

## Dome's new chef goes long with fresh items and 'Monster Sandwich'

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Believe it or not, there once was a time when people didn't care about the provenance of their ballpark food. In fact, the very anonymity of a foot-long was the essence of its deliciousness.

Now, football fans, it's time to trade in that tube steak for a ciabatta sandwich made with grass-fed sirloin from White Oak Pastures in South Georgia. Real men these days are locavores.

Along with a multi-million renovation that has most visibly outfitted the seats in Falcons red and black, the Georgia Dome has hired a new executive chef to thoroughly revamp the menus offered at the Club and Suite levels. The centerpiece of this new bill of fare is the so-called "Chef's Harvest" menu that features natural, organic, locally grown and sustainable foods.

On Thursday night, Chef Frank Abbinanti and a crew from Levy Restaurants (the Dome's food service provider) greeted a crowd of Club and Suite level patrons at the 50-yard line with a full buffet. Guests availed themselves of a full bar and milled about, tasting the various options they will encounter this season.

The kitchen crew showcased fare from both Suite menus and Club level "mini restaurants," where chefs at "action stations" will henceforth prepare fresh flatbreads and hand slice smoked-in-house barbecue.

Abbinanti — a former executive chef at Disney World's Animal Kingdom who has cooked on a cruise and run an Orlando-area restaurant called Frankie's Big City Grille — wore a Conehead-worthy toque and unveiled such creations as Amish chicken over an organic white bean cassoulet and shrimp margaritas served in shot glasses with sugar-cane sticks.

But it wasn't all fancy stuff. Eyes bulged and stomachs rumbled when Abbinanti wheeled out the "Monster Sandwich," a behemoth of barbecue. Between two 16-inch slabs of grilled Texas toast he had piled chopped pork, slaw and Vidalia onion rings.

"It's a wow item," Abbinanti said, hoisting it aloft. And — at \$17 — not much more than you'd pay for a couple of dogs. Pass the Texas Pete.