

805

LIVING

Home + Garden



Where TO EAT Now

THE DINING GUIDE

Our aim is to inform you of restaurants with great food that you might not have experienced yet. This guide is arranged not by cuisine type, but by style of restaurant. “Fine Dining” choices have an elegant atmosphere and very professional service. Restaurants included under the “Foodie” heading are heralded for their wonderful chef-driven cuisine, regardless of atmosphere. “Good Eats” listings are just that—solid, casual, and delicious. The “Fun, Fun, Fun” category brings you spots geared toward a good time.

New listings will appear in *Where to Eat Now* in every issue. Please send any comments and suggestions to edit@805living.com.

MORE ON THE WEB: Visit 805living.com for more listings and to make quick and easy reservations at many of the restaurants listed here and on the website through Open Table.

Fine Dining

These restaurants have a skilled kitchen team, a lovely dining room, and great service.

BELLA VISTA RESTAURANT IN FOUR SEASONS RESORT THE BILTMORE SANTA BARBARA

1260 Channel Drive

Santa Barbara, 805-969-2261

fourseasons.com/santabarbara/dining

Californian and Italian

Entrées \$19–45; Sunday Brunch \$85 per person

Great Views

Named for its sweeping views of lawn, ocean, and sky, Bella Vista has an Italian bent featuring local fish and organic farmers' market produce, handmade pastas, and herbs from the chef's garden in dishes such as Tajarin Carbonara di Mare, and *jidori* chicken with farrotto and smoked corn. Specials include table-side service of spaghetti with caciocavallo cheese and Tellicherry pepper. At the adjacent Ty Lounge, an extensive menu of Spanish tapas echoes the Hacienda-style decor featuring a fireplace, an ocean-view terrace, and hand-painted walls and ceilings. The wine list offers local and international labels. Happy hour Mondays through Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. includes specials on featured tapas (\$5 to \$9), draught beer and wine on tap (\$4 to \$6), and select cocktails (\$7).

BELMOND EL ENCANTO

800 Alvarado Place

Santa Barbara, 805-845-5800

belmond.com/el-encanto-santa-barbara

Entrées \$28–\$48

Great Views, Romantic

The luxe Belmond El Encanto hotel perches atop its seven-acre hilltop property with sweeping city and ocean views. Settle in on the spacious terrace or in the elegant dining room and linger over artfully presented California coastal cuisine crafted by executive chef Johan Denizot. Local ingredients shine, including herbs from the chef's garden and cheese made from the milk of Ellie, the resort's cow. The seasonal menu features appetizers such as halibut sashimi and mains like king crab leg in lobster-chili broth and classic New York steak with a choice of sides. The wine list includes Santa Barbara County gems and globetrotting labels. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served daily, although Sunday lunch is replaced with a bottomless Bellini brunch. Afternoon tea (reservations highly recommended) is served Monday through Saturday. In-the-know locals and hotel guests take in the sunset, cocktail in hand, on the terrace.

CAFÉ ZACK

1095 E. Thompson Blvd.

Ventura, 805-643-9445

cafezack.com

Global; Entrées \$20–\$34

It's appropriate that this hidden gem is set in a charming renovated house, since owner Hector Gomez has been making customers feel at home for the past 20 years. Gracious service and impeccably executed dishes keep loyal followers coming back for lunch and dinner. For the evening meal, chef Salome Cervantes offers classic dishes with global influences, such as Tellicherry peppercorn—encrusted Choice Beef Filet Mignon and Slow Roasted Boar Shank in a rich demi-glace. Fresh locally sourced fish, pastas, and salads round out the menu along with house-made desserts including crème brûlée. Lunchtime offerings include soups, pastas, and salads like Zack's Tostada, which comes with a choice of grilled shrimp, chicken, or vegetables. The wine list highlights local bottlings.

CELLO RISTORANTE & BAR

2700 Buena Vista Drive

Paso Robles, 805-369-2503

allegrettovineyardresort.com/dining.aspx

Mediterranean; Entrées \$14–\$38

Romantic

Located at the luxurious Allegretto Vineyard Resort, Cello showcases the cuisine of executive chef Justin Picard, a veteran of kitchens in San Francisco and Aspen who has made two guest appearances at the James Beard House in New York. Look for local, seasonal ingredients (some grown on site) in his pastas, salads, flatbreads, steaks, and seafood. A serene covered patio near the substantial kitchen garden is a fine place for enjoying breakfast, lunch, small plates, or dinner outdoors. Cello also offers an extensive farm-to-bar cocktail menu and a wine list that includes several otherwise impossible-to-get bottles.

THE CHASE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

1012 State St.

Santa Barbara, 805-965-4351

chasebarandgrill.com

Italian; Entrées \$16–\$44

Romantic

With the cozy upscale ambience of an old-fashioned supper club, The Chase Restaurant and Lounge has offered enduring Italian favorites along with American steaks, chops, and seafood, since 1979, proving that the classics never lose their appeal. Sparkling garlands of tiny white lights, white tablecloths, a marble-inlaid bar, tip-top service, and Frank Sinatra in the background set the scene for traditional, satisfying meals.

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE

2 Dole Drive

Westlake Village, 818-575-3000

fourseasons.com/westlakevillage/dining

Three dining concepts at this resort offer a variety of options. At Coin & Candor, a breakfast, lunch, and dinner brasserie, chef Jose Fernandez combines thoughtfully sourced local ingredients with wood-fired cooking techniques. The recently remodeled Onyx boasts a new menu by chef de cuisine Masa Shimakawa. With a spotlight on bright, fresh *nigiri* sushi and sashimi, the menu includes specialty rolls like the Hayabusa, with yellowtail, shrimp, asparagus, avocado, and creamy ponzu. The American Wagyu beef skirt steak is also a highlight on the well-rounded menu. Prosperous Penny is a sophisticated, comfortable social watering hole pouring inventive cocktails, aged bourbons and whiskeys, and rare spirits. Fernandez provides accompaniments in a seasonally driven light-bite menu. For a sip of joe, Stir coffee bar, located off the lobby, is open daily from 6 a.m., offering a grab-and-go menu of baked on-site pastries and savory options along with cold-brewed coffee, juices, gelato, and other treats. Valet parking is \$10 with validation; self-parking is free for up to four hours with validation.

THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY

120 E. Promenade Way

Westlake Village, 805-418-1760

thegrill.com

American; Entrées \$11–\$59

Saturday & Sunday Brunch

Steaks and chops are legendary here and at the original Grill on the Alley in Beverly Hills, the ultimate power-lunch spot. At this location, whether out on the patio or in the dining room and bar, diners enjoy American comfort food with international flair. Sushi is available at lunch and dinner, and the menu's friendly reminder that “any turf can surf” is an invitation to

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order jumbo prawns and other seafood with your filet mignon or dry-aged New York strip. Weekend brunch offers avocado toast, Niman Ranch slab bacon and eggs, and \$15 bottomless mimosas and Bloody Marys. Happy hour is daily from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., when you can make a meal of the specially priced lollipop chicken wings, spicy tuna rolls, and wood-fired cheeseburger bites offered with cocktails, draft beers, and wines by the glass.

LA DOLCE VITA RISTORANTE

740 S. B St.

Oxnard, 805-486-6878

ladolcevitadimare.com

Mediterranean; Entrées \$11–Market Price for Steaks and Seafood

Romantic, Great Views, Live Music

From the pergola-covered patio of this pretty Colonial Revival house, diners can often see docents in Victorian-era costumes giving tours of Oxnard's Heritage Square. Dining rooms inside the historic former home offer bird's-eye views of the grounds through diamond-pane windows. The eclectic menu by co-owner and executive chef Michelle Kenney includes grilled onion chowder, lemon-pistachio pasta, and portobello Florentine, the latter topped with sautéed spinach, pancetta, Gruyère, and capellini. Afternoon teas and hands-on cooking classes are available. Named for the year in which the house was built, the 1901 Speakeasy Lounge in the basement specializes in live music and Prohibition-themed cocktails.

NEW LES PETITES CANAILLES

1215 Spring Street

Paso Robles, 805-296-3754

lprestaurant.com

French; Entrées \$17–\$40

Offering a taste of Paris in Paso without the pretense, this buzzing French farm-to-table bistro focuses on sophisticated, modern cuisine in a casual, comfortable setting. Julien Asseo, chef and co-owner with his wife, Courtney, received his culinary education in France and honed his skills at Michelin-starred eateries Restaurant Guy Savoy and Joël Robuchon in Las Vegas and La Fontaine de Mars in France. Following dishes like steak tartare, escargot in puff pastry, steak frites, dayboat scallops, beef cheek Bourguignon, and Le Burger, it's easy to say *oui* to crème brûlée or profiteroles for a very French ending.

LUCKY'S

1279 Coast Village Road

Montecito, 805-565-7540

luckys-steakhouse.com

Steak House; Entrées \$16–\$69

Saturday & Sunday Brunch

Black-and-white portraits of stars like Elizabeth Taylor, Sammy Davis Jr., Andy Warhol, and Julia Child adorn the walls of this upscale steak house in Montecito. The plates and napkins are monogrammed, the patio is tented and heated for year-round enjoyment, and the bar opens an hour before dinner service begins. Steaks can be dressed with seven different sauces, there are eight versions of potato side dishes, and the onion rings should have their own Facebook Fan page.

MEDITERRANEO

32037 Agoura Road

Westlake Village, 818-889-9105

med-rest.com

Mediterranean; Entrées \$16–\$58

Great View, Weekend Brunch

Recently reopened after a major makeover, this favorite of locals and hotel guests retains an elegant yet comfortable vibe. Located on the 17-acre property of the Westlake Village Inn, the all-new design includes an expansive bar for sipping craft cocktails and international wines. Executive chef Lisa Biondi has reimaged the menu to include bright Mediterranean dishes such as *salatim*, seasonal Israeli salads and spreads like street corn with lemon, yogurt, feta, and a punch of Aleppo pepper, at lunch and dinner. Dinner entrées include old favorites like classic prime steaks and house-made pastas, along with lamb sirloin souvlaki and grilled whole branzino. Weekend brunch options include Benedicts, *shakshuka*, pancakes, and waffles. Patios offer views of the lake or vineyard.

NONNA

951 S. Westlake Blvd. #102

Westlake Village, 805-497-8482

nonna.restaurant

Italian; Entrées \$18–\$45

Romantic, Great Patio

A casually elegant dining room of distressed wood lit with unique light sculptures by artist Timothy J. Ferrie is a beautiful fit for Florence-born and -trained restaurateur Jacopo Falleni. The menu avoids the faddish, instead cutting a culinary swath through the Italian peninsula and islands with tradition-rich dishes that reflect Falleni's Tuscan upbringing (*gnudi* with pomodoro sauce), executive chef Pamela Ganci's Sicilian heritage (*arancini*), and pasta chef Pamela Ganci's influences from Bologna (*passatelli* with peas). Service is engaging and professional, while Falleni himself fills the role of sommelier and designed signature cocktails for the full bar.

OJAI VALLEY INN

905 Country Club Road

Ojai, 805-646-1111

ojaivalleyinn.com

Various cuisines; Entrées \$11–\$60; Saturday Buffet Brunch \$32; Sunday Bluegrass Brunch \$55

The resort's beautiful setting can be enjoyed by hotel guests and others who simply want to patronize the restaurants. As the fine-dining flagship, Olivella features California-Italian cuisine (see separate listing). Start the evening with small bites and cocktails in the Wallace Neff Heritage Bar, located in the resort's original golf clubhouse and named for the architect who set the inn's Spanish Revival tone. Other dining venues include the tranquil Spa Café in Spa Ojai, where light breakfast, fresh-pressed juices, and spa lunch are served inside or on the poolside terrace. The Oak is famous for its casual but attentive lunch service on a shaded patio overlooking the 10th hole of the resort's golf course. It also serves breakfast

and dinner and two styles of brunch: buffet on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and bottomless Champagne with live bluegrass music on Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Indigo Pool & Bar offers salads, sandwiches, and adult libations served poolside and in cabanas. The Pixie Café is located at the family-friendly Pixie Pool. Jimmy's Pub offers a menu of salads, sandwiches, wood-fired pizzas, and entrées plus craft beers and cocktails. (It's also one of the few restaurants in Ojai to stay open past 10 p.m. on weekends.) Next door, Libbey's Market is the place to go for a quick sandwich and a scoop of McConnell's Fine Ice Creams.

NEW OKU

29 E. Cabrillo Blvd.

Santa Barbara, 805-690-1650

okusantabarbara.com

Asian Fusion; Entrées \$16–\$38

This sleek, contemporary Asian spot across from the beach boasts spectacular ocean and Stearns Wharf views and a lively atmosphere. The first-floor dining room is anchored by a cocktail bar on one side and sushi bar on the other, with an outdoor patio. Upstairs, a dining room with a cocktail bar opens to a roomy patio with an outdoor fireplace and sofas. Menu favorites include Wagyu steak, Miso Yuzu Black Cod, and Crispy Korean Cauliflower. Sip craft cocktails, local draft beer, sake, or a selection from the well-curated wine list spotlighting Santa Barbara County wineries. The restaurant is open daily for lunch, dinner, and happy hour.

PACIFIC BY NORU

394 E. Main Street, Suite B

Ventura, 805-205-9618

pacificbynoru.com

New American; Entrées \$10–\$29

This star serves innovative coastal fare in an upscale yet laid-back setting that includes a lovely covered patio. Housed in the 1924 Beaux Arts-style Bank of Italy building on Ventura's buzzing main drag, it's a locals' go-to for dinner and happy hour (4 p.m. to 6 p.m.). The menu changes seasonally, but chef Ren Weigang and co-owner James Norton serve up recurring favorites like sake-glazed salmon, *hamachi* sashimi, braised short rib, chicken *katsu* sliders, and Wagyu Bavette Bulgogi with chimichurri. Sip an inventive cocktail or local wine or beer.

ROSEWOOD MIRAMAR BEACH

1759 South Jameson Lane

Montecito, 805-900-8388

rosewoodhotels.com/en/miramar-beach-montecito

Californian and Italian; Entrées \$19–\$55

Great Views, Saturday and Sunday Brunch

Set in a spectacular seaside location, this luxury beachside resort's seven distinctive restaurants and bars are open to the general public as well as hotel guests. Executive chef Massimo Falsini oversees the dining destinations, which emphasize locally and sustainably sourced ingredients. Caruso's, the signature oceanfront eatery, is open daily for dinner and features alfresco seating over the sand in addition to a stylish dining room outfitted with deep blue leather booths. Menu highlights include starters such as hand-pulled *burrata* as well as Baja *kampachi crudo*, house-made pastas including the chef's signature carbonara, *uni tagliolini*, and main courses such as pan-roasted petrale sole and grass-fed Watkins Ranch beef fillet. Local and international wines and traditional handcrafted signature cocktails are also offered. Malibu Farm at Miramar, the first California resort outpost of Helene Henderson's well-regarded farm-to-table restaurant, offers breakfast, lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch in a refined yet relaxed setting. Standout dishes include mini Swedish crepe-style pancakes for breakfast, coconut and avocado striped bass ceviche for lunch, and crispy

Café Ana (cafeanasb.com) in Santa Barbara now offers a full-service dinner menu on Fridays and Saturdays, with more evenings in the works. Chef Adam Shoebridge helms the evening meal with a menu that changes weekly and includes main dishes such as New York Strip Tagliata, Pollo à la Plancha With Herbed Potatoes and Jus, Ricotta Dumplings With Snap Peas, Pecorino, and Parmesan Broth, and recurring favorites like the cheeseburger with grilled onions and roasted tomato. Reservations are recommended and are available through the website.

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baked whole fish tacos for dinner. Beverages on the menu range from juices to specialty cocktails. At dinner, guests can dine family-style with shared plates such as a roasted Rocky Canyon half chicken.

Pico at The Los Alamos General Store (losalamosgeneralstore.com) welcomes new executive chef John Wayne Formica, whose dinner menu embraces local bounty and reflects Formica's Italian roots and global culinary stints. Expect dishes like local crudo, Grilled Octopus with *diavola* sauce, Pappardelle Short Rib Ragù, and Double-Cut Smoked Pork Chop with local polenta. The popular Sunday Burger Night remains with weekly burger specials and an edited dinner menu. Pico co-owners Will Henry and Kali Kopley also helm the restaurant's wine bar, wine retail shop, and new tasting lounge for Henry's Lumen Wines.

SAN YSIDRO RANCH

900 San Ysidro Lane
Santa Barbara, 805-565-1700
sanysidoranch.com/san_dining.cfm
American; Entrées \$18–\$56 at Plow & Angel; \$38–\$63 at The Stonehouse; Sunday Brunch, \$75
Great View, Romantic, Sunday Brunch

The five-star treatment at this historic resort starts the minute you turn onto the long drive lined with olive trees and lavender; it continues as you are greeted by a valet who whisks away your car from the circular entrance to its two restaurants, both overseen by executive chef Matthew Johnson. At Plow & Angel, the menu and setting are in keeping with a well-appointed tavern. Thick stone walls and a fireplace create a cozy space for enjoying barrel-aged cocktails and a menu of grilled flatbreads, beer-battered halibut and chips, and grilled New York steak with cognac Bordelaise sauce. Upstairs, The Stonehouse dining room gleams with copper and burnished wood and has a sheltered terrace with views of Montecito, the ocean, and Channel Islands. Seating is also available on outdoor patios below, furnished with a fireplace and flanked by loquat trees. At lunch, served Mondays through Saturdays, a warm salad of kale grown on the premises, house-smoked bacon, and dates is topped with a poached egg. A three-course market menu also emphasizes local ingredients. Served from 6 p.m. daily, the dinner menu includes seared scallops with braised oxtail, sweet corn puree, and black garlic vinaigrette and Steak Diane prepared in the classic style—flambéed tableside. The list of wines and spirits is varied and deep; the wine selection garnered the 2018 *Wine Spectator* Grand Award. Sunday brunch from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. includes starters, entrées, desserts, and free-flowing Laurent-Perrier Brut Champagne.

TIERRA SUR RESTAURANT AT HERZOG WINE CELLARS
3201 Camino del Sol
Oxnard, 805-983-1560
tierrasuratherzog.com

New American; Entrées \$16–\$144 (for 32-ounce rib eye for two); Buffet Brunch \$65
Sunday Brunch

Tucked inside Herzog's winery and tasting room, Tierra Sur specializes in wine-friendly meals made with careful attention to detail. Executive chef Gabe Garcia maintains a local, seasonal vibe at lunch and dinner. Marinated olives and lamb bacon are made in-house. Tapas feature Wagyu sliders and a Margherita pizza with basil-cashew cheese. Watch carefully, and you may see your bone-in rib eye for two prepared on the patio's wood-burning grill before it is served with fried kale and roasted potatoes. Desserts include frozen custards, vanilla-spiced doughnuts, and a show-stopping Baked Alaska. Surrounded by the coppery glow of the walls and the burnished-wood wine rack that frames the kitchen pass-through, diners may forget they're at a kosher restaurant in an Oxnard industrial park. The restaurant is closed on Fridays and Saturdays in observance of the Sabbath. Sunday brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. is served buffet style, with carving and omelet stations and weekly specials inspired by ingredients from local farms.

TRA DI NOI RISTORANTE

3835 Cross Creek Road, Suite 8A
Malibu, 310-456-0169
tradinoimalibu.com
Italian; Entrées \$18–\$36; Market Price for Some Seafood
Sunday Brunch

Even though locals know what they want without opening a menu, the kitchen at this restaurant in the Malibu Country Mart can still impress the rest of us with its handmade pastas, shaved truffles, grass-fed beef, local olive oil, and salads made with produce from Malibu's Thorn Family Farm. The spaghetti carbonara manages to be both low fat and delicious, and the seasonal specials are a treat. The well-curated wine list matches the food and offers prime selections for sipping on the patio.

WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT AND BAR

1510 Anchors Way
Ventura, 805-642-1200
watersedgeventura.com
American; Entrées \$14–\$50

This aptly named bar and grill offers well-prepared plates from both land and sea in an elegant setting with views of the harbor and boats. Start with a cocktail in the piano bar and move on to dinner for starters such as Bloody Mary shrimp cocktail and pesto-stuffed mushrooms and main dishes like seared sesame seed—crusted ahi and braised short ribs. Brunch, served every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until 3 p.m., offers fried calamari and crab cakes appetizers and traditional breakfast dishes like eggs Benedict, pancakes, and waffles, as well as burgers, sandwiches, and freshly caught fish. Happy hour is every day from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. (except holidays) and features \$8 cocktails and \$5 to \$10 plates and pizzas. There's a pet-friendly patio, too.

ZIN BISTRO AMERICANA

32131 Lindero Canyon Rd., Suite 111
Westlake Village, 818-865-0095
zinwestlake.com
Eclectic; Entrées \$15–\$42
Great View, Romantic

The fire pit on the patio and the view of the lake make this quite a romantic spot for dinner. Begin by nibbling on oysters, or a seafood cocktail, or a cheese and charcuterie plate. Main courses have influences from France and England. Farfalle pasta is tossed with roasted salmon and caviar, and at lunchtime, a British steak and ale stew over mashed potatoes. A long list of main-course salads includes tuna Niçoise with seared ahi, mixed greens, caper berries, and potatoes. Happy hour is from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Foodie

Cuisine that shines regardless of decor, service, ambience, or even views.

BARBAREÑO

205 W. Canon Perdido St.
Santa Barbara, 805-963-9591
barbareno.com

Californian; Entrées \$18–\$29

This restaurant highlights ingredients from the Central Coast in menus that feature a few changes monthly. Head chef Justin Snyder focused on pastry in his previous culinary lives, evident from the carefully composed salads, tartares, and desserts that emerge from the kitchen. Recurring favorites include starters like avocado roulade made with *hamachi* crudo and coconut-oolong milk, and cheeky Eggmuffins featuring buttermilk blini stacked with Seascape cheese, speck, and shavings of salt-cured egg yolk. Hope Ranch Mussels with fennel and mustard broth and slow-cooked Wagyu tri tip are also available, along with an extensive inventory of local beers and a wine list that recently garnered a *Wine Spectator* award of excellence.

NEW BASTA

28863 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-865-2019
bastaagoura.com

Italian; Entrées \$16–\$55, Pastas \$16–\$21

Located in Whizin Market Square, Basta is the real Italian deal, serving authentic scratch-made dishes, including pasta and wood-fired pizzas for lunch and dinner. Helmed by Florence-native chef Saverio Posarelli and wife Devon Wolf, the bustling eatery features a menu of tradition-rich dishes that reflect Posarelli's Tuscan roots, such as the Tagliatelli With Wild Mushrooms and Black Truffle Sauce, as well as grilled steaks and fresh fish. Other standouts include the Wagyu Beef Burger, Grilled Spanish Octopus Salad, and Basta's take on ramen, Tagliolini in Brodo.

BELL'S

406 Bell St.
Los Alamos
bellsrestaurant.com
French; Entrées \$18–\$27

Daisy and Gregory Ryan, alums of Per Se, Thomas Keller's Michelin-starred New York restaurant, helm this French-inspired bistro in the historic town of Los Alamos. Located in a building that served as a bank in the early 1900s and as a biker bar later, Bell's delivers classics like steak tartare, wild Burgundy snails served with bread from Bob's Well Bread Bakery down the street, and coq au vin. For lunch, try the French dip made with roasted rib eye. Reservations are available through the website or via email to info@bellsrestaurant.com.

BIBI JI

734 State Street
Santa Barbara, 805-560-6845
bibijisb.com

Indian, \$10–\$16, Grill \$15–\$25, Curries \$10–\$18, Chef's Tasting \$50 per person

A short stroll from Stearns Wharf and the beaches along the Santa Barbara waterfront, Bibi Ji presents an approachable and modern twist on traditional Indian cuisine. The spacious restaurant, designed with a vibrant, eclectic decor, also has a private back patio for dining while taking in the fresh ocean air. Owners Alejandro Medina and James Beard Award-winning sommelier Rajat Parr offer a menu that highlights an abundance of local seafood, traditional coconut curries, a bounty of fresh regional produce cooked in Indian spices, a Chef's Tasting menu,

and an extensive list of natural wines. The critically acclaimed restaurant was included in *The New York Times*' "52 Places to Go in 2019."

BOB'S WELL BREAD BAKERY

550 Bell St.

Los Alamos, 805-344-3000

bobswellbread.com

European; Pastries and Breads \$1.50-\$20, Entrées \$7-\$13

Located in a refurbished 1920s-era service station with its original Douglas fir floors intact, this artisanal bakery is well worth a visit. For the best selection, arrive at 7 a.m. on Thursdays through Mondays, when the doors open and aromatic scones, bagels, *kouign-amann*, *pain au chocolat*, and other pastries come out of the ovens. Loaves of naturally leavened, burnished-crust breads follow soon after. Special daily breads include gluten-free Centennial Loaf and *pain aux lardons* (Saturdays and Sundays). The on-site café serves breakfast and lunch (think avocado toast tartine, croque monsieur sandwiches, and grilled bread with pâté and onion-bacon marmalade) until 3 p.m. Grab-and-go items for DIY picnics include *ficelle* sandwiches made with French ham, Emmentaler cheese, and house-made butter. Well Bread Wines created by Doug Margerum are available by the glass or bottle.

EMBER RESTAURANT

1200 E. Grand Ave.

Arroyo Grande, 805-474-7700

emberwoodfire.com

California-Mediterranean; Small Plates \$10-\$17, Pizzas \$18-\$20, Entrées \$23-\$32

Named for the wood fires used to cook the restaurant's seasonal and farm-fresh dishes, Ember is the project of executive chef Brian Collins, an Arroyo Grande native who shares skills he honed at Chez Panisse in Berkeley and Full of Life Flatbread in Los Alamos with his hometown. The menu, like the beer and wine list, is locally focused, changes monthly, and includes rustic specialties such as crispy kale and house-made fennel sausage pizza, Jidori chicken alongside a wedge of grilled polenta and farmers' market veggies, and grilled rib eye served over roasted potatoes and topped with a decadent garlic confit and avocado chimichurri.

FINCH & FORK

31 W. Carrillo St.

Santa Barbara, 805-879-9100

finchandforkrestaurant.com

American; Entrées \$22-\$36

Weekend Brunch

Located in the Kimpton Canary Hotel, the restaurant has its own entrance at Chapala and Carrillo streets. The vibe in the dining room is sophisticated but comfortable, words that also describe the locally sourced menu by executive chef Peter Cham, a Santa Barbara native. Creative starters, flatbread, salads, and entrées change with the seasons for lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch. The latter, served from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, even has its own cocktail menu. The daily specials menu offers buttermilk fried chicken on Tuesdays and cioppino every Thursday. Happy hour from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays includes drinks starting at \$5 and snacks starting at \$3. Go ahead and splurge on the \$8 harissa buffalo wings, served with pickled celery and crumbled Point Reyes blue cheese.

NEW FLOR DE MAIZ

29 E. Cabrillo Blvd.

Santa Barbara, 805-869-6559

flordemaizsb.com

Mexican; Entrées \$14-\$28

Restaurateur Carlos Luna and the team behind the Los Agaves restaurants and Santa Barbara's Santo Mezzal delivers Oaxacan cuisine to the Santa Barbara waterfront at this rustic yet refined eatery. Lunch, dinner, and happy hour seating with ocean views is available inside or outside on two patios, one of which

features a firepit. The menu is a combination of dishes that showcase traditional moles (grilled mahi-mahi with mole verde, for example) and contemporary Mexican plates. Innovative cocktails complement the food and are also perfect for sipping after dinner on the patio.

HELENA AVENUE BAKERY

131 Anacapa St., Suite C

Santa Barbara, 805-880-3383

helenaavenuebakery.com

Baked Goods, California-Eclectic

Entrées \$4-\$14

The artisanal bakery and café is brought to you by the masterminds behind The Lark, Lucky Penny, and Loquita in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone. The address says Anacapa Street, but walk in from Helena Avenue for the quickest access to Dart Coffee drinks and croissants, scones, cookies, and other pastries made with seasonal ingredients. Open daily, the bakery serves breakfast from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., when don't-miss items include Green Eggs & Ham made with spicy green harissa and grits topped with a fried egg. The lunch menu from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., offers salads and sandwiches, plus specials like Nashville Hot Chicken served with house-made pickles. The bakery's rustic patio is shared by its neighbor, the Santa Barbara Wine Collective, which offers curated tasting flights and wines by the glass and bottle.

HOTEL CALIFORNIAN

36 State St.

Santa Barbara, 805-882-0100

thehotelcalifornian.com/santa_barbara_restaurants/

Eclectic; Entrées \$31-\$50

Built on the grounds of the original Hotel Californian less than a block from Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara's newest resort pays careful attention to all the luxurious details while retaining a casual yet elegant vibe. Its dining options are equally skilled. At Blackbird, dinner menus showcase local ingredients in dishes inspired by the Mediterranean with some North African influences; the bar serves signature cocktails in addition to local brews on tap. (Fans of Alfred Hitchcock will get a kick out of his photo in the dining room.) Located in a separate building from Blackbird, Goat Tree is an order-at-the-counter café with its own patio and, in the dining room, windows with a view of the kitchen. It serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with grab-and-go options for impromptu picnics.

INDUSTRIAL EATS

181 Industrial Way

Buellton, 805-688-8807

industrialeats.com

New American; Entrées \$9-\$45

To find this destination restaurant on Buellton's aptly named Industrial Way, drive past the Central Coast Water Authority office and look for a building painted with a mural of floating sausages, carrots, and wine glasses. Inside, you'll find imported cheeses, house-cured meats, and locally sourced dishes by owner and executive chef Jeff Olsson. The frequently changing menu is noted on pull-down rolls of butcher paper behind the order counter. Wood-fired pizzas can be simple (rosemary with Parmesan) or adventurous (crispy pig's ear salad with sriracha and an egg on top). Offerings from the Not Pizza section of the menu include chicken liver with *guanciale*, while the sandwich list offers selections like the Next Level BLT and a beef-tongue pastrami Reuben. Clipboard specials often feature a must-have oyster-uni-avocado combo. Local wine and beer options are on tap. Located two doors down, The Grand Room is available for large private parties and is the setting for monthly chef dinners. Tickets go fast. Next door to the Grand Room is the new Here to Go, offering grab-and-go items like premade and hot sandwiches, salads, cheese and charcuterie plates, and pizzas. Also find house-cured meats, kimchi, dressings, hot sauces and salsas, fresh fish, meats, and baked goods.

THE LARK

131 Anacapa St.

Santa Barbara, 805-284-0370

thelarksb.com

New American; Entrées \$18-\$42

Santa Barbara's Funk Zone takes flight with The Lark, named for the Pullman train that once made overnight runs between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The past is present in the restaurant's setting, a former fish market remodeled to include exposed brick walls, subway tile, communal tables, and private booths fashioned from church pews. As culinary conductor, executive chef Jason Paluska oversees a thoroughly modern menu that highlights local ingredients. West Coast oysters with Goleta caviar lime are popular starters to shared plates of roasted chicken with green peppercorn *gastrique*, depending on the season. Craft brews, wines by the glass, cocktails, and *mocktails* extend the artisanal spirit into the bar.

LIDO RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

2727 Shell Beach Road

Pismo Beach, 805-773-8900

thedolphinbay.com/lido

Californian; Entrées \$16-\$58

Great View, Daily Brunch

Chef Richard Pfaff brings his eye for fresh and local ingredients to a menu that echoes the creativity displayed by the art glass in Lido's dining room. Appetizers include oysters with pink peppercorn mignonette and beef carpaccio with dijon aioli. Entrées include pasta carbonara, house-made burgers, and a generous rib eye with herbed porcini butter. The Chef's Tasting Menu offers five courses for \$75 (\$100 with wine pairings). A daily affair, brunch from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. features a three-course plated option with bottomless mimosas as well as à la carte dishes.

Need a laugh? **The Original Pizza Cookery** (pizzacookery.com) in Thousand Oaks hosts free Hump Day Comedy shows on the first Wednesday of each month. Stop in for some giggles (pizza optional) on April 1 and May 6 from 7:30 p.m. to about 9 p.m. Produced in conjunction with Funny Girl Events, the midweek pick-me-ups showcase headliner comedians who have been featured on Comedy Central, HBO, and *Conan*.

LOQUITA

202 State St.

Santa Barbara, 805-880-3380

loquitasb.com

Modern Spanish; Entrées \$19-\$42

Great Patio

Loquita is Spanish slang for a wild, fun-loving girl, but this eatery's menu and food are seriously irreproachable. Executive chef Peter Lee sources the finest meat, fish, cheese, and produce to create festive, communal, à la carte meals, including tapas, *pintxos* (small bites typically pierced with a toothpick), and signature paella dishes. Drinks *autentico* include sangria and Spanish-style gin and tonics. Enjoy the spacious patio with two inviting fireplaces, or try the small-bites bar named, naturally, Poquita.

Where to Eat Now

MOUTHFUL EATERY

2626 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-777-9222
mouthfuleatery.com
Peruvian, Californian
Entrées \$9–\$14
Kid-Friendly

Don't let the multicolored chalkboard menu or the solar-powered toy pigs decorating the dining room fool you: This order-at-the-counter café may specialize in salads, sandwiches, and what are called "powerbowls" in a fun, casual atmosphere, but chef and co-owner Luis Sanchez is serious about the food—witness Mouthful's inclusion on Yelp's Top 100 Places to Eat in the U.S. for 2015. La Sarita, a sandwich of house-roasted pork shoulder served with fried sweet potatoes and pickled red onions, gets its heat from an aioli made with *aji amarillo*, a pepper from Sanchez's native Peru. Additions at dinner might include malbec-braised short ribs on polenta one night and savory chicken stew called *aji de gallina* the next. Desserts include *alfajores*, delicate shortbread cookies filled with salted caramel. The Foodies in Training children's menu includes a turkey slider with fruit, yucca fries, and a drink, all for \$6.

Novo's full-service bar and lounge area fronts the busy downtown, beckoning passersby to peek inside. Walk through the lounge to the back of the restaurant and a different Novo presents itself: a multilevel wood patio that backs up to San Luis Obispo Creek. It's a serene setting livened by the hum of diners' conversations and crickets. Like its sister restaurant, the nearby Luna Red, Novo offers global cuisine and local ingredients. Executive chef Michael Avila presides over a menu that includes sought-after Southeast Asian and Indian curries and fresh avocado-shrimp spring rolls. Calling out gluten-free and vegan menu items is a nice touch as is identifying teas by caffeine level. Central California and international wines and spirits accent the menu. Late night on Fridays and Saturdays, a DJ fills the lounge with music.

OLIO E LIMONE RISTORANTE AND OLIO CRUDO BAR

11 W. Victoria St., Suites 17-18
Santa Barbara, 805-899-2699, Ext. 1
olicucina.com

Italian; Entrées \$18–\$41; Crudo Bar \$12–\$25
Husband-and-wife owners Alberto Morello and Elaine Andersen Morello treat their restaurants in downtown Santa Barbara like the gems they are: No ingredient is too good to employ. The organic extra-virgin olive oil from a grove near Alberto's home village in Italy is so popular, patrons buy bottles of it for their own use. At the Ristorante, salads are fresh and the pastas and sauces are house-made. Standouts include *gnocchi alla Riviera*, which combines spinach-and-ricotta dumplings with fresh tomato sauce. With its glass shelves and glowing marble walls, the crudo bar is a jewel-box showcase for carefully executed dishes. Thinly sliced pieces of raw fish are accented with simple but excellent *olio e limone* (olive oil and lemon) and sometimes a bit more: Try the Atlantic Bluefin tuna belly with ginger vinaigrette and wasabi shoots for a meaningful experience. Selected appetizers, beers, cocktails, proseccos, and wines by the glass are half-price during happy hour service available Sundays through Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

OLIVELLA

905 Country Club Road
Ojai, 805-646-1111
ojaivalleyinn.com
California-Italian
Entrées \$37–\$65 (a three-course experience is \$90 or \$150 with wine pairings; four-course experience is \$110 or \$180 with wine pairings)
Romantic, Great Views

This fine-dining restaurant at Ojai Valley Inn features California cuisine with an Italian twist. From chef de cuisine Andrew Foskey's menus come beautifully plated dishes like Kabocha Squash Ravioli, Tails & Trotters Farm Tenderloin of Pork, and Wild Pacific Sea Bass. Save room for the Citrus Olive Oil Cake or Crème Fraîche Panna Cotta, just two of executive pastry chef Joel Gonzalez's creative dessert options. Dining spaces include a private wine room as well as a veranda overlooking the first and final holes of the property's world-class golf course. The restaurant also hosts winemaker dinners.

UPDATE PARADISE CAFÉ

702 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, 805-962-4416
paradisecafe.com
New American; Entrées \$15–\$35
Great Patio

Founded in 1983, the longtime locals' favorite Paradise Café is now helmed by the Acme Hospitality team, offering lunch and dinner daily. Local ingredients inform the evolving seasonal

menu, which includes the signature oak-grilled Paradise Burger. Also look for hearty salads and dishes featuring fried chicken, beef, and fresh fish. Housed in a 100-year-old building, the eatery boasts a brick and wood dining room, a shaded patio, and for a special taste of paradise, a charming separate bar with original murals.

PARADISE PANTRY

218 and 222 E. Main St.
Ventura, 805-641-9440
paradisepantry.com
Rustic; Entrées \$9–\$22
Sunday Brunch

This combination café, wine shop, and cheese store occupies adjoining storefronts in Ventura's historic downtown. Both spaces feature original brick walls and delightfully creaky wood floors. While 218 E. Main St. is devoted to wine sales and cheese and charcuterie displays, 222 offers wine tasting and soups, salads, cheese plates, and pâté samplers. Panini-style sandwiches include the Italiano, packed with arugula and truffle cheese and wrapped in prosciutto. (That's right: The meat is on the outside.) Named for chef and co-owner Kelly Briglio, Kel's Killer Mac is made with a new over-the-top combination of ingredients each week. (Gluten-free options are available.) Typically scheduled once a month, Sunday brunch features such dishes as Kel's crab cakes with Meyer lemon crème fraîche, and French toast made with cinnamon brioche. Join the email list for news of upcoming pop-up appearances by visiting chefs and winemakers.

PAUL MARTIN'S AMERICAN GRILL

100 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-373-9300
paulmartinsamericangrill.com
American; Entrées \$13–\$36
Romantic, Saturday & Sunday Brunch

The farm-to-table movement never looked as elegant as it does at this bistro-style restaurant, which also has locations in Irvine, Roseville, El Segundo, San Mateo, and Mountain View. Tortillas and infused vodkas are just two of the items made in-house to augment the menu showcasing organic produce and artisanal ingredients. The kale Caesar salad features wild white anchovies, mesquite-grilled salmon is served with a chilled salad of quinoa and bulgur wheat, and natural meats are used for burgers, steaks, chops, and "brick" chicken (flattened and cooked evenly under the weight of a brick). Weekend brunch service starts with freshly baked millet drop biscuits and honey butter before moving on to your choice of entrée. Three-course dinner specials include prime rib on Sundays and fried chicken on Tuesdays. Available daily from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., the Taste of Paul Martin's menu offers small plates, burgers, and signature cocktails from \$5 to \$13.

UPDATE PICO AT THE LOS ALAMOS GENERAL STORE

458 Bell St.
Los Alamos, 805-344-1122
picosalamos.com
New American
Shared Plates and Entrées; \$9–\$46
Live Music

The spirit of a one-stop general store lives on in the historic town of Los Alamos, the northern gateway to the Santa Ynez Valley. The outstanding chef-driven, locally sourced dinner menu from executive chef John Wayne Formica changes frequently but offers dishes like local crudo, grilled octopus, house-made pastas, smoked pork chop, and dry-aged rib-eye steak. Charcuterie and cheese platters are a mainstay. Pair the fare with a signature cocktail, beer, or wine from the well-curated list spotlighting small-scale vintners, which earned Pico "Top 100 Wine Restaurant"

The Backyard on Thirteenth (thebackyardpaso.com) in Paso Robles is a new open-air beer, wine, and food venue with the feel of a German beer garden. Sip Central Coast craft beers, ciders, and local wines on tap at shared tables and join in family-friendly outdoor games. Bring Fido, too. Also on-site, walk-up-style partner restaurant Roots on Railroad (rootsonrailroad.com) offers lunch and dinner options such as Lobster Mac and Cheese, Smash Burger, and a Fried Chicken Sandwich.

NEW NOI DUE TRATTORIA

29020 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-852-7090
noiduetrattoria.com
Italian

Entrées \$28–\$42; Pastas \$15–\$24

With a hospitality background that includes stints at Le Cirque in New York and Toscana in Brentwood, owner Antonio De Cicco joins forces with chef Daniele Gallo, who grew up with De Cicco outside Naples, Italy, to head up this warm, sophisticated yet unstuffy eatery. Enduring Italian favorites include pastas such as Spaghetti Cacio e Pepe, Eggplant Parmigiana, grilled filet mignon, and branzino. Tiramisu made tableside is a special treat. The wine list offers Californian and Italian labels, some priced at \$10 a glass during happy hour.

NOVO RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

726 Higuera St.
San Luis Obispo, 805-543-3986
novorestaurant.com
Global; Entrées \$16–\$32
Sunday Brunch

recognition from *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*. The spacious, refurbished building is also the tasting room of Lane Tanner and Will Henry's Lumen Wines of Santa Maria. Sunday is Burger Night. Upscale but down home, Pico is keeping destination diners as well as the local cowboys coming back for more.

THE SPOON TRADE

295 West Grand Ave.
Grover Beach, 805-904-6773
thespoontrade.com

American; Entrées \$15-\$32
Great Patio, Sunday Brunch

The Spoon Trade serves what chef Jacob Town calls "elevated comfort food" in a bright and comfortable neighborhood hangout. Classic dishes (think: fried chicken, pasta, and upside-down cakes) are reimagined with of-the-moment flavors and local ingredients alongside a progressive beer and wine list.

Twisted Oak Tavern & Brewery (twistedoaktavern.pub) is poised to open a second location of its popular Agoura Hills eatery and brewery in Camarillo. Look for 21 beers on tap, a full bar, and daily happy hour with deals on drinks and bites (macaroni-and-cheese balls, anyone?). The brewpub's lunch and dinner menus include sandwiches, salads, burgers, flatbreads, and decadent desserts, along with main dishes such as Stout-Braised Short Ribs.

S.Y. KITCHEN

1110 Faraday St.
Santa Ynez, 805-691-9794
sykitchen.com

Italian; Entrées \$20-\$38

Located on a quiet side street in Santa Ynez, this cozy spot is an oasis of craft cocktails and rustic Italian fare in wine and tri-tip country. Executive chef Luca Crestanelli lets his native Italian roots show in house-made pastas such as wild mushroom pappardelle, salmon puttanesca, and a don't-miss grilled globe-artichoke appetizer. With its firepits and padded lounge seating, The Courtyard is a great place to settle in for pre-dinner cocktails and glasses of local wine or to stay for the whole meal. A lunch menu of salads, pastas, and oak-grilled meats and seafood is served daily.

THOMAS HILL ORGANICS

1313 Park St.
Paso Robles, 805-226-5888
thomashillorganics.com

Wine Country Cuisine; Entrées \$15-\$41
Sunday Brunch

At this chic but casual restaurant in downtown Paso Robles, executive chef Libry Darusman builds on the vision of owner and founding chef Debbie Thomas by turning ingredients from local purveyors into elegant, satisfying fare at lunch, brunch, and dinner. (Why, yes, those are Loo Loo Farms tomatoes in the pickled stone fruit and house ricotta salad.) Wine, beer, and ciders from the region are also featured, adding to the restaurant's farm-to-table bona fides. A new dessert bar served in the front bar and lounge area offers a

selection of treats crafted both in-house and by local purveyors. Try Darusman's spin on s'mores.

TYGER TYGER

121 E. Yanonali St.
Santa Barbara, 805-880-4227
tygertygersb.com

Thai-Vietnamese

Entrées \$13-\$17; Platters \$21-\$23

Located in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone, Tyger Tyger burns bright with creativity. Hundreds of illuminated pink lanterns ring the exterior of the restaurant's shared marketplace space. Open daily at 11 a.m., the order-at-the-counter eatery offers a menu of street food-inspired dishes by chef Daniel Palaima, who's now back in his native Santa Barbara after stints with culinary heavyweights Grant Achatz and Stephanie Izard. Dishes include pork belly *bahn mi*, crispy chicken wings with caramelized fish sauce, octopus salad with glass noodles and a Vietnamese fish sauce called *nouc cham*, and Vietnamese crepes with duck and shrimp confit. Beer and wine selections are from around the globe. Also on site is Monkeyshine, which serves frozen treats flavored with Asian spices and ingredients. Dart Coffee, a small-lot specialty roaster, opens its coffee counter at 7 a.m. daily.

Good Eats

Not too fancy, not too expensive, and a good experience all around.

BLUE TABLE

28912 Roadside Drive
Agoura Hills, 818-597-2583
bluetable.net

International; Entrées \$8-\$15

Live Music

A few blue tables provide seating for outside dining at this charming deli with high-quality Italian eats for lunch and dinner. The indigo theme continues inside, where blue-wash wooden tables are topped with bouquets of fresh flowers. Different salads rotate through the deli case, and the list of sandwiches is written on a blackboard. (The *prosciutto* and *burrata* panini is not to be missed.) Pizzas, soups, cookies, and all other items here are made fresh daily. A small freezer carries pastas and sauces for home use, but anything on the menu can be taken to go. You'll want to stay for dinner, available daily from around 6 p.m. The menu of comfort-food classics includes eggplant Parmesan and spaghetti with organic ground turkey meatballs. Local musicians are featured on Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

BRAXTON'S KITCHEN

317 Carmen Drive
Camarillo, 805-384-7566
braxtonskitchen.com

American; Breakfast and Lunch Entrées \$8-\$13

This beloved order-at-the-counter breakfast-and-lunch spot serves updated classic dishes with a side order of down-home friendly vibes. Hearty breakfasts include lemon-poppyseed pancakes and the Scorpion Bowl of fried potatoes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, cheese, jalapeños, and a sriracha drizzle. Lunch offerings are fresh salads and sandwiches, including the vegan Somis Sammy with marinated eggplant and hummus. The dog-friendly patio is a given, as the restaurant is named after co-owner Steve Kim's rescue pooch.

BRENT'S DELI

2799 Townsgate Road
Westlake Village, 805-557-1882
brentsdeli.com

Deli; Entrées \$6-\$20

Kid-Friendly


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Lindero Country Club
5719 Lake Lindero Dr., Agoura Hills

Where to Eat Now

For amazingly good Reuben sandwiches on rye bread piled high with pastrami or corned beef, sauerkraut, and Thousand Island dressing, you can't beat this slick deli. The booths are cushy and roomy, leaving space for your tummy to expand as you down a four-layer slice of chocolate cake or a plate full of stuffed cabbage rolls. A separate bar also offers the full menu. The patio out back allows for even more seating. A counter up front expedites take-out orders. Brent's Deli is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily.

CAFÉ BIZOU

30315 Canwood St., #14
Agoura Hills, 818-991-9560
cafebizou.com

French; Entrées \$17-\$28

Cozy and candlelit, Café Bizou offers French comfort food in an unstuffy atmosphere. It's known for well-crafted classics such as traditional bouillabaisse, lobster bisque, escargots persillade, steak au poivre, double truffle pommes frites, along with plats du jour. Also look for grilled fresh fish, steaks, chops, chicken, pastas, and risotto. This is high-end food without the prices to match. A salad added to your dinner is \$2 or \$3, and wine buffs rejoice at the \$2 per bottle corkage fee.

NEW CISKO KID LOS ALAMOS

346 Bell St.
Los Alamos, 805-344-1960
thestationlosalamos.com
California Barbecue; Entrées \$14-\$40

Chef, caterer, and restaurateur Conrad Gonzales developed a reputation in the Santa Ynez Valley with his ValleFresh wood-fired barbecue fare and creative tacos made with handmade tortillas. He brings those and much more to The Station, a landmark 1926-era building (look for the original gas pumps in front), a western-style space that he shares with Ranchos de Ontiveros wines. Many plates are shareable and include smoked and fried chicken wings, pork belly tacos, and a barbecue combo plate. Vegetarian and vegan dishes are also offered. With an outdoor garden area, it's also a popular spot for private events.

UPDATE FINNEY'S CRAFTHOUSE

982 S. Westlake Blvd., Suite 2
Westlake Village, 805-230-9950
and 494 E Main St.,
Ventura, 805-628-3312
and 35 State St., Suite A
Santa Barbara, 805-845-3100
and 857 Monterey St.
San Luis Obispo, 805-439-2556
finneyscrafthouse.com

American; Entrées \$10-\$16
Kid-Friendly

The "craft beer spoken here" neon sign in the dining room doesn't quite say it all at this casual but polished gastropub owned by Greg Finefrock, an 805 local whose childhood nickname inspired the restaurant's moniker. In addition to the 30 brews on tap, you'll find craft cocktails, California wines by the glass and bottle, and a fun atmosphere and menu that has something for everyone. With variations in decor between locations (look for the skee-ball machine and photo booth in San Luis Obispo), the menu remains the same. Shareable appetizers include gluten-free buffalo cauliflower tossed in yuzu sauce and chicken- and waffle bites that come with a tangy surprise: Tabasco-brased kale. The house burger is made with a chuck, brisket, and hanger steak patty on a brioche bun (options include gluten-free buns and plant-based Impossible Burger patties). Crispy tacos, salads, and flatbread pizzas are also available. Seating is first-come, first-served at the copper bar.

LOUISIANA SEAFOOD HOUSE BY EMC

511 Town Center Drive, Space 3015
Oxnard, 805-278-4997

emcseafood.com

Cajun; Entrées \$15-\$22; Seafood Boil is market price

The Big Easy comes to Oxnard with the brand-new menu at this stylish eatery serving lunch and dinner daily in The Collection at RiverPark. Created by NOLA-raised wife-and-husband chefs Aliza and Guy DuPlantie, old-school New Orleans dishes such as jambalaya, gumbo, shrimp Creole, house-made sausages, and blackened catfish are the real deal. French bread for authentic po'boys comes from Leidenheimer Baking Company in New Orleans, and crawfish is flown in seasonally. Patio seating is available. Happy hour takes place Mondays through Fridays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

SOCIAL MONK ASIAN KITCHEN

4000 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Space C1
Westlake Village, 805-370-8290
socialmonk.com

Asian; Entrées \$9-\$14

Spicing things up at The Promenade in Westlake Village, this new fast-casual restaurant offers made-to-order Asian dishes with an emphasis on fresh ingredients. Award-winning chef Mohan Ismail oversees the approachable menu that features starters, salads, sandwiches, rice and noodle bowls, classic entrées, noodles, and sides, as well as a Little Monks menu for children. Pair the bold flavors with a glass of wine or beer, or Vietnamese iced coffee, and sit in the bright, contemporary dining room or on the outdoor patio.

THE STONEHAUS

32039 Agoura Road
Westlake Village, 818-483-1152
the-stonehaus.com

Mediterranean; Sandwiches & Platters \$10-\$17
Dog-Friendly, Great Views, Kid-Friendly,
Romantic

Patterned after an Italian *enoteca*, the aptly named Stonehaus starts each day as a coffeehouse, serving kale-berry smoothies along with baked goods, wraps, and breakfast sandwiches from Lisa Biondi, executive chef at the adjacent Mediterraneo at the Westlake Village Inn. It switches to wine bar mode in the afternoons and evenings, when the menu includes charcuterie and crostini platters, salads, panini, and desserts. The outdoor pizza oven is fired up nightly (check website for hours). Wine flights are arranged by regions, varietals, and themes. Patios overlook the waterfall and the working vineyard, which is open for picnicking on Stonehaus fare (check website for information about seasonal tastings and festivals). The picnic tables and bocce ball court are family friendly, and visiting canines get a water fountain of their own near the courtyard fireplace.

Fun, Fun, Fun

Look to these eateries for festive food, an upbeat atmosphere, and a good time.

ANDRIA'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT & MARKET

1449 Spinnaker Drive
Ventura, 805-654-0546
andriasseafood.com

Seafood; Entrées \$8-\$24

Kid-Friendly

No visit to Ventura Harbor—or to Ventura, period—is complete without a stop at Andria's, a locals' favorite since 1982. On weekends, the fast-moving line to order can stretch out onto the restaurant's front patio. Additional seating includes indoor dining rooms decorated with vintage photos and fishing gear, and a protected patio with a view of the docks. Charbroiled fresh catch of the day dinners come with rice pilaf, bread, and a choice of salads. Some items are available in stir-fry dishes. But deep-fried is the preferred method of preparation for everything from onion rings (served in a towering stack) to halibut and chips, oysters and chips, popcorn shrimp and chips, and, well, you get the idea. The atmosphere is beach casual: Orders are called out by number when ready, and it's up to diners to gather utensils, tartar sauce, and other fixin's from a counter near the kitchen. Beer and wine are available. An on-site fish market is open daily.

THE ANNEX

550 Collection Blvd.
Oxnard, 805-278-9500
thecollectionrp.com/the_annex
Cuisines and prices vary by location
Kid-Friendly

Seven restaurants offer as many dining experiences at this public market-style spot in the heart of The Collection at RiverPark. House-roasted coffee, avocado toast, and gluten-free muffins help jumpstart the day at Ragamuffin Coffee Roasters, while The Blend Superfood Bar serves smoothies, juices, and acai bowls made with local berries and honey. Other order-at-the-counter options include Love Pho, Taqueria el Tapatio, and PokeCeviche, specializing in build-your-own Hawaiian poke bowls and chef-curated Latin American ceviche. Seoul Sausage Kitchen, the season-three winner of Food Network's *The Great Food Truck Race*, offers an updated take on Korean barbecue. The craft-beer bar Bottle & Pint serves local brews and ciders on tap and by the bottle and can; wines are available by the glass. Fun artwork, inventive communal seating areas, and two retail shops add to the vibe.

BOGIES BAR & LOUNGE

32001 Agoura Road
Westlake Village, 818-889-2394
bogies-bar.com
Spanish-California; Small Plates & Entrées \$4-\$15
Great Views, Live Music

Surrounded by greenery and water, this bar on the grounds of the Westlake Village Inn is a gorgeous place to get your groove on: Live music and/or club nights are scheduled nearly every night of the week. On the patio, wicker chaise lounges are arranged in semi-private groupings around fire pits and a bar counter looks onto the dance floor through roll-up doors. Inside, bronze curtains and silver wall sconces shimmer in the mood-setting darkness. (Some areas are available by reservation.) It all adds up to a great backdrop for a menu that includes happy hour specials like \$3 draft beers, \$5 glasses of wine, and dinner-and-drink duos (\$10 to \$14) on Mondays through Fridays from 5 pm. to 7 p.m. Spanish influences are evident in dishes like paella and crispy *patatas bravas* with Fresno chilies and garlic aioli.

Get in the pink and attend the annual Rosé All Day at **The Stonehaus at the Westlake Village Inn** (the-stonehaus.com) on May 17 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sip rosés from around the world, including the 2017 Stonehaus Rosé, and nibble charcuterie and cheese plates and other small bites while enjoying live music. Check online for ticket price, which covers rosé tastings and a commemorative glass. The dress code is pink chic.

A new breakfast and lunch option in Ventura, **Immigrant Son Caffé** (immigrant-son.com) offers a unique blend of American and southern Italian fare with menu items for both meals served every day from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Owner Alessandro Tromba honors his family's Italian heritage in dishes such as Maicho's Morning Carbonara and Molise Eggs Benedict with prosciutto and pancetta. Linger over a mimosa, glass of sangria or wine, a Peroni on draught, or a coffee drink.

CAFÉ HABANA

3939 Cross Creek Road
Malibu, 310-317-0300
cafehabana.com
Pan-Latin; Entrées \$9–\$25
Sunday Brunch

Café Habana isn't limited to Cuban food or cocktails. Dishes represent all of Latin culture, from South American ceviches to Mexican grilled corn and huevos rancheros to Cuban pulled-pork sandwiches. Owner Sean Meenan is an eco-warrior while partner Rande Gerber brings in the celebs and keeps the nightlife hopping. The food is good, the cocktails are great, and the coconut flan is out of this world.

THE CAVE AT VENTURA WINE COMPANY

4435 McGrath St., Suites 301-303
Ventura, 805-642-9449
venturawineco.com
International; Small Plates \$3–\$18;
Salads and Sandwiches \$7–\$11
Saturday Brunch

Patrons at The Cave conduct their own tastings via Enomatic machines, which dispense 1-, 3- and 5-ounce pours at the push of a button. Executive chef Alex Montoya's creative, wine-friendly menu of shareable small plates changes on the first Tuesday of each month. Look for combinations like prosciutto-wrapped pork chops with apricot-cashew stuffing and Arctic char with *sinigang* broth and tomato *concasse*, plus an assortment of pizzas, burgers, and desserts. (Save room for one of Montoya's award-winning frozen custards.) For the best acoustics, nab a table in the Barrel Room decorated with dozens of glass balls hanging from the ceiling. It's also available for private events.

THE CRUISERY

501 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-770-0270
thecruisery.com
American Fusion; Entrées \$9–\$18

This lively brewpub located in the former Santa Barbara Brewing Company space serves top-notch beers from award-winning master brewer Dave "Zambo" Szamborski as well as a satisfying suds-friendly menu. Not your typical pub grub, offerings include *banh mi* flatbread, yellowtail crudo, and steak frites, along with sandwiches, tacos, salads, and appetizers like beer-battered green beans. Beer not your jam? Try a craft cocktail with house-made infusions and freshly squeezed juices. Happy hour is Sundays through Fridays from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. with deals on cocktails, beers, and bites.

CUBANEO

418 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-250-3824
cubaneosb.com

California-inspired Cuban; Entrées \$10–\$15
Sister restaurant to Barbareño in Santa Barbara, this order-at-the-counter spot has a fun vacay vibe and shares space with tropical-cocktail bar Shaker Mill and Modern Times Beer. Cubaneo offers lunch, dinner, and late-night eats with a reasonably priced menu of sandwiches, *platos*, and sides. Plates include *plato mixto* (\$15) with choice of *mojo* pork loin or roast, marinated chicken breast, shrimp, or goat cheese *croquetas*. A standout sandwich is the Cubano (\$13) with *mojo* pork roast, Benton's country ham, and Jarlsberg cheese. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.

FLOUR HOUSE

690 Higuera St.
San Luis Obispo, 805-544-5282
flourhouseslo.com
Italian; Starters \$5–\$21; Pizzas \$15–\$20;
Pastas \$19–\$28

With a sleek interior, dynamic menu, and portrait of Sophia Loren, Flour House isn't just a pizzeria: It's a love song to Italy. Co-owner and Salerno native Alberto Russo works magic with imported flour and a Stefano Ferrara pizza oven, the gold standard for traditional pizza napoletana. During Meter Mondays, pizzas are available in different sizes depending on the number in your party: a half-meter for four people includes a choice of three tastings (\$28), while a full meter serves eight with a choice of six tastings (\$50). Don't miss Russo's house-made pastas or the weekday-night *aperitivo* hour from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., featuring cocktails such as the classic Negroni and Aperol Spritz as well as beer and wine and appetizers from \$4 to \$6.

HITCHING POST II

406 E. Highway 246
Buellton, 805-688-0676
hitchingpost2.com
Steak House; Entrées \$26–\$56

A fan favorite since its star turn in the 2004 movie *Sideways*, Hitching Post II radiates a western-style steak-house feel with down-home service and hearty portions of Santa Maria-style barbecue. In addition to oak-grilled steaks, the menu features ribs, quail, turkey, duck, and seafood. Sip from the *Wine Spectator* award-winning wine list that includes a selection of Hitching Post labels.

LOS OLIVOS WINE MERCHANT & CAFÉ

2879 Grand Ave.
Los Olivos, 805-688-7265
losolivoscafe.com
Wine Country; Entrées \$12–\$29

This retail wine shop adjoins an all-day café with seating indoors by the stone fireplace and outside on the wisteria-covered patio. Cheese plates and olives are small bites perfect for pairing with wines at the bar. Salads, sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and pizza comprise the lunch menu. At night choices get a little fancier with pot roast, lamb shank, pasta, chicken, steak, and fresh fish. The wine selection from the shop (available to diners) has more than 400 labels and specializes in picks from California's Central Coast. Now that's fun.

LUCKY PENNY

127 Anacapa St.
Santa Barbara, 805-284-0358
luckypennysb.com
Californian; Entrées \$11–\$16

Located in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone, this order-at-the-counter spot ranks as one of the city's most Instagrammed restaurants. The exterior covered in thousands of shiny copper pennies is a draw, but so is the creative menu of close-up-worthy salads, sandwiches, small plates, and wood-fired pizzas. The latter includes such local-place-named favorites as

the Milpas, topped with fingerling potatoes, chorizo, and a sunny-side-up egg. Salads are big enough to turn into a meal or to share with a friend who orders pizza. Seating is on a pet-friendly patio adjacent to The Lark restaurant. Coffee is served, along with beer, wine, cider, and a life-giving *frosé* accented with local strawberries and tarragon.

OLIO PIZZERIA

11 W. Victoria St., Suite 21
Santa Barbara, 805-899-2699
oliocucina.com
Italian

Small and Shared Plates \$5–\$19; Entrées \$15–\$21
This combination Italian pizzeria and *enoteca* is brought to you by the owners of Olio e Limone Ristorante, the more formal eatery located next door. The Victoria Court setting includes a long bar with a peekaboo view of the pizza oven, plus small tables. Menu offerings include chicken, fish, and beef entrées, as well as pasta, antipasti, salads, cured meats, cheeses, vegetables, and house-made *dolci*. The pizzas, with thin, chewy crusts, are individually sized and topped with excellent ingredients—sautéed rapini, spicy salami, cremini mushrooms, and black truffles among them. Lunch or brunch is served daily from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and the dinner menu is available daily from 11:30 a.m. until 10 p.m. Wines from California and Italy are available by the glass, carafe, half liter, and bottle.

THE PROJECT: CORAZON COCINA & TAPROOM

214 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-869-2820
theprojectsb.com
Mexican; Entrées \$10–\$24

Chef Ramón Velazquez of Corazon Cocina teamed up with Captain Fatty's Brewing Company to create this easy-breezy hangout spot on the edge of Santa Barbara's Funk Zone. Fun-loving folks dig into fresh and creative tacos, burritos, quesadillas, salads, and ceviche while quaffing from a frequently changing selection of more than 20 craft beers, including Captain Fatty's, local guest taps, and Mexican brews. A full bar features signature tequila- and mezcal-based margaritas. Catch the ocean breeze on the State Street-facing outdoor patio or the game on TVs in the bar.

RUMFISH Y VINO

34 N. Palm Street
Ventura, 805-667-9288
rumfishyvinoventura.com
Caribbean-Central American inspired
Entrées \$13–\$27
Sunday Brunch

Rumfish Y Vino brings the taste and feel of the tropics to Ventura. The airy dining room and bar area and roomy outdoor patio with lush plantings and a fireplace puts diners in vacation mode. Begin by nibbling crispy Conch Fritters, Ahi Tuna Crudo, or Peruvian Ceviche. Move on to Caribbean Fish Stew, braised pork tacos on house-made corn tortillas, or vegetarian rice and beans with roasted vegetables. Sip an inventive cocktail or local beer and wine. The restaurant is open for lunch, dinner, Sunday brunch, and daily happy hour.

TAVERNA TONY

23410 Civic Center Way
Malibu, 310-317-9667
tavernatony.com
Greek; Entrées \$13–\$37

This huge space at the northeast corner of the Malibu Country Mart is almost never closed and never empty. There's always fun to be had: If the classical guitarists aren't playing, the waiters might be singing. Every meal starts with Greek-style country bread and house-made dip. The roast baby lamb is a specialty of the house for good reasons: The meat is garlicky and mostly tender with some crispy bites. The accompanying potatoes are roasted with lemon juice and the carrots are cooked with dill. Greek coffee is a perfect end here. ♦