they're eating is clean and good for them. It can be done."

Einhorn also includes in his menu a list of the farms from which that week's products were sourced. Many of those farms come from Pungo, a local farming community.

"It's very important to me that my dollars stay here to ensure that farmers can keep their farmlands and to make sure that they won't get developed out," says Einhorn. "Through my purchasing power, I spend a lot of money, and if I can keep that in Hampton Roads and in my community, it benefits me, and it benefits the farmers."

From local produce, including shallots, garlic, onions, carrots, celery and potatoes, to proteins such as chickens, pigs and beef, Einhorn sources as many of his food items

as possible from local vendors—hence, his ever-changing menu; during the busy summer months, he can wipe out a small farm's supply with a single large purchase.

But no matter how often the menu is revised, it always retains a similar feel...er, flavor. Guests can always find a scallop dish, as well as two fish dishes, year-round. And in the summer—prime Chesapeake Bay blue crab season—they're guaranteed to find a crab dish, such as crab cakes, as well. Duck is always on the menu, an homage to the region's heritage as the duck hunting capital of the world. And each summer, for about six weeks when tomatoes are fresh, Einhorn pairs the red fruit with fresh-pulled mozzarella or burrata. Similarly, during the two weeks in autumn when fig season overlaps peach season, Terrapin offers a salad of organic mixed greens with caramelized figs, blue cheese and peach dressing.

"I find it very easy to change my menu," says Einhorn. "A lot of times, I'll get a farmer's list and see what he's growing,

and I'll just start ordering stuff without any plan. It keeps the creative juices flowing. Also, I get a lot of locals eating here, and it keeps them coming back once a month instead of just for special events."

Of course, a few signature dishes are always on the menu. These include fennel pollen-dusted sea scallops with a wild mushroom mix and oven-dried tomatoes, a popular menu item since day one; an heirloom beet salad with goat cheese and rosemary-yuzu vinaigrette; and the unforgettably creamy truffle mac and cheese. "I've taken it off the menu a few times, and I've been yelled at for doing so," says Einhorn. "It's a customer favorite."

## SOUTHERN PRIDE

Although Einhorn was trained in classic French cuisine, he credits Terrapin's success to his Southern roots.

"I'm a simplest at heart," he says. "I grew up eating Southern food. It's all in the technique, in the presentation. I'm not a 'put a bunch of stuff on the plate and try to

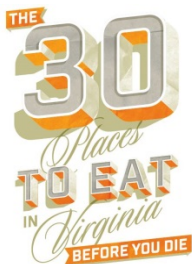
make it look fancy' guy. I'd rather have a simple plate with big bold flavors.

"As the world gets bigger and bigger, we're kind of losing sight of individualities; we're inundated with everything," he adds. "I don't want to lose sense of who we are and where we are and why we cook the way we cook and use the products that we do. I grew up here, and I didn't realize how special it was. Then I went to New York and Aspen, and I came back home and ate the food and thought 'wow, this really does mean a lot to me.'"

It's that sense of pride in place that helped earn Terrapin AAA's Four Diamond Award, a distinction it has held since 2008.

So the next time you head for the beach—Virginia Beach, that is—make sure your plans include dinner at Terrapin. Last-minute reservations are hard to come by, so remember to call ahead. You won't be disappointed, and perhaps you'll even come away with a better sense of the region's diverse culinary offerings.

—Rebecca L. Rhoades



Listed as 1 of the "30 Places to Eat in Virginia Before You Die in 2014

<http://hamptonroads.com/2014/03/30-places-eat-virginia-you-die>



*Diners Choice Award for "Fit for Foodies" and "Best Overall" 2010 through 2014*

*2012 Top 50 Restaurants in the Country "Best Over All" Award 2010 and 2011 Top 50 Restaurants "Best Service" Awards*

Best of Virginia Living Magazine 2014



*In the top 5 Platinum Plate Awards for 7 Consecutive Years*

*2008 Platinum Plate 1st Place Award*

*Stellar Cellar Silver Award*



## JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

Chef Rodney Einhorn and Robert Foley (2007 Winemaker of the Year) at the James Beard House. Chef Rodney was honored with an invitation to cook at the world famous James Beard House in New York on November 29, 2011. Related link:

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/local-chef-finds-his-flow-tiny-nyc-kitchen>



Virginian-Pilot's, "Distinction Magazine"

Spring/Summer 2011

Article by: Tom Robotham

Profiles by: Roberta T. Vowell

Portraits of Power

Spoke to the pursuit of power based on an individual's unrelenting energy and dedication to their vision. Chef Rodney was acknowledged for his "Power of Purity" in the creation of his food.

Larger than life portraits of Chef Rodney and the other "Portraits of Power" individuals taken by Photographer, Mark Atkinson were displayed in the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk.

March/April 2009

Article: Farm Fresh

By: Anne Dimon

**Clean Eating**  
magazine

Interview with Chef Rodney, regarding his "commonsense cooking" philosophy and approach: "people today want to know where their food comes from"; and "good for the environment, good for the body and good for the soul."



PRESS

**Los Angeles Times**

Summer/2011

*Terrapin noted for its creative Dessert Menu*



2010 Chef Rodney Einhorn  
ABC Nightline "People's Platelister Finalist"

## REVIEWS & BLOGS

"Terrapin Restaurant never disappoints!! The service, food, and atmosphere are unmatched in Hampton Roads. This is my favorite restaurant in the area!" ~ Dined on 08/20/2012

"Loved this place and wish we lived closer. Some really creative items on the menu including the jalapeño margarita which was excellent to start. Fantastic service, nice wine list and from apps to entrees to dessert - just outstanding all around. Highly recommend this place is a must dine in VA Beach. " ~ Reviewed September 1, 2012

"THE BEST IN TIDEWATER.....HANDS DOWN" ~ Reviewed on September 7, 2012

"Anyone looking for a "Top Chef" dining experience may want to check this restaurant out." ~ Reviewed June 15, 2012

"Everything, the service is exceptional, the food always fantastic and fun. We go at least once a month, just because!" ~ Reviewed August 23, 2012

## REVIEWS & BLOGS



[http://www.gayot.com/restaurants/terrapi-restaurant-virginia-beach-va-23451\\_56nf071202.html](http://www.gayot.com/restaurants/terrapi-restaurant-virginia-beach-va-23451_56nf071202.html)



<http://www.yelp.com/biz/terrapi-restaurant-virginia-beach>



[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant\\_Review-g58277-d618390-Reviews-Terrapi\\_Restaurant-Virginia\\_Beach\\_Virginia.htm](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g58277-d618390-Reviews-Terrapi_Restaurant-Virginia_Beach_Virginia.htm)