

# San Diego

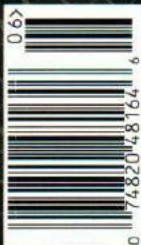
MAGAZINE

# Best Restaurants



**290**  
CRITIC'S  
AND READERS'  
PICKS

JUNE 2019



WINNER!  
Death by Tequila,  
readers' pick  
for Best New  
Restaurant

\$5.95

# FROM THE CRITIC

## WELCOME TO THE SPOTLIGHT

We're next.

For decades, the national food media hunkered in the safe zones. Namely, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Those cities, our anthills of art and commerce, provided enough world-class dishes, cocktails, and rags-to-Michelin stories to fill the pages and posts. Sure, food media would make the occasional jaunt to exotic locales—"Tulum is the New Limal"—but they treated secondary US markets as less-exciting siblings. Too familiar to be discovered, too not-New York to justify the travel budget.

To get recognition for their tireless work, most top-tier chefs lived and worked in the "major three."

And now those years are over. Regional and social media have filled the holes, illuminated the cracks. Meccas were made of Austin, Portland, Charleston, Oakland, and Houston. Thanks to apps like Instagram and pubs like *San Diego Magazine* being online and globally readable, chefs have realized the circus isn't the only place with a spotlight.

That's why Richard Blais lives here, and why he was able to lure Anthony Wells from The French Laundry to Juniper and Ivy. That's why Michelin-starred brothers recently moved from Italy to open Il Dandy in Bankers Hill. And why *Top Chef* runner-up and Jean-Georges vet Angelo Sosa chose Encinitas for his Death by Tequila. Why chefs like Trey

Foshee, Jason Knibb, Claudette Zepeda-Wilkins, Carl Schroeder, and William Bradley are now resurfacing in national headlines.

The titans of media have noticed, and are adjusting. *The New York Times* recently allocated a food critic for our region (two San Diego restaurants have made the pages). Local chefs are trading rumors about the whereabouts of *Michelin Guide* critics, who are in town and looking for places to hang their stars.

The spotlight is circling our city. The best thing is that its fringes will illuminate our indies. The gems run on very little budget by locals who are passionate about food, drink, and the art of hospitality. Blue Water Seafood. Las Cuatro Milpas. Fort Oak. Grand Ole BBQ. Izakaya Masa. Dark Horse Roasters. Le Parfait Paris. Maestoso. Kindred. Special places created in the shadows, serving hustle and grit. You'll see all of these names in my critic's picks for our annual Best Restaurants feature.

As someone who's covered San Diego's restaurant scene for 12 years, I cheer the international media's arrival. Welcome to a city with the highest number of small farms in the US, where the growing seasons are obscenely long and the produce infinitely

better. Welcome to a city where the restaurants finally do those farms justice. A city that once deserved your omission, and now equally deserves your attention.

—TROY JOHNSON



# Overall

## BEST OF THE BEST (FANCY)

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Juniper and Ivy**

READERS' PICK  
**Juniper and Ivy**

RUNNER-UP  
**Born & Raised**

## BEST OF THE BEST (CASUAL)

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Grand Ole BBQ y Asado,**  
(Flinn Springs)

READERS' PICK  
**The Crack Shack**

RUNNER-UP  
**Whisknadle**

## NEW RESTAURANT

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Fort Oak**

READERS' PICK  
**Death by Tequila**

RUNNER-UP  
**Jeune et Jolie**

## CHEF

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Carl Schroeder**  
(Market)

READERS' PICK  
**Ryan Johnston**  
(Catania)

RUNNER-UP  
**Brad Wise**  
(Trust, Fort Oak)

## SERVICE

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Trust**

READERS' PICK  
**RoVino**

RUNNER-UP  
**Solare Ristorante**

## HOTEL RESTAURANT

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Nine-Ten**

READERS' PICK  
**Nine-Ten**

RUNNER-UP  
**Lionfish**

## RESTAURANT IN BAJA

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Animalón**

READERS' PICK  
**Oryx Capital**

RUNNER-UP  
**Deckman's en el Mogor**

## HAPPY HOUR

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Bankers Hill Bar + Restaurant**

READERS' PICK  
**Herringbone**

RUNNER-UP  
**Bub's at the Ballpark**

## BAR MENU

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Tiger!Tiger!**

READERS' PICK  
**Starlite**

RUNNER-UP  
**Death by Tequila**

## LATE-NIGHT MENU

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Starlite**

READERS' PICK  
**Starlite**

RUNNER-UP  
**Royale**

## INDULGENT EATS

CRITIC'S PICK  
**The Crack Shack**

READERS' PICK  
**The Crack Shack**

RUNNER-UP  
**Extraordinary Desserts**  
AND  
**Pop Pie Co.**  
(tie)

## CHEAP EATS

CRITIC'S PICK  
**The Porchetta Shack**

READERS' PICK  
**The Kebab Shop**

RUNNER-UP  
**The Crack Shack**



## CATERER

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Wild Thyme**

READERS' PICK  
**Kitchens for Good**

RUNNER-UP  
**Miho Catering**

## BUFFET

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Provisional Kitchen**

READERS' PICK  
**Barona Casino**

RUNNER-UP  
**Viejas Casino**

## HEALTHY EATS

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Tahini**

READERS' PICK  
**Everbowl**

RUNNER-UP  
**Café Gratitude**

## GLUTEN-FREE MENU

CRITIC'S PICK  
**Civico 1845**

READERS' PICK  
**True Food Kitchen**

RUNNER-UP  
**Frost Me Gourmet**

