

MODERN LUXURY

RIVIERA

SAN DIEGO

THE RESTAURANT ISSUE

THE 50 FINEST

BEST NEW EATERIES,
OVER-THE-TOP DINING
EXPERIENCES,
MIXOLOGY MAGIC,
ICONIC CHEFS
& MUCH MORE!

TOUR DE FORK

EXCITING NEW RESTAURANTS
FROM COAST TO COAST

SMALL PLATES

S.D.'S TWEEN CHEF PHENOM

HEAD FOR THE BORDER

BAJA'S NEW FOODIE APPEAL



PLUS

ART & SOUL: THE CULTURAL SCENE SIZZLES

DEL MAR: SUMMER'S SURE BE

& INSIDE ALL THE FAB FETES

3 PASTRY CHEFS WITH SWEET SKILLS



RACHEL KING

A nominee for *Food & Wine's* best new pastry chef in 2013, King has continued to rule since joining La Jolla's Nine-Ten, where her fanciful and elegant desserts—like an icy dish of watermelon sorbet with coconut-lemongrass tapioca, lime and sea salt (\$11)—are a sweet counterpart to chef Jason Knibb's stunning cuisine.

910 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858.964.5400,
nine-ten.com



ADRIAN MENDOZA

At Herringbone, this top talent—who trained at Spago and Cut in Beverly Hills—plays it cool for summertime with dishes like a frozen coconut mousse served with apricots and sea salt (\$11). Mendoza's also been drafted to create desserts for the new Herringbone Santa Monica, opening soon. 7837 Herschel Ave., La Jolla, 858.459.0221, herringboneeats.com



JOE BURNS

Dessert lovers going gluten-free have a friend at Waters Fine Catering, where Burns waives the wheat but delivers the decadence on treats like chocolate cake layered with chocolate-banana-cashew cream and caramel, or even très adorable mini eclairs that pack a punch despite their petite size (from \$2.75). 1122 Morena Blvd., San Diego, 619.276.8803, waterscatering.com



BAR NONE
 Cocktails at Fairweather include fresh, new takes on tiki drinks.

FAIRWEATHER PHOTO BY ANDY BOLD



5 CHEF ICONS

1. BERNARD GUILLAS
Globe-trotting Guillas—a member of the prestigious Maitre Cuisiniers de France and exec chef of the Marine Room since 1994—is S.D.'s de facto culinary ambassador to the world. So it's hardly surprising that the chef's signature dish—sesame-peppered ruby red ahi tuna with fennel mango salad and an avocado fritter (\$44)—borrows from many culinary traditions. *2000 Spindrift Drive, La Jolla, 858.459.7222, marineroom.com*

2. CARL SCHROEDER James Beard-nominated Schroeder is a fixture at Market Restaurant + Bar. And if he's not in the kitchen, he's in pursuit of pristine ingredients, even line-fishing for the local calamari and white sea bass he serves on a dish with caper rémoulade and marinated Chino Farms tomatoes (\$32). *3702 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858.523.0007, marketdelmar.com*

3. JASON KNIBB At Nine-Ten at the Grande Colonial Hotel, Knibb produces plates that are almost too beautiful to eat. But don't let their delicate appearance deceive—the chef is at his best on robust, full-flavored dishes like the unforgettable lamb tartare

(\$16) with black garlic and cured egg yolk. *910 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858.964.5400, nine-ten.com*

4. JEFF JACKSON His peerless farm-to-table reputation at A.R. Valentien recently helped The Lodge at Torrey Pines land an exclusive James Beard Celebrity Chef Tour dinner. True to Jackson's locavore roots, his technique-driven cooking is straight-ahead, letting the ingredients shine, as in his signature lunch-menu dish of Chicken Under a Brick (\$18), where the crackly, golden-skinned poultry is served with a salad of pea tendrils and crispy curried chickpeas. *11480 N. Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla,*

858.453.4420, lodgetorrey.pines.com

5. PATRICK PONSATY
The vineyard-dappled hills surrounding Bandy Canyon Ranch resonate with Gallic Ponsaty, who also helms sister resto Bellamy's nearby in Escondido. There he shines on "forgotten recipes" like navarin d'agneau (\$68), but the real treat is his five-course Innovation Menu (\$75), which changes daily and is served for the whole table. *417 W. Grand Ave., Escondido, 760.747.5000, bellamysdining.com; 16251 Bandy Canyon Road, Escondido, 760.871.6494, bandycanyon.com*

KETTNER EXCHANGE

The indoor-outdoor bilevel design marvel colloquially known as KEX has become a hot spot for creative-world luminaries like PR titans John Bailey and Jamie Lynn Stigler, who come for cocktails by Steven Tuttle and eats by Brian Redzikowski (don't skip the fatty soft-shell crab [\$18], or Hudson Valley foie gras with mango and Brussels sprouts [\$19]).

POWER MOVE The chef's table, hidden in a private room off the kitchen, has just eight uberexclusive seats, available only at a monthly five-course dinner (from \$125 per person) where off-menu dishes like fried whole Japanese char with ponzu, or oxtail with asparagus and morels, are served. 2001 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, 619.225.2001, kettnerexchange.com



3 PLACES TO SEE AND BE SEEN



MORADA

Want to crack a famously private social scene? Look no further than the glam, redesigned resto at the iconic Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. Morada has a genteel heritage feel befitting its straight-ahead cuisine (pan-seared Arctic char, \$28, filet mignon, \$35) and blue-blood fan-base, replete with Forbes list regulars.

POWER MOVE Monday night it's a packed house for, we kid you not, Meatloaf Night (\$29). Exec Chef Brian Black's tomato-crusted twist on the mainstay comes with the famed Royce salad—plus plenty of air-kissing. 5951 Linea Del Cielo, Rancho Santa Fe, 858.756.1131, thetrainrfs.com

THE PONY ROOM

Regulars know that a corner table at Rancho Valencia's swank bar is the ultimate in RSF real estate. More "casual" than dining next-door at Veladora, Pony Room rendezvous start—and end—with margaritas (the El Jefe [\$45] has Don Julio 1942 Añejo tequila) and include bites like The Chopchop salad [\$13] and lobster nachos [\$22].

POWER MOVE Book catador Chris Simmons for structured agave-spirit tastings (price on request). These private parties encompass sips of sotol (from Chihuahua), bacanora (from Sonora) and mezcal (from Oaxaca), in addition to the respado, añejo and super añejo tequilas known to typical tipplers. 5921 Valencia Circle, Rancho Santa Fe, 858.756.1123, ranchovalencia.com



UNCOMMON GROUND
Jason Knibb's Arctic Char at Nine-Ten includes Chino Farms squash and zucchini



5 FOOD MECCAS

CHINO FARMS

At the roadside Rancho Santa Fe farm stand, pick up organic summer strawberries (including rare fraise du bois) and the sweet corn that S.D. chefs like Carl Schroeder and Jason Knibb fight over. The farm also hosts a Good Earth/Great Chefs series that brings top toques to town. 6123 Calzada Del Bosque, Del Mar, 858.756.3184, chinofamilyfarm.com

CONVOY DISTRICT

Ready for some new favorites? Find A-list chefs, ex-pat Asians and second-generation Convoy kids dining on conveyor belt sushi at Kula Revolving Sushi Bar (4609 Convoy St., 858.715.4605), Anthony Bourdain-endorsed eats at Myung In Dumpling (4344 Convoy St., 858.565.2688), Chinese sausage sticky rice at Shanghai Saloon (4625 Convoy St., 858.268.9638), red bean and mocha coffee bread at 85°C Bakery (5575 Balboa Ave., 858.278.8585) or black-sesame shaved snow at Iceskimo (4609 Convoy St., 858.216.1111).

LIBERTY STATION

Trust us: Between S.D.'s original Tender Greens (tendergreens.com), the rustic bakery Con Pane, Stone Brewing

Co.'s indoor-outdoor gastropub (stonelibertystation.com) and Italian farm-to-fork resto Solare (solarelounge.com), this Point Loma complex is worth the parking-lot puzzle. Next up? Blue Bridge Hospitality's \$3 million Public Market food hall opens this summer. Off Rosecrans between Lytton Street and Womble Road, Point Loma.

LITTLE ITALY MERCATO

S.D.'s most extensive farmers market is still Saturday morning's freshest scene. We're fans of Da Le Ranch's fresh rabbit and quail, the imported cheese and prosciutto sliced-to-order at Thyme of Essence and Poppa's Fresh Fish with freshly shucked oysters or just-cracked uni. Sat. mornings rain or shine, 8AM-2PM, Cedar Street between Kettner Boulevard and Front Street.

MAIN STREET IN EL CAJON

East County is newly vibrant thanks to the Middle Eastern diaspora that is steadily remaking El Cajon's main corridor, now packed with halal butchers, grocers and bakeries. Gems include next-door neighbors Nahrain Fish & Chicken Grill (1183 E. Main St., El Cajon, 619.334.3222)—for the clay-oven cooked Masgouf fish and sumac-spiced Musakhan chicken—and Shakira Pastry (1183 E. Main St., El Cajon, 619.440.6068), home to a stunning variety of honey-dripping baklava. Try Valley Foods (1275 E. Main St., El Cajon, 619.749.8355) for spices and condiments, or pop into Harvest International Market (733 E. Main St., El Cajon, 619.442.0413) for teas, sweets and dates.

[FOOD & DRINK] GUIDE

delightful tuna tartare and a simple but sublime hamachi served Peruvian style (*tiraditos*). Lunch and dinner daily. 1250 Prospect St., 858.454.1637, thehake.com \$\$

Herringbone 🍷 This indoor-outdoor “ocean bazaar” is a stunner, especially with new chef Jordan Davis at the helm. New cold seafood standouts include a scallop crudo with watermelon and negroni, while hearty mains include skate wing schnitzel and oven-roasted pork ribs over cheesy grits. Lunch Mon.-Sat., dinner daily, brunch Sun. 7837 Herschel Ave., 858.459.0221, herringboneeats.com \$\$

La Valencia New chef James Montejano, a Michael Mina protégé, revamped the menu at this hotel’s resto, The Med, to herald the hotel’s coastal location. The emphasis is on fresh seafood, with dishes like swordfish with guanciale and clams, or sea bass in dashi broth with laughing bird shrimp dumplings. At the streetside Café la Rue, the La Rue burger with caramelized onions and Gruyère has ardent fans. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. 1132 Prospect St., 858.454.0771, lavalencia.com \$\$

Manhattan of La Jolla The moody dining room of this updated but old-school Italian classic at the Empress Hotel is where you go for the famed cannelloni, a classic Alfredo and an addictive New York steak Delmonico. The longtime beloved bartenders, Mike and Beige, know regulars’ drink orders by heart. Find them

holding court in the piano lounge. Lunch Tue.-Fri., dinner nightly. 7766 Fay Ave., 858.459.0700, manhattanoflajolla.com \$\$

The Marine Room At high tide, waves spray the windows at one of S.D.’s ultimate “rooms with a view.” Chef Bernard Guillas, an inductee into the Maitres Cuisiniers de France, and Chef de Cuisine Ron Oliver are global cuisine masters. Proof? We love the organic tofu vegetable hot pot, Cervena elk loin with wattleseed and rhubarb, and the five-mushroom casserole with Spanish chorizo. Dinner daily. 2000 Spindrift Drive, 858.459.7222, marineroom.com \$\$\$\$

Nine-Ten 🍷 Chef Jason Knibb’s Jamaican jerk pork belly is a star dish, but perhaps the best dining option here is to not handcuff Knibb—go for a Mercy Of The Chef experience and let the guy run wild. Otherwise, start with the lamb tartare with cured egg yolk, and move on to mains like Berkshire pork chops with polenta and smoked cipollini onions, or braised oxtail tortellini. Save room for dessert from Pastry Chef Rachel King, a nominee for *Food & Wine’s* pastry chef of the year. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 910 Prospect St., 858.964.5400, nine-ten.com \$\$\$

Piatti We’re partial to a seat on the twinkly patio for alfresco dining at this La Jolla Shores mainstay. The beef carpaccio with capers and shaved grana padano has a cult following and the lemon herb half chicken is a favorite. Open for lunch and dinner

daily, brunch Sat.-Sun. 2182 Avenida de la Playa, 858.454.1589, piatti.com \$\$

Puesto 🍷 Authentic Mexican street food freshens the La Jolla dining scene. After a dining room expansion by Thomas Schoos, it’s all-day full-service dining on standouts like the signature tacos, in tastes like carne asada or shrimp with griddle-cripsed cheese and inventive toppings (grilled cactus, huitlacoche). Other standout dishes include two exemplary ceviche preparations (don’t miss the chile-spiked Tulum), plus barbacoa, mole and refreshing antojitos. Cocktails by the Queen-Conner-Ward collective are the bow on the package. Lunch and dinner daily. 1026 Wall St., 858.454.1260, eatpuesto.com \$

Roppongi 🍷 The high-design Prospect Street patio is a happy hour scene at this staple where chef Alfie Szeprethy’s revamped menu includes a trove of tasty tapas. Sip signature cocktails like the East Meets West mojito while nosing on a summer-appropriate roasted beet salad with strawberries and feta; seared prawns; or braised apricot-glazed pork belly. Dinner daily. 875 Prospect St., 858.551.5252, roppongiusa.com \$\$

The Shores Chef Percy Oani brings Asian flair to this waterfront resto with one of the best views in La Jolla. Dine on dishes like line-caught local halibut with coconut red rice and avocado, or a comforting but sophisticated bowl of lemon-ginger chicken noodle soup. Breakfast and dinner daily, lunch

Mon.-Sat., brunch Sun. 8110 Camino del Oro, 866.644.2630, theshoresrestaurant.com \$\$\$

Whisknadle Centered around chef Ryan Johnston’s housemade specialties, high-minded cocktails (London’s Burning has roasted jalapeño water, lime and gin) and owner Arturo Kassel’s well-curated wine list, this is one of S.D.’s top local-seasonal spots. The sleeper hit of the menu? Caesar salad with cabernet vinegar and a light spritz of lemon. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat.-Sun. 1044 Wall St., 858.551.7575, whisknadle.com \$\$

TORREY PINES/ UTC

A.R. Valentien at The Lodge at Torrey Pines Executive Chef Jeff Jackson, a winner of the Bocuse d’Or Culinary Gold Cup, and Chef de Cuisine Kelli Crosson lead the nose-to-tail charge in S.D. So, needless to say, their house-cured meat plate is fantastic. Another foodie favorite? The drugstore burger, an oft-imitated classic (heat-seekers should order the off-menu “atomic burger”). Join fellow gourmands Thursday nights at the artisan’s table dinners. Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Sat.-Sun. 11480 N. Torrey Pines Road, 858.777.6635, arvalentien.com \$\$\$

Cafe Japengo 🍷 Make reservations for this solid mainstay featuring Pacific Rim cuisine and creative sushi from chef Jerry Warner. Best time to try his out-of-the-bento-box creations? Sushi hour,

Mon.-Sat., from 4:30-5:30PM, when all rolls are half-price. For non-sushi eaters, look for short-rib bao buns, Kona-spiced seared ahi served over black rice risotto, and a cashew chicken stir-fry in addition to staples like miso butterfish and braised short ribs. Lunch Mon.-Fri., dinner daily. 8960 University Center Lane, 858.450.3355, cafejapengo.com \$\$

RANCHO SANTA FE

Delicias We’re liking the snackable meat and cheese platters at this RSF institution, where a straight-ahead dinner menu features whole roasted Baja fish, jidori chicken and Colorado lamb. At lunch it’s ramped-up flatbreads, a taco bar and plenty of salads for the crowd of lunching ladies. It’s the Ranch, so expect (and find) a good wine list. Lunch and dinner Mon.-Sat. 6106 Paseo Delicias, 858.756.8000, deliciasrestaurant.com \$\$\$

Morada The starring centerpiece of the remodeled Inn at Rancho Santa Fe sparkles in its brand of casual-glam. Chef Brian Black offsets the homey SoCal menu with grilled octopus, ahi street tacos, housemade gnuddi and chorizo flatbread, plus the ever classic bacon and butter lettuce Royce salad. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sat.-Sun. 5951 Linea Del Cielo, 858.756.1131, theinnatrsf.com \$\$\$

Mille Fleurs Find celebration-worthy menus from surf (scallops with