

## New door: Liberty Kitchen at the Treehouse

Sky-high dining room, wood-fired grill and delightful patio await

By **Greg Morago** Published 4:28 pm, Monday, October 17, 2016

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IMAGE 1 OF 11

An interior view of Liberty Kitchen at the Treehouse, 963 Bunker Hill Rd., is shown Thursday, Sept. 15, 2016, in Houston. ( Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle )

### THE CONCEPT

The newest and most ambitious of the five Houston restaurants bearing **F.E.E.D. TX Restaurant Group's** Liberty

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Kitchen name. Like the other Liberty stores, the design is playful, the menu vast and varied, and the vibe self-assured yet welcoming.

## THE SPACE

Set inside the eco-friendly MetroNational office called the Treehouse in Memorial City, the double-height restaurant has an open dining area backed by a long counter where guests can sit and watch the kitchen staff. Generous booths to the left lead to a massive patio. Décor is an eclectic mix: Think chandeliers, Kelly green stools, bold wallpaper, homey tchotchkes, framed photography and an installation involving

rulers by the Art Guys' **Jack Massing**. Some wall expanses are covered in reclaimed pine from a cotton factory on the Ship Channel; other surfaces are clad in antique siding from Victorian homes in the Heights. The "tree den" mezzanine level can host private events.

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## THE FOOD

On the menu are Liberty signatures, such as queso; deviled eggs; raw oysters; Hawaiian poke; gumbo; macaroni and cheese iterations; and a burger. But there are also fresh ideas and a new plaything in the kitchen: a 14-foot-long wood-burning grill for expanded fish and meat offerings, as well as grilled oysters. Other new dishes: loaded hush puppies with chopped brats, cherry peppers, queso, bacon jam and hot sauce; fried shrimp and pork belly carnitas served with tortillas and fries; chicken cacciatore; coq au vin; a lamb cheeseburger; an \$18.50 pork belly BLT featuring a half pound of dry-cured heritage bacon; and Dutch oven dishes cooked over coals, including cazuela of pork shoulder, chorizo and octopus.

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## THE DRINKS

The cocktail menu includes drinks such as the Liberty Mule made with pineapple-infused vodka and ginger beer; the Bunker Hill Bloody Mary (pepper-infused vodka with house-made Bloody mix); and the Treehouse Toreado (anejo tequila, chile liqueur and St-Germain elderflower liqueur).

## THE WORD

"This is, mechanically, one of the most sophisticated buildings in Houston," F.E.E.D. partner **Will Davis** said. Indeed, the MetroNational Treehouse has the distinction of being a LEED Platinum-certified building; it boasts geothermal cooling and heating; a green roof with solar panels; rainwater collection; and a wind turbine and rooftop garden.

## ONE MORE THING

Shortly after opening, executive chef **Travis Lenig** left the F.E.E.D. fold to pursue his own restaurant (Field & Tides in the former Zelko Bistro space in the Heights). Lenig had worked with F.E.E.D. culinary director **Lance Fegen** to develop the menu, which remains in place under new executive chef **Eric Laird**.

## THE DETAILS

963 Bunker Hill; 713-802-0533; [libertykitchentreehouse.com](http://libertykitchentreehouse.com). Open 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday.

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