

Husband and Wife Open The Belly of the Whale in Charlotte's Cotswold Neighborhood

A seafood kitchen built around the waters of North Carolina

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Opening today in Charlotte's Cotswold neighbourhood, The Belly of the Whale is an independent seafood restaurant

built around the waters of North Carolina. Tatiana welcomes. Raynold cooks. The Belly of the Whale is the work of a husband and wife.

the belly of the whale

For more than twenty-five years, whenever Raynold wasn't in the kitchen, he was on the water, fishing and diving the Outer Banks, building friendships with the captains and crews of Hatteras Island. Among them is Tami Gray, a Hatteras Island fishing captain, fisherman, great mother, best friend. Over dinner at her home one evening, Tami asked him a question he couldn't let go of: "How come you chefs don't know how good the fish is around here? You're a chef, aren't you? Do something about it."

“

We do not build a menu and then go find the ingredients. We find out what came off the boats and build from there. That is how this kitchen works.”

Tatiana Mendizabal, co-founder of The Belly of the Whale

The Belly of the Whale is that answer. The menu follows the seasons and the catch, sourced directly from Hatteras Island boats. The cooking draws from a wide range of

culinary traditions including the American South, Spain, France, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, with the fish always at the centre.

"We do not build a menu and then go find the ingredients," said Tatiana Mendizabal, co-founder of The Belly of the Whale. "We find out what came off the boats and build from there. That is how this kitchen works."

The Belly of the Whale seats a limited number of guests in a room built around food, conversation, and genuine hospitality. There are no QR codes, no screens, and no distractions. Guests are handed a menu. Service is warm and unhurried. The focus is entirely on the people at

the table.

About The Belly of the Whale

The Belly of the Whale is an independent, owner-operated seafood restaurant in Charlotte's Cotswold neighbourhood. Founded by Raynold and Tatiana Mendizabal, the restaurant sources directly from fishing boats at Hatteras Island on North Carolina's Outer Banks. The menu follows the seasons and the catch while drawing from a wide range of culinary traditions. The Belly of the Whale opened in July 2026.

The Belly of the Whale is located at 4422 Colwick Road. Reservations are available at www.thebellyofthewhaleclt.com.

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