

## DINING

# THE BEST OF LA JOLLA

WITH THE CONRAD PREBYS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER OPENING FRIDAY, WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S TOP DINING OPTIONS

BY MICHELE PARENTE

**W**ith its gorgeous setting, landmark restaurants and top-line chefs, La Jolla has long been one of the region's top dining destinations.

But as neighborhoods like Little Italy, North Park and Carlsbad have edged it out for culinary cachet, La Jolla isn't always the first place that pops into hungry non-La Jollans' minds.

Friday's opening of the Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center is sure to change that tune. The \$82 million, state-of-the-art venue is the new home of the La Jolla Music Society and will also host a world-class roster of performers.

If you're planning to eat up all that culture and it's been a while since you've been to La Jolla — or are looking for a new place to try — here's our first-string list of where to dine.

## THE CONCERT MASTERS

**Bistro Du Marché:** A Parisian classic from chef Jean-Michel Diot, who had to close his beloved Tapanade to make room for the concert hall. Tuesday and Wednesday night specials — moules frites, \$20, and steak frites, \$28 — and happy hour prices are a steal. And Tapanade favorites like escargots de Bourgogne, ravioli aux champignons and Île Flottante all get another encore here. 7437 Girard Ave., La Jolla. (858) 551-7500.

[bistrodumarche.net](http://bistrodumarche.net)

### George's at the Cove:

The well-deserved icon of La Jolla dining, George's sports refined deliciousness, impeccable service and spectacular views on every level, whether it's the casual, rooftop Ocean Terrace, the crafty cocktail-ious Level2 or the inventive, optimal-quality fine dining of George's California Modern. 1250 Prospect St., La Jolla. (858) 454-4244. [georgesatthecove.com](http://georgesatthecove.com)

**Isola Pizza Bar:** One our favorite Italian restaurants in all of San Diego County, Isola excels at re-creating the down-home taste of Italy, just like chef Massimo Tenino's nonna, Isola, used to make — but in a thoroughly stylish and modern setting. The wood-fire oven turns out crispy, tasty pizza and smoky dishes like charred octopus. We're partial to the perfect pasta. 7734 Girard Ave., La Jolla. (858) 412-5566.

[isolapizzabar.com](http://isolapizzabar.com)

**Nine-Ten:** Nine-Ten boasts one of the most respected chefs in San Diego, Jason Knibb, whose masterful cooking draws inspiration from his Jamaican heritage, local ingredients and top-shelf kitchen mentors Wolfgang Puck, Roy Yamaguchi and George's executive chef Trey Foshee. Don't miss the Jamaican Jerk pork belly or the half-baked chocolate cake, quite possibly the best dessert in town. 910 Prospect St., La Jolla. (858) 964-5400. [nine-ten.com](http://nine-ten.com)

## THE PRINCIPALS

**Catania Coastal Italian:** A chic spot for handmade



Red-wine-braised beef cheek from George's California Modern is culinary art on a plate.

pasta and pizza and wood-fired dishes, with ocean views to boot. 7863 Girard Ave., La Jolla. (858) 551-5105. [cataniasd.com](http://cataniasd.com)

**Eddie V's:** A seriously swanky, seaside steak and seafood house. Petrossian caviar anyone? 1270 Prospect St., La Jolla. (858) 459-5500. [eddiev.com/locations/ca/la-jolla/la-jolla/8511](http://eddiev.com/locations/ca/la-jolla/la-jolla/8511)

**El Pescador Fish Market:** Pure, fresh seafood, from poke to sashimi, sandwiches to char-grilled platters, and all delicious. 634 Pearl St., La Jolla. (858) 456-2526. [elpescadorfishmarket.com](http://elpescadorfishmarket.com)

**Galaxy Taco:** Lower-case fine dining meets hip, artisan taco joint where the tortilla masa is ground-in-house daily, from George's executive chef Trey Foshee. 2259 Avenida de la Playa, La Jolla. (858) 228-5655. [galaxytaco.com](http://galaxytaco.com)

**Herringbone:** See and be seen at this stylish and lively seafood-centric eatery, while the lounge features a \$1-per-shuck Oyster Hour. 7837 Herschel Ave., La Jolla. (858) 459-0221. [herringboneeats.com/locations/la-jolla](http://herringboneeats.com/locations/la-jolla)

**Manhattan:** Old-school New York-Italian charm and cuisine, down to the linguini with clam sauce and chicken parm. At the Empress Hotel, 766 Fay Ave., La Jolla. (858) 459-0700. [manhattanoflajolla.com](http://manhattanoflajolla.com)

**Olive & Basil:** A "Mediterranean California Kitchenetta" that serves cross-border fare in every sense, from spicy hummus to ahi tuna tacos. 8008 Girard Ave., No 220, La Jolla. (858) 412-4912. [oliveandbasillj.com](http://oliveandbasillj.com)

**Piatti:** We love Piatti's pretty patio and the stellar Italian food, like grilled eggplant pizza and homemade ricotta, spinach and basil ravioli. 2182 Avenida De La Playa, La Jolla. (858) 454-1589. [lajolla.piatti.com](http://lajolla.piatti.com)

**Puesto:** This fast-growing local chain serves the aptly named Puesto Perfect guacamole and margarita, 13 kinds of tacos, and Valle de Guadalupe wine on tap. 1026 Wall St., La Jolla.



HERRINGBONE



MICHELE PARENTE U-T



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ISOLA PIZZA BAR



SAFFRON THAI

**Clockwise from top left: oysters at Herringbone; happy hour charcuterie board at Wheat and Water; grilled corn, zucchini and huitlacoche quesadilla at Galaxy Taco; drunken noodles at Saffron; pizza at Isola.**

(858) 454-1260. [eatpuesto.com](http://eatpuesto.com)

**Rimel's Rotisserie:** Rightly famous for its moist, juicy rotisserie chicken and wood-fired burgers, seafood, shrimp cocktail and more. 1030 Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla. (858) 454-6045. [rimelsrestaurants.com/la-jolla](http://rimelsrestaurants.com/la-jolla)

**Saffron Thai:** The second outpost of San Diego's venerated spot for salad rolls, soups, curries, noodles and especially founding chef Su-Mei Yu's grilled chicken. 1055 Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla. (858) 263-4324. [saffronthai.com](http://saffronthai.com)

**Spice & Rice Thai Kitchen:** Offering an extensive selection of Thai dishes, from the classics to the creative, like pumpkin curry and Thai basil with duck. 7734 Girard Ave., La Jolla. (858) 456-0466. [spiceandricethaikitchen.com](http://spiceandricethaikitchen.com)

**Sugar and Scribe:** An exceptional bakery and breakfast and lunch eatery from star pastry chef Maeve Rochford specializing in Irish dishes from scones to shepherd's pie. 7660 Fay Ave. (858) 274-1733. [sugarandscribe.com](http://sugarandscribe.com)

**The Taco Stand:** At the original location of this exceptional Baja-style taco shop, we're crazy for the camaron and al pastor, topped with chipotle crema. 621 Pearl St., La Jolla. (858) 551-6666. [letstaco.com](http://letstaco.com)

**Wheat & Water:** A favorite find in Bird Rock for the crispy, spicy Brussels sprouts, bounteous charcuterie boards, wood-fired pizza — spinach, ricotta and lemon zest is a must! — and happy hour bargains. 165737 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla. (858) 291-8690. [wheatandwater.com](http://wheatandwater.com)

**Whisknadle:** A consistent culinary trend-setter that has packed them in for more than a decade and where local and artisan aren't buzz words, but guiding principles. 1044 Wall St., La Jolla. (858) 551-7575. [whisknadle.com](http://whisknadle.com)

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