

CHICAGO

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# Virgin Hotels Chicago to Unveil a Renovated Restaurant With a New Chef

Moosah Reaume is Carmelo Anthony's ex-personal chef

by **Chris LaMorte** | Aug 29, 2017, 11:49am CDT



Moosah Reaume | Courtesy of Virgin Hotels Chicago

The Virgin Hotels Chicago second-floor restaurant has announced a replacement for Rebecca LaMalfa, the former *Top Chef* **contestant who left in July**. When the **Commons Club** completes its renovations by the middle of September, new executive chef **Moosah Reaume** will debut a new menu. Reaume, 42, has a resume that includes working as Carmelo Anthony's personal chef during the NBA star's rookie year in Denver.

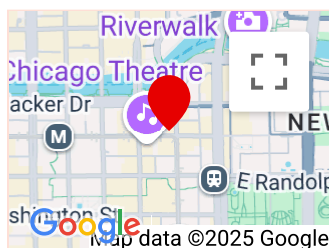
Originally conceived as a cocktails-and-small bites lounge, the Virgin's space will now open up the kitchen to the dining room. The idea is to make it more welcoming and fun, said Reaume. To that end, diners will find mix-and-match service pieces, as well as toy cars, children's blocks, and other trinkets on the table.

Reaume's developing both a la carte and prix-fixe menus to bring out the best of his eclectic culinary background. A southerner who grew up in Austin, Texas; Biloxi, Mississippi; and Melbourne, Florida, Reaume said his Thai-born mother and his father (who was of French-Canadian descent) both imparted their family's respective culinary heritage.

Reaume is developing a seasonal-inspired menu that incorporates a little of everything he's learned through years. His scallop crudo, inspired by flavors found in the Thai staple *som tom* (green mango salad), will feature what he likes to call "firewater" — tomato-fermented chili water.

Reaume will coat his smoked-short ribs in a chili-inflected sweet-and-sour glaze and smoke them 12 hours with pecan and oak. He'll serve them with three preparations of corn. And as a nod to his time exploring New York's Chinatown, he will also offer his spin on shrimp toast with shrimp mousse, double crust, and sweet-chili coconut sauce. He is also planning a dish of cavatelli served with chili and crab.

Besides cheffing for 'Melo, his culinary career includes stints at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's The Mark Restaurant in New York, as a prep cook at Morimoto, and as executive chef at Public Hotel Chicago. More recently he worked as chef de cuisine at The Lobby at the Peninsula hotel.



### Virgin Hotel

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