Last year, Atlanta-based Proof of the Pudding took on the challenge of catering five major boat shows in Florida. The company’s five-year concessions contract with Informa U.S. Boat Shows includes the Palm Beach International Boat Show, the St. Petersburg Boat Show, the Miami Yacht Show, the Suncoast Boat Show in Sarasota and—the largest in-water boat show in the world—the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

All food for each show is prepared at the kitchen location built on-site, according to Ben Witte, Proof of the Pudding senior vice president. “This is the fun part,” says Witte. “Our chefs design an on-location portable kitchen with all the equipment needed for the show—convection ovens, stoves, smokers, fryers, grills, walk-in coolers and a freezer. We also do our own plumbing for water and drain for the three compartment sinks we bring in.”

Proof transports much of its own equipment from Atlanta, storing it at an Informa warehouse, and rents the rest locally. It’s now designing a new kitchen area for the Fort Lauderdale show with a larger footprint, and building an additional kitchen to service the restaurant at the show’s new Superyacht Village—a “VIP experience for food and mixology,” as Witte describes it, that Proof of the Pudding will operate.
During its first year catering the shows, Proof of the Pudding made its mark by providing upscale food and beverage options, many with a local flair. Under the direction of Proof of the Pudding’s Corporate Executive Chef, Vagn Nielsen, the company offered ports of call-themed food stations at the Fort Lauderdale show, serving up Mexican food at the Cabo San Lucas station, for example, and Italian at the Portofino station. “In Fort Lauderdale, our custom rice bowls were very popular, and in West Palm and Miami, our Brazilian smoked meat stand was very popular,” says Witte. This being Florida, however, the best-selling menu item served at all the shows was Proof’s Cuban sandwich—mojo-braised pork, sliced ham, Swiss cheese, pickles and chipotle aioli stacked on Cuban bread sourced from a Hialeah bakery. In addition to overseeing the management and operations of all the shows’ food-and-beverage areas, Proof of the Pudding offers catering reservations.
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