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# VILLAGE NEWS

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## Nine-Ten Restaurant and Bar looks good enough to eat, thanks to renovation

BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

When the Nine-Ten Restaurant and Bar opened in 2001, the interior's glut of mahogany fixtures almost seemed to defeat the purpose of the design. Here was an ideal locale, mere millimeters from the ocean and virtually next door to the Prospect Street bustle three blocks up the way — still, those dark walls gave the place a dungeony look and feel while the sun had its way with the spectacular immediate area.

But even as socially conscious wardens renovate their prisons, so too do restaurateurs conspire to strike while the iron's hot. Gone is the Nine-Ten's dead of night amid its reopening last month, replaced by lighter walls and several varieties of open lighting that features post-modern chandeliers. Pristine new furniture and tile abut to-die-for artwork that mimics La Jolla Cove in every sense.

And don't forget the bar, with its new lighting and a whole different feel to the Grande Terrace patio.

Six months and \$300,000 later, Nine-Ten is making up for lost time, sporting a look only a reconstructive surgeon could love.

It's ironic that the menu (which has always been great) now comports with such an appealing set-



Although their renovation was cause for this recent visit, the food at Nine-Ten had our reviewer satisfied.

ting. From the oatmeal, berries and house-made granola at the start of the day to lunch's grilled octopus and New York steak, the Nine-Ten serves fare on a par with its counterparts up the street — you'll find that's especially true at dinner, when the Roasted Colorado Lamb Loin insistently rests on its laurels.

And if you forgo the vaunted half-baked chocolate cake or the caramel mousse, with its pumpkin cheesecake core, we can't be held responsible.

Neither can we get enough of local photographer Dana Midlack's stunning art, which runs the length of the dining room's northern wall.

It's an absolutely splendid complement to the seascape that awaits in one of the Village's quieter neighborhoods — a series of slats screams the lush blues and browns from the ocean beyond, oranges and greens providing the cadenced complement. The room's appointments handsomely frame this marvelous

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

### NINE-TEN RESTAURANT & BAR

What: Contemporary cuisine.

Where: 910 Prospect St. inside the Grande Colonial Hotel.

Contact: 858-964-5400, nine-ten.com.

uproar of color and light, a flawless interpretation of the water's perpetual rise and fall.

If the art is meant to get you to linger a while, there's only one appropriate setting — the bar, which amid its renovation is no scissorbill itself. The same fresh, earthen look greets the casual bar customer — and management is happy to offer appetizers like lamb meatballs and short-rib ravioli and signature cocktails like the 910 Manhattan, with its orange coriander-infused whiskey and sweet vermouth. This is a good one — you might want to make sure you've eaten first.

Whatever you decide, please be assured that this is some kind of facelift, from the fantastic wall art to lighting that must have been designed by an architect. Kudos to La Jolla's Robinson Brown Design for the magnificent plan, to Nine-Ten management for staying the course and to you for delighting in all of it.