



Azul Arrives In Chicago This Month

By **The Magazine SCENE** - August 20, 2020

👁 95 💬 0

The New Latin-Inspired Restaurant & Bar Will Be Chicago's First Mariscos On The Water

Something exciting (and delicious) is docking into Chicago! Azul Mariscos is proud to announce they will be officially opening their doors August 20th.

Located along the Chicago river in the burgeoning Goose Island neighborhood, Azul will be a new type of dining and drinking experience, unlike anything else in the Windy City. An upscale mariscos (seafood) restaurant & bar, Azul will serve an expansive menu of Latin-inspired fare. The concept aims to combine the ethos of an authentic mariscos restaurant with modern hospitality practices and all the touches of a sophisticated, lively new hot spot.

The address – 1177 N. Elston Ave. – will be familiar to members of the city's social scene as Azul occupies the space that housed the popular bar Estate for 8 years.

Celebrating the rich flavors and fresh ingredients of Latin culinary



culture, Azul's chef-driven menu is brimming with refined representations of classic mariscos cuisine. Created by Executive Chef Michael Hernandez, Azul will offer a variety of grilled, baked, fried and raw proteins as well as ceviches, seafood cocktails and artfully arranged family-style platters. Guests can look forward to mouthwatering dishes like Grilled King Crab Legs prepared Nayarit-style, Whole Veracruz Red Snapper and Grilled Tequila Lime Glazed Salmon topped with housemade Fire Roasted Salsa and Fresh Avocado. The seasonal menu will change as the weather begins to turn colder, making Azul a year-round dining destination. Chef Michael and his team have opted to present a curated opening menu to allow the kitchen to social distance safely and comfortably.

An inventive beverage program includes craft cocktails, cervezas, wine and international spirits. Azul will offer individually sized cans of select wines – perfect for the casual boater stopping by for a drink or a group of friends who want to enjoy a relaxed happy hour on the patio.

A list of signature libations will include original creations like the Cantarito, a citrusy tequila-based drink served in jarritos (clay pots.) Azul has partnered with Project FIRE, a trauma recovery program for youth injured by gun violence in Chicago, to help this particular cocktail come to life. Part of the Firebird Arts Community, Project FIRE participants will make the jarritos (clay cups) and cazuelas (large clay pots) for Azul's signature Cantarito cocktail. Proceeds from that drink will directly benefit the Project FIRE organization.

The space is a visual experience that's as bold and beautiful as the food & drinks themselves. The walls of the massive multi-level space are covered in shades of blue with accents of orange and bright white throughout. Original artwork in the form of ocean-inspired paintings punctuate the space while an eclectic array of glass, metal and ceramic light fixtures hang from the ceiling. Azul commissioned world-renowned Mexican artist Senkoe to create a stunning mural in the restaurant's main lounge. For Azul, Senkoe mixed sacred geometry and nature to tie together the entire ambiance and environment of the Latin-inspired cuisine with the use of the octopus and crab murals that wrap the walls of the restaurant.

Oversized windows flood the main dining room and bar with natural light, creating a warm ambiance year-round. A lounge-like area next to the dining room boasts plush banquettes and a newly installed set of garage doors, which create a wide-open feel in the summer and cozy atmosphere in the winter. The crown jewel of Azul will undoubtedly be its rooftop (one of the largest open-air rooftop in the city of Chicago). The Azul rooftop is slated to open in late Summer 2020 a bit later than the rest of the restaurant. "The health & safety of our guests and staff are the most important thing," says Operations Manager, Derek Medina. "We feel that opening Azul in phases is the best way to ensure all COVID-19-related protocols and CDC recommendations are followed explicitly." Two additional patios situated on the first and second floors will provide additional options for al fresco dining & drinking in the spring, summer and fall. Azul Mariscos is located at 1177 N. Elston Ave. in Chicago, IL. Reservations will be available via OpenTable or by calling 773-770-3766. Azul will be open

Thursday – Friday from 4:00pm – midnight and Saturday – Sunday from 11:00am – midnight. Hours of operation are expected to expand in early Fall. Delivery and carryout will be available by contacting the restaurant directly and via UberEats, GrubHub, DoorDash and Postmates.