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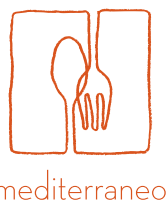
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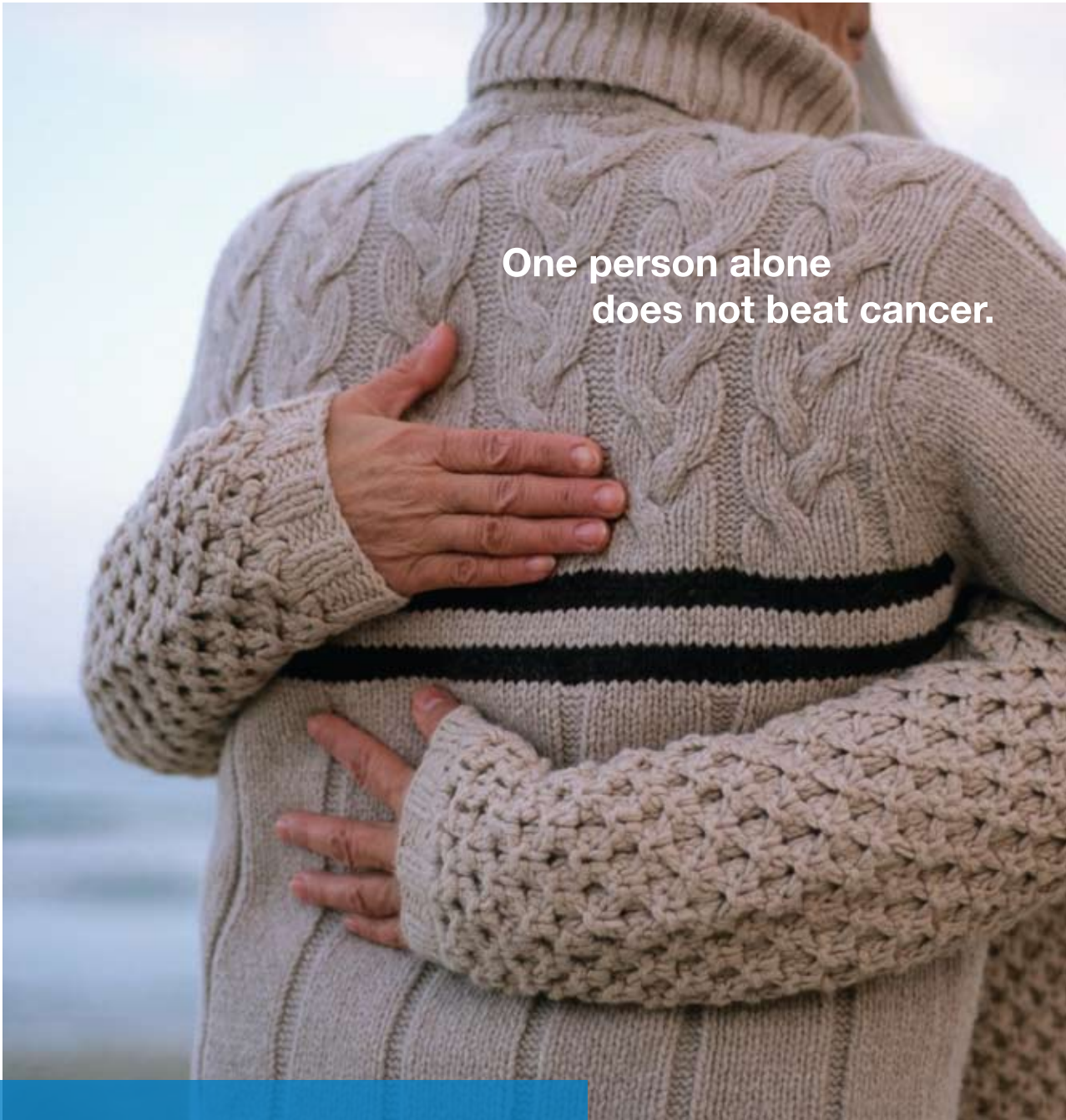
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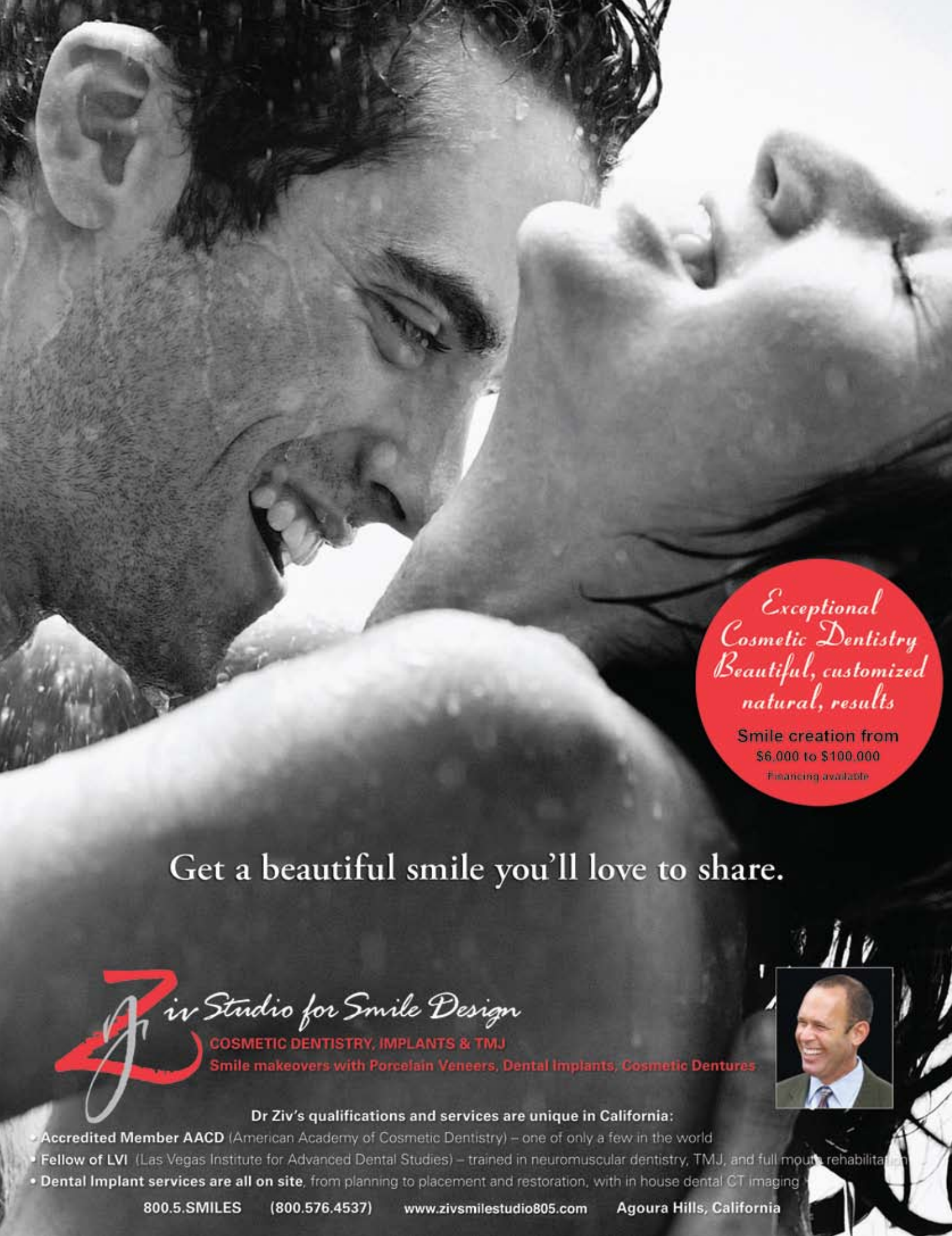
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Out of 312,120 + Combinations, Burger No. 97,258 **VEGGIE BACON BURGER**

Last week on the lunch shift, I was in the kitchen where the burgers come up ready to go out to the customers, checking the orders. Now there is someone whose job it is (the Expo) to do that all the time but with hundreds of thousands of combinations, I often double check. Then I saw it; there was a veggie burger on a honey wheat bun with sprouts, tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, avocado, dijon balsamic dressing **AND BACON**. Certain that it was a mistake, I immediately snapped a look at the cooks but they were embroiled in other burgers, onion strings and sweet potato fries so I looked at the Expo and exclaimed, "There's bacon on this veggie burger!"

His first reaction was something like, "Don't you have something better to do?" but given I am the manager, he thought better of it. He explained to me that this same person comes in every week and orders a perfectly vegan veggie burger, with bacon. He shrugged and said, "What can I say, that's the way the guy likes his veggie burger."

"It's ready to go if you want to take it out and meet the guy" he said. Given that was one of the better ideas he'd had all week I picked up the order and headed for the dining room. Just as I hit door I heard the Expo yell out behind me, "Did you hear about the guy who orders his burgers with..."

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Editor's Note



GARY MOSS

Welcome to the Race

With Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Memorial Day to celebrate this month, I have no doubt that May will be wonderful. For those of us living in the Conejo Valley, in which this magazine is headquartered, May also brings Race Day. On Sunday May 23, we play host to the Amgen Tour of California, and *805 Living* is proud to be the exclusive regional lifestyle magazine sponsor for the Stage 8 Overall Finish.

Then—soon enough—after all that preparation and after all the excitement, it will all be over. Just because the cyclists leave, however, doesn't mean Amgen's work is done. Its *Breakaway from Cancer* initiative uses the Tour's popularity to reach an audience of hundreds of thousands, letting them know of the resources available to cancer patients and their families.

805 Living is donating a percentage of advertising revenue generated by official tour sponsors as well as from restaurants participating in the "Taste of the Tour" food and wine event on May 22 (see page 72 for details) back to *Breakaway from Cancer* because there is still a vital need to find ways of increasing the odds of surviving cancer. There are many ways for you to get involved, too, from taking part in fundraisers, like fun runs and walks, to simply using your purchasing power. For example, on page 24 there is a pretty "Mom" bracelet, sold through J Girl; part of the proceeds from every sale go to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure in honor of Jacqui S. Elbling, because not everyone is a survivor yet.

You may know someone going through their own battle right now, and our second feature focuses on female cancer survivors. Anthony Head interviewed these women and decided their stories were best told with their own words, which turned out to be a great call. Spreading the word from person to person makes it more personal, and when something terrible like cancer becomes personal, people try to make great things happen. I think "Voices of Survivors" is one of the most important features we've ever run because it underscores how each person was determined to *never* give up.

I'll bet that's the attitude of each rider in the Tour as well. And regardless of the final results from the Conejo Valley, the riders will likely meet one another again very soon for another race. (There's always another race to be run.) Wherever it is that they meet, they'll continue their efforts, battle their mountains, and cover a lot more ground.

As I finish this letter and we ship the issue out the door, I have to hope that the cure for cancer is forthcoming, but I know there's still a lot of work to be done and a lot of ground to cover.

See you at the race,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne".

Lynne Andujar, Editor in Chief
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Behind the Scenes

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Moms are full of advice—they really can't help it. Sometimes their sage counsel might be credited for our own happiness or productivity; other times, their admonitions might just leave us wondering. This month, to honor Mother's Day, a few of our contributors share the motherly words of wisdom or wackiness that they've carried with them into adulthood.



Contributing photographer **GERARD BELLO** shot some of the fashions featured in this issue (*Finds Style*, page 26); it turns out that his mother had something to do with his choice of occupation. This is what my mom said to me when I told her that I wasn't sure how I should lead my life: “If something seems to spark your interest, try it! If you do it half-ass, then it's probably not for you. But if you can't stop thinking about it, then it's for you.” I realized that this applies to everything—my career, relationships, and character.

Contributing columnist **MARYANN HAMMERS** (*Mind/Body/Soul*, page 44) still follows a lot of the advice she got while growing up. Mom always said, “Cover your mouth when you cough,” “Bring a sweater in case it gets cold,” “Don't leave the house until you brush your teeth and make your bed,” “TVs and microwaves emit cancer-causing radiation, so avoid both,” and “Spaghetti is always a good idea.” I have to say I still faithfully abide by all of the above—especially the spaghetti part.

This month **MARK LANGTON**, an avid cyclist and contributing editor, wrote a preview of the Amgen Tour (page 70), in addition to keeping readers up-to-date on other area events (*Insider*, pages 34 and 36; *Hot Ticket*, page 38; and *Good Deeds*, pages 54 and 56). Langton was on the receiving end of some career advice early on. My father was an actor, and it was a good life he provided for my mother and me. But at times the jobs could be a little scarce, so sometimes the finances were a bit shaky. One day when I was about 13, I remember my mom telling me, “Don't ever become an actor.” I knew better than to go against my mom's advice, so I became a musician.

CYNTHIA HOUSE NOONEY, a contributing editor (*Pursuits*, page 48), has reinterpreted some of her mom's advice in teaching her own children. My mom's choices taught me to care about others, which is what I attempt to pass along through real-life examples (like no more white lies when trying to get out of something and making sure the friends I select also care about others). The one piece of advice she verbalized was to forget about doing the dishes so I could play with my children. I've put my own spin on that: “We time” is how fast *we* can unload the dishwasher together.





Contributing editor and local restaurant guru **ANGELA PETTERA** (“Greatest Hits,” page 74; *Taste of the Town*, page 90; and *Dialed In* and *Dining Guide*, beginning on page 92) thinks about her mom when she’s doing the dishes. I wouldn’t call it advice, but one thing my mother said years ago changed my attitude toward household chores forever. As a teenager I was complaining about having to do the dishes one night when Mom, smiling, spoke words I had no argument for: “Why do you think I had you if not to do things like this?”

Gary’s Outtake

By Gary Moss, Photo Editor



Sometimes an image can be what we call “soft.” In other words, even though the auto-focus indicates the lens is focused, you might still end up with out-of-focus images.

When photographing people, the rule of thumb is to focus on the subject’s eyes in order to make them completely sharp first, followed by the rest of the face. Holding a piece of paper with type on it can help you focus more easily. Here, my assistant covers my subject with a menu at the photo shoot inside the Stonefire Grill (see page 90). Typically, you want to photograph people between f-5.6 to f-11. So make sure the paper is right on the face to achieve critical focus.

Another tip: I suggest keeping a few playing cards in your camera bag; they’re small and easy to carry.

Gary Moss has launched the Camera Whisperer Photographic Workshops and Seminars for all levels of photographers, from emerging to professional. These are extremely interactive seminars and workshops designed to create a positive experience for photographers who want to take their work to the next level. Gary’s motto: “You own the equipment, now own your photography.” Check out camerawhisperer.com for more information. ■

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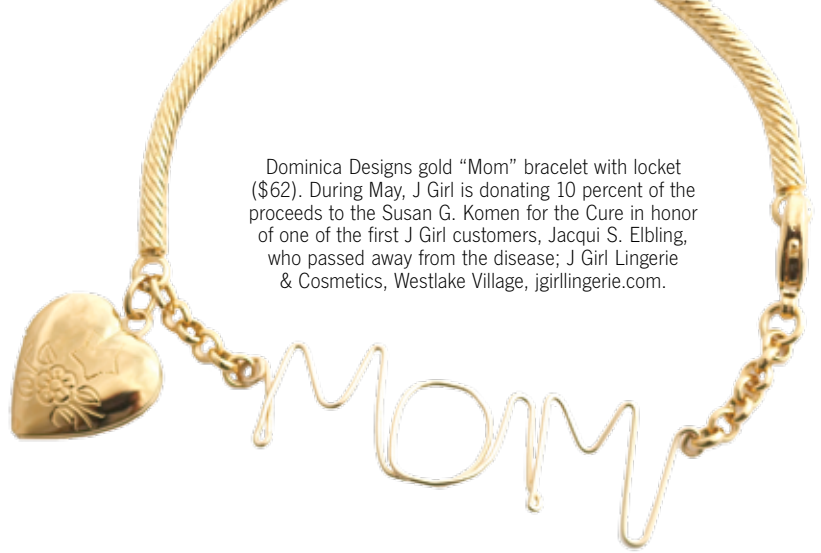
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Dominica Designs gold "Mom" bracelet with locket (\$62). During May, J Girl is donating 10 percent of the proceeds to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure in honor of one of the first J Girl customers, Jacqui S. Elbling, who passed away from the disease; J Girl Lingerie & Cosmetics, Westlake Village, jgirlingerie.com.



Chloe "Belladone" sunglasses (\$295); Madison at The Promenade at Westlake, Westlake Village, and Malibu, madisonlosangeles.com.



Sony "MHS-PM5 Bloggie" hi-def MP4 video recorder and 5-megapixel camera with built-in USB arm (\$170); Sony Style at Westfield Topanga, Canoga Park, sonystyle.com.

Asha by ADM "Flavia Mixed Triple Cabochon Earrings" with moonstone, rose quartz, lemon quartz, rose de France, and rock crystal (\$595); Dressed, Santa Barbara, dressedonline.com.



Lollia "Relax" bath salts (\$24); Bella Claire Home, Westlake Village, bellaclairehome.com.

Sweet Arleen's cupcakes (\$35-\$40 a dozen) in tempting flavors such as Banana Caramel, Chocolate Marshmallow, Strawberry Cream, and Rich Peanut Butter. Mention "805" and receive \$10 off a purchase of \$50 or more through the end of this month; Sweet Arleen's, Westlake Village, sweetarleens.com.



Tory Burch "Slouchy Straw Tote" (\$350); Neiman Marcus Topanga, Canoga Park, neimanmarcus.com.



"2 Carat Cup" (\$17) with Swarovski crystal; Paper Source at The Oaks, Thousand Oaks, 805-496-6400.

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INITIAL ATTRACTIONS

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Clockwise from top left: Vintage letter button bracelet (\$150); The Agoura Antique Mart, Agoura Hills, 818-706-8366.

Jenny Gaynor Glass "Stamped Initial" recycled glass pendant (\$148); Imagine, Santa Barbara, 805-899-3700; or jennygaynor.com.

Elsa Peretti "Letter A" 18-karat gold pendant (\$595); Tiffany & Co., Santa Barbara, tiffany.com.

"ABC Monogrammed" charm (\$18); Brighton at The Lakes, Thousand Oaks, brighton.com.

Birthstone pendant necklace (\$70, chain and one charm); redenvelope.com.

Waxing Poetic "Baby Charm" bracelet (\$75); Siany, Westlake Village, 805-557-1881.

Mauri Pioppo "Love Letter" necklace (\$510); mauripioppo.com.



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FAIRWAY FABULOUS

Look sharp on the greens with these sparty finds.

Glove It "Bling" visor (\$25); gloveit.com.

EP Pro "Poppy Hills" shirt (\$55); Roger Dunn Golf, Thousand Oaks, 805-778-0050; or worldwidegolfshops.com.

Ame and Lulu "Cypress" golf tee bag (\$24); ameandlulu.com.

Evertan "Cotton Candy" gloves (\$17); Golfsmith, Oxnard; golfsmith.com, or evertan.com.

Sun Dog "Paula Cramer" sunglasses (\$60); Roger Dunn Golf (see above).

"Empowered" golf balls (\$13 for 6); pinksandgreens.com.

Glove It "Houndstooth" golf bag (\$160) (see above).

Ecco "Street Premier" golf shoe (\$129) available at Roger Dunn Golf (see above).

EP Pro "Houndstooth" skort (\$80); Golfsmith (see above).





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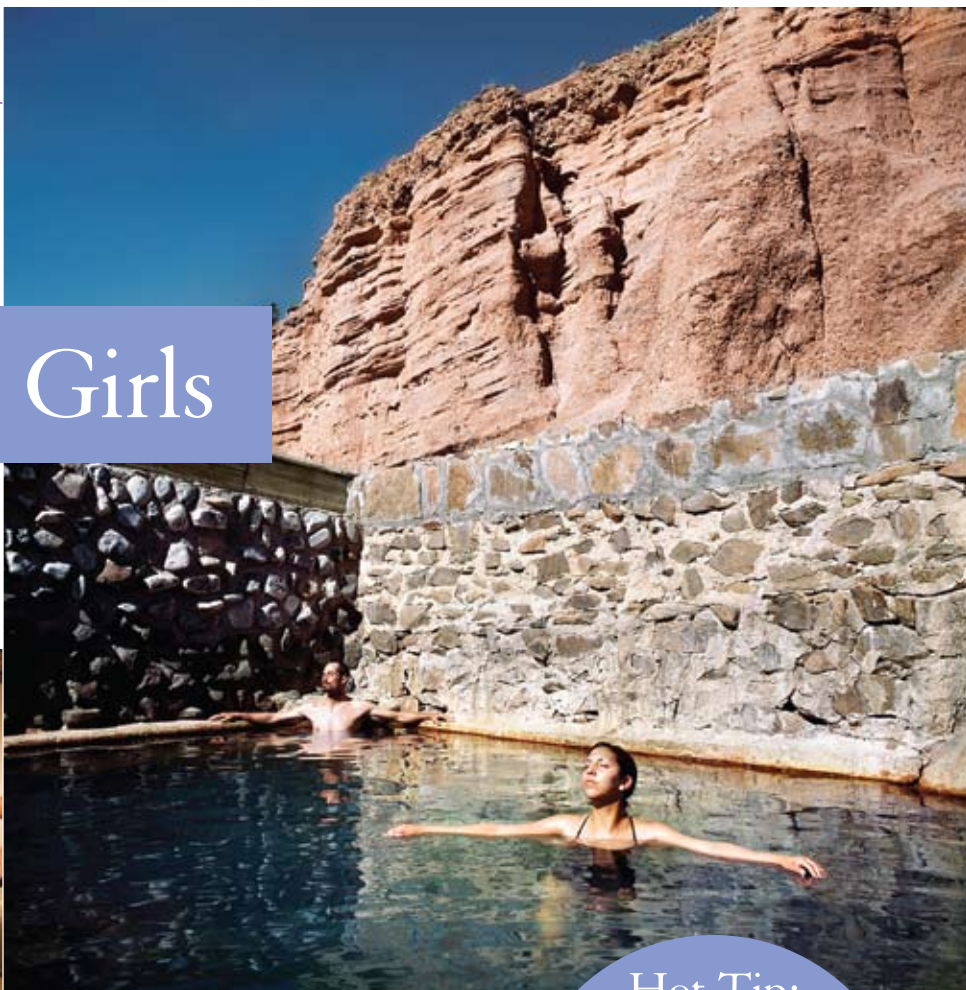
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Girls, Girls, Girls

FROM GIRLFRIEND GETAWAYS TO SPACATIONS, MAY TRAVEL IS ALL ABOUT THE LADIES.



Hot Tip:

3froz.com offers luxury health and beauty products in—you guessed it—3-fluid-ounce containers to breeze through airport security. Check out travel-friendly goodies like the Air Repair Kit (\$65), which is designed to pamper skin while flying.

VIVA NEW MEXICO

One sip of the lithia water that naturally occurs on-site starts the relaxation at **Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs Resort & Spa** (ojospa.com) in northern New Mexico, less than an hour's drive from both Santa Fe and Taos. But it's the signature spa treatments and affordable accommodations that attract serenity-seeking girlfriends to this rustic retreat that has been a sacred healing spot for Native Americans for more than 140 years.

The spa offers a range of therapeutic and restorative treatments, and some signature items are well worth the trip. The Native American blue-corn salt scrub enhances circulation the same way any body scrub does, although there's something about adding cornmeal to the mix of sea salt and oil that seems to take off more than dead skin. It sloughs away stress and problems and annoyances while leaving skin feeling refreshed. The prickly pear, aloe vera, and cactus fruit mask is said to be especially soothing for sunburn and insect bites and is gentle enough for sensitive skin (like mine). But there's plenty to do besides spa treatments, from hiking to mountain biking to yoga to soaking in the resort's various pools with different blends of sulfur-free mineral waters (iron, lithia, soda, arsenic) and different temperatures—there's even a mud pool for total detox.

Guests have a variety of lodging choices, from hotel rooms without phones, TVs, or showers (bathing is done in the bathhouses) to suites and cottages (with kitchenettes) to full-service private homes. The "Girlfriends' Getaway" package (from \$589 for two people) includes two nights in a Pueblo Suite (with traditional New Mexican furnishings and a kiva fireplace) or a Plaza Cottage, two 50-minute spa face treatments (one per person); a 50-minute reservation in a private outdoor pool with a kiva fireplace; and unlimited access to eucalyptus steam, sauna, and all mineral pools. Dining is available on-site and the shops and galleries of Santa Fe are just 50 miles to the south.

Cliffside suites at Ojo Caliente feature kiva fireplaces and private, outdoor soaking tubs (above left). Native American legend says that the red rock above the iron pool (above right) protected mesa people during times of famine, offering them food and water.



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INDULGE IN LAGUNA

The luxurious **Montage Laguna Beach** (montagelaguna.com) offers two women-friendly packages at its oceanfront Arts and Crafts-style resort:

- “Girlfriend Getaways” (\$3,300 for three people, \$565 each additional person; includes tax and gratuity) includes one night in a two-bedroom suite (one king bed, two queen beds, plus a pull-out sofa), breakfast, and a visit to the holistic indoor/outdoor Spa Montage for a mani/pedi and one-hour massage.
- The “Surrender Balancing Retreat” (\$3,995 per person, double occupancy) is an all-inclusive, four-day customized retreat to focus on body, skin, diet, health, and fitness issues with a personal therapist and coach. The package includes unlimited access to group fitness classes, personal life coaching, all meals, and a group cooking class with The Loft’s chef de cuisine Brian Black.



Spa Montage draws inspiration from its oceanside setting for many of its spa treatments, including a sea-mineral-infused underwater massage, sea salt scrub, anti-aging sea-vegetable body wrap, and algae cellulite massage.



A Nearby Tuscan Retreat

A Tuscan escape with food, wine, and spa treatments doesn’t have to mean a transcontinental flight when the Villagio Inn and Spa (villagio.com) in Napa Valley’s Yountville is just a few hours away. Sculpted gardens, Italian-style frescoes, a 24-hour heated pool, and a daily champagne breakfast buffet are enough reasons to stay on-property, even when Yountville’s tasting rooms and world-class restaurants (Bouchon, The French Laundry, Bottega) beckon. Even more enticing are Villagio’s spacious guest rooms, with soaking tubs and sitting areas with fireplaces plus patios or balconies. A complimentary bottle of wine awaits each guest, but the in-room wine cellar filled with staff picks of local vintages (with descriptions) at retail prices is the real treat.

Through June 30, book the “Viva La Diva Girlfriends Getaway Spa Day” (\$285 per person for spa services; lodging from \$340) and enjoy a private spa suite with a fireplace, infinity soaking tubs, steam shower, flat-screen television, and champagne and hors d’oeuvres platter while the spa treatments (mani/pedi and choice of a facial or 50-minute body treatment) come to you. Wine-tasting passes for nearby tasting rooms are also included in the package. ■

The private soaking tubs and secluded service of the Mayacamas Spa Suite at Napa Valley’s Villagio Inn and Spa make it a perfect retreat for a girlfriends’ getaway.



TOP TEN PLACES TO SPOIL MOM

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By Mark Langton

THROUGH 8/15

Through August 15: *COLORSCOPE: ABSTRACT PAINTING 1960–1979*

Santa Barbara Museum of Art. The period of abstract painting between 1960 and 1979 was an era marked by the vibrant use of color. Works from some of the most influential artists of the genre including Richard Anuszkiewicz, Alice Baber, and Jerrold Burchman are on display. (sbma.net)

May 8: *AAUW ANNUAL HOME TOUR*

Various locations, Paso Robles. The American Association of University Women host tours of four unique properties. Proceeds benefit local high school girls and women entering or returning to college later in life. Estates include a restored early 20th-century home and garden, a farm home transformed using green materials, a custom hilltop vineyard residence, and a mission-inspired Spanish villa. (805-237-1836)

May 10: *AN EVENING WITH GEORGE HINCAPIE*

Muvico Theaters, Thousand Oaks. Meet *Breakaway from Cancer* spokesperson and current U.S. National Road Race Champion George Hincapie when he discusses his new film, *A Ride with George Hincapie*. Hincapie, who is also the only rider to be a member of eight Tour de France winning teams, takes questions from the audience afterward. The \$50 film pass includes event entry, refreshments, and *A Ride with George Hincapie* DVD. The \$100 VIP pass additionally includes a VIP reception and a bottle of limited-edition Malibu Family Wines King of the Mountains Cuvée. The \$500 Executive pass additionally includes a case of KOM Cuvée and a private ride with Hincapie on May 11. Tickets are tax deductible and proceeds benefit the Local Organizing Committee, which funds the entire Stage 8 Overall Finish. (velogen.org)

May 15: *MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C-SHARP MINOR*

The Granada, Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Symphony celebrates the 150th birthday of Gustav Mahler with a performance of his Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor. Mahler is considered one of classical music's most prolific composers; all nine of his completed symphonies are on multiple lists as some of the 100 greatest ever written. (thesymphony.org)

May 16: *KITCHENS AND COOKS TOUR*

Various locations, Westlake Village. Homeowners open the doors to their kitchens to showcase design and decor, while local chefs and caterers (including Grissini Ristorante, Boccaccio's, Fins, Zin Bistro, Moz Buddha Lounge, and Leila's) provide gourmet nibbles. Also on hand will be designers and cookbook authors, as well as representatives from local specialty kitchen retailers. Proceeds benefit Assistance League of Conejo Valley. (alcv.net)

May 22: *LET'S FALL IN LOVE, AN EVENING OF ROMANCE AND SEDUCTION*

The Granada, Santa Barbara. This Broadway-worthy production stars legendary Broadway actors/singers Rebecca Luker (*Mary Poppins*, *The Music Man*, *The Sound of Music*) and Howard McGillin (*Phantom of the Opera*, *She Loves Me*, *Anything Goes*). The show features songs from some of Broadway's most notable composers including Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Oscar Hammerstein, Leonard Bernstein, and Andrew Lloyd Webber. A native of Santa Barbara and graduate of Dos Pueblos High School, McGillin is making this his first hometown performance since becoming a Broadway sensation. Proceeds benefit Dos Pueblos High School performing arts programs and The Granada's children's programs. (granadasb.org)

May 29–30: *CAJUN-CREOLE MUSIC FESTIVAL*

Rancho Santa Susana Park, Simi Valley. Some of Southern California's best Cajun-Creole and blues bands perform both days. There is also plenty of Cajun food, plus activities for the entire family. Hosted by the Simi Sunrise Rotary Club, the event's proceeds benefit dozens of local community organizations. (simicajun.org) ■



PAVA, DAN CHRISTENSEN, 1968, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

Here's an idea:

One of the most anticipated events of the year is the **OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL**. Held under a canopy of huge oaks at the Libbey Bowl (as well as several other locations around Ojai), the festival—now in its 64th year—features a different musical director each year. This year's director is world-renowned composer/conductor George Benjamin (shown below). A broad spectrum of musical genres and composers will be represented, from Igor Stravinsky to Frank Zappa. Ensemble Modern, one of the world's preeminent modern music ensembles, will perform four separate programs as it makes its West Coast debut. A definite highlight will be the West Coast premiere of Benjamin's chamber opera, *Into the Little Hill*, which was called "the opera of the decade" by London's *Daily Telegraph*. (ojaifestival.org)



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By Mark Langton

5/29

May 11–June 20: **HEARTS, FLOWERS, MUSIC, AND LOVE**

Gardens of the World, Thousand Oaks. This art show features works by longtime Conejo Valley resident Sheila Fein and her daughter Jenna Elinson, who graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. Both artists display a whimsical, abstract style using brilliant colors and vibrant imagery. (gardensoftheworld.info; fein-art.com; jennafein-design.com)

May 13–16: **FILLMORE MAY FESTIVAL**

Downtown Fillmore. This small-town celebration, dating back to 1912, is big on fun and attractions, with carnival rides, a parade along Central Avenue, live music, local foods, and crafts. (fillmorechamber.com)

May 15: **FAMILY SERVICE AGENCY CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**

Alameda Park, Santa Barbara. This free event celebrates childhood and family life. There will be live dance and musical performances, pony rides, face painting, crafts, sports, and workshops. Since 1899, Family Service Agency has been committed to assisting youth, families, and seniors with low-cost or free basic necessities and counseling. (fsacares.org)



May 15–16: **CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**

Strawberry Meadows of College Park, Oxnard. Strawberries, our region's quintessential crop, are celebrated in every way imaginable. Ranked as one of the top festivals in the country, there is live entertainment, celebrity cooking demonstrations, arts and crafts booths, and Strawberryland for Kids with rides and attractions, and strawberry eating contests. (strawberry-fest.org)

May 23: **"AMELIA EARHART—MY COUSIN"**

California Lutheran University (CLU), Thousand Oaks. As part of the university's Scandinavian Lecture Series (and also sponsored by The Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation), this illustrated talk on famed aviator Amelia Earhart will be given by her second cousin, former CLU professor of 29 years Ernst F. Tonsing. Recently

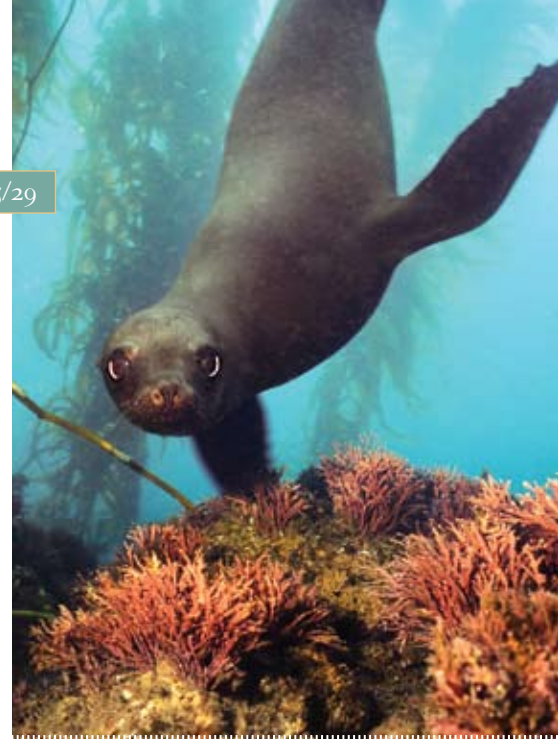
named Outstanding Scandinavian American of 2010 by the foundation, Tonsing discusses not only Earhart's numerous record-breaking achievements, but also her exploits as an author, social worker, college professor, businesswoman, clothing designer, and women's rights activist. Admission is free. (callutheran.edu)

May 29: **CHANNEL ISLANDS LIVE**

Channel Islands National Park Visitors Center, Ventura Harbor. Join National Park Service Rangers as they lead interpretive tours of the Channel Islands National Park. The park contains more than 2,000 species of terrestrial plants and animals, including 145 species found nowhere else in the world. Marine life ranges from microscopic plankton to the blue whale; and archeological and cultural resources date back more than 10,000 years. (nps.gov/chis)

May 29–31: **I MADONNARI ITALIAN STREET PAINTING FESTIVAL**

Santa Barbara Mission. *Madonnari* (Italian for "street painters") will create 150 giant chalk paintings and turn Mission Plaza into a living canvas. There will also be a chance for children to try their hand at pastels on pavement. Adjacent to the murals will be an Italian market with Italian cuisine and specialty items, as well as live music. Admission is free. Proceeds benefit the Children's Creative Project, a nonprofit arts education program of the Santa Barbara County Education Office. (imadonnarifestival.com) ■



Here's an idea:

AMERICA'S TEACHING ZOO: The Exotic Animal Training and Management (EATM) Program at Moorpark College is open to the public every weekend. Walk the grounds, where EATM students care for more than 200 reptiles, birds, and mammals—including rare and endangered species—that live at the compound. Fun and educational 15-minute carnivore feeding shows are performed throughout the day, and birthday parties can be arranged; the fee includes a 45-minute show with 10 to 14 animals. Special presentations and guided tours can also be arranged for school outings and other groups. There's even Junior Safari Camp, an all-day summer program with activities that include animal presentations, handling opportunities, and art and science projects. (moorparkcollege.edu)



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MAY 23, 2010



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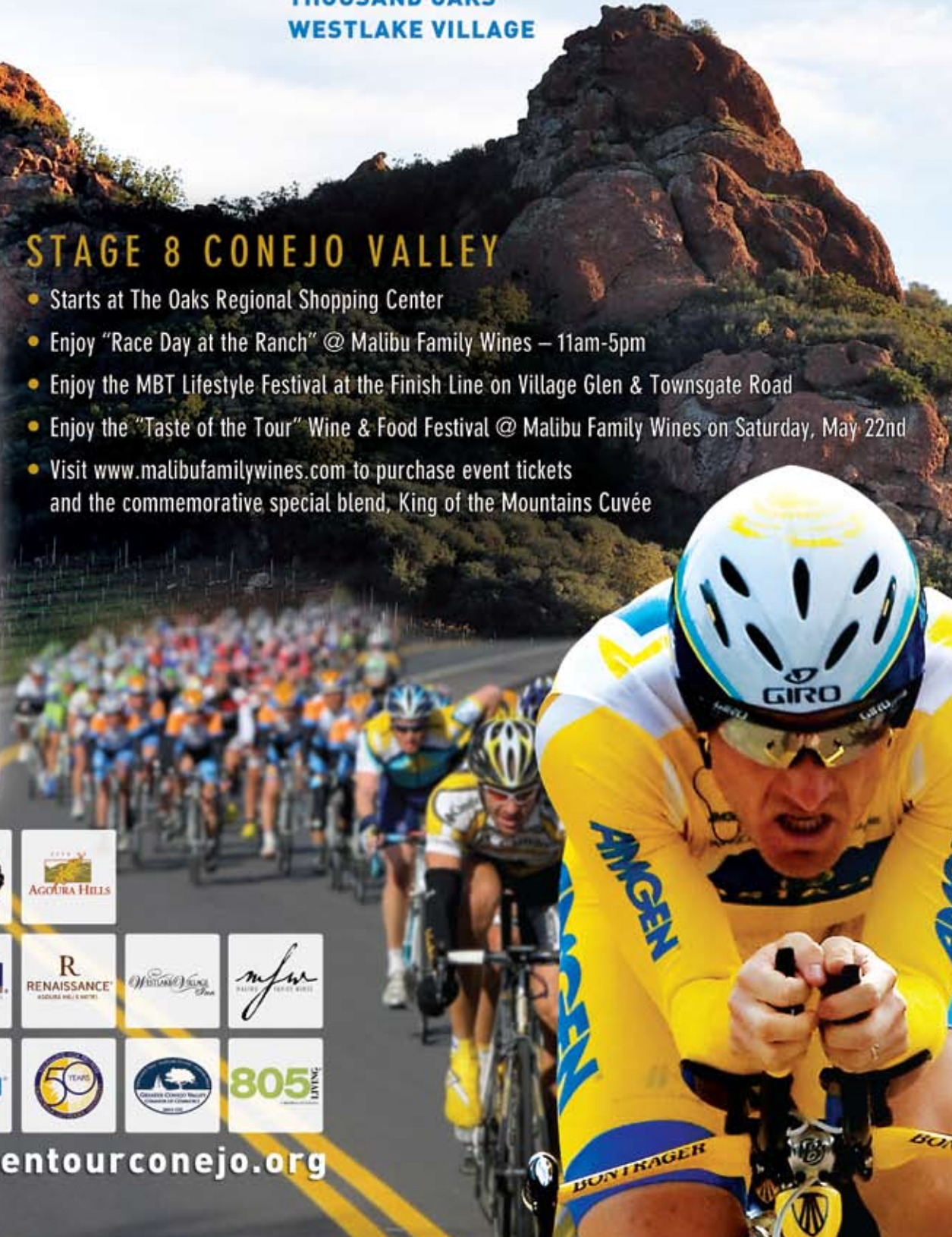
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MAY

May 18: Carole King and James Taylor bring their **TROUBADOUR REUNION TOUR** to the Santa Barbara Bowl. These two iconic singer/songwriters revive their 2007 performances from the Troubadour in Los Angeles as part of the venue's 50th anniversary. King and Taylor originally performed together at the Troubadour in 1970. (sbbowl.com)

May 21-23: One of the premier wine festivals of the Central Coast, the **PASO ROBLES WINE FESTIVAL** takes over Paso Robles Downtown City Park with more than 90 local wineries in attendance. In addition to plenty of samples, there will be winemaker dinners, food-pairing seminars, and cooking classes. Special winery and vineyard tours will also be available. The event concludes with the Wine Country Auction and Dinner, where attendees bid on wine auction lots only available at this event. (pasowine.com)

May 21-23: The Institute for Cultural Change in Ojai holds its annual gathering; this year's theme is **THE AESTHETIC NATURE OF CHANGE**. Presenters will explore introspective ways to learn to welcome societal and emotional change rather than resist it. (instituteforculturalchange.org)

MAY 24: UCSB Arts & Lectures' 50th anniversary celebrates its closing night with **AN EVENING WITH AMERICAN LEGEND KEN BURNS** at the Coral Casino in Santa Barbara. Burns directed the critically heralded documentary films *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, *JAZZ*, and most recently, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, a majestic and awe-inspiring epic history of some of our country's most beloved treasures. He will present an illustrated lecture, *Sharing the American Experience*, followed by a catered dinner and benefit auction featuring unique signed memorabilia from artists featured at previous Arts & Lectures events. Proceeds benefit Arts & Lectures' educational outreach programs. (artsandlectures.ucsb.edu)



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JUNE

June 3: **AMBROSIA**, the extremely popular band of the seventies and eighties, appears at The Canyon Club in Agoura Hills. While known mostly for their radio-friendly pop-rock tunes, the band's work also includes progressive rock and jazz-fusion influenced songs, mixing lush vocal harmonies and masterful musicianship. (canyonclub.net)

June 5: Garrison Keillor is once again at the Santa Barbara Bowl with his live broadcast of **A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION**. A variety-show format with an ensemble cast that has been entertaining audiences for 36 years, it features comedy skits and an eclectic mix of musical parodies—ranging from folk, bluegrass, classical, rock 'n' roll, and jazz—by The Guy's All-Star Shoe Band. And of course, there will be Keillor's signature monologue "The News from Lake Wobegon" (the little town that time forgot and decades can't improve). Droll, witty, and comically thought-provoking, this show has become ingrained in American pop culture and is heard on nearly 600 public radio stations nationwide, as well as on satellite radio. (sbbowl.com)

June 13: Lake Casitas will be the backdrop for the **OJAI WINE FESTIVAL**. In addition to more than 50 wineries offering hundreds of selections of wine, there will be beer tastings, food vendors, live music, and arts and crafts. Ticket price includes access to a silent wine auction and free boat rides. Proceeds benefit the Rotary of Club Ojai-West. (ojaiwinefestival.com)

June 18–20: Woodstock meets the Central Coast at the **LIVE OAK MUSIC FESTIVAL**. Enjoy live music amid the beautiful hills above Santa Barbara. Entertainment includes 16 main-stage performances with a wide variety of styles—from roots-rock, folk, bluegrass and gospel to blues, jazz, classical, world music, and more. Featured artists include Rickie Lee Jones, the Chicago Blues Reunion, and Dr. Lonnie Smith, voted "Organ Keyboardist of Year" by the Jazz Journalists Association. There will also be five music workshops, two teen concerts, two late-night dances, and a children's activities area. Proceeds benefit KCBX public radio. (liveoakfest.org)



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Insider

June 19: Fiddlestix Vineyard hosts **FIDDLE-FEST**, a celebration of Fiddlehead Cellars wines as well as selections from 14 other Santa Ynez vintners. There will be Santa Maria-style barbecue and wine-country cuisine provided by Hitching Post II; and as the name implies, there will be live fiddle music by local players throughout the day. A silent auction will feature collectors' large-format signed bottles, special verticals, and private tastings, with proceeds to benefit the nonprofit Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People. (syvphp.org; fiddleheadcellars.com)

June 26: The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural Art hosts the **SANTA BARBARA WINE FESTIVAL**, benefiting the museum's various exhibits and educational programs. There are more than 75 Central Coast wineries that have signed on, as well as several local food purveyors with savory dishes and sweets. (sbnature.org)

JULY

July 15-17: The **CALIFORNIA WINE FESTIVAL** in Santa Barbara features three separate events. You can attend one, two, or all three, with special discounts for multi-event passes. The first event is "Old Spanish Nights" at the De La Guerra Adobe Courtyard, with Spanish music, flamenco dancing, and tapas to go along with some of Santa Barbara's finest wines and specially selected Spanish imports. Day two showcases rare and reserve wines under the stars at Chase Palm Park, with gourmet appetizers, artisanal cheeses, and fresh chocolate-covered strawberries. The final day convenes under the sun at Chase Palm Park for the Beachside Wine Festival with unlimited sampling of more than 200 California wines, along with appetizers from local chefs, artisanal cheeses, olive oils, fresh-cut fruits, and chocolate desserts. Live music plays throughout the day. (californiawinefestival.com)

Save the Date

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THESE CHARITIES.

MAY

May 7: Local residents who have made an impact on cancer patients through The Wellness Community Valley/Ventura's free cancer support programs will be honored at

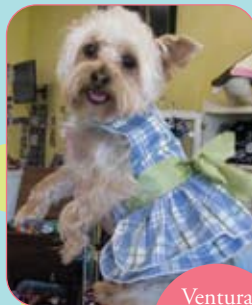
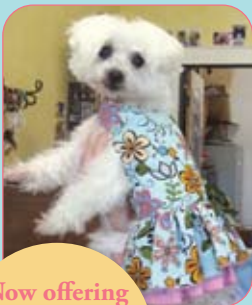


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the Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village during the 19th annual **ANNIVERSARY GALA**. The evening features entertainment, dinner, and a live auction. (twcvv.org)

May 15: A unique event to benefit Theater 150 in Ojai combines a musical comedy with an actual wedding. It's the idea of Theater 150's co-artistic directors Deb Norton and Chris Nottoli, who are also the co-writers and the bride-and-groom-to-be. The community (and of course friends and family) is invited to the play, **DEB AND CHRIS GET MARRIED!**, which takes place at Libbey Bowl. The couple was so engrossed with the theater during their engagement that they kept postponing their wedding plans. Said Norton, "We decided if we aren't getting married because of the theater, let's get married *for* the theater." In lieu of gifts there will be a \$50 admission charge. (theater150.org)

May 22: Music for Heart Foundation and the Conejo Valley Rotary Foundation raises funds for children with congenital heart conditions whose families cannot afford treatment. Their gala fundraiser, **A NIGHT OF HOPE**, takes place at the Calabasas Inn and features casino games as well as Brazilian food and live entertainment. (musicforheart.org)

JUNE

June 2: The Alliance for the Arts auxiliary group, Angels for the Alliance, holds its annual **ANGELS LUNCHEON** at the Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village. The afternoon features a tablescape competition, where contestants decorate dining tables in a variety of elaborate themes. Proceeds support the Alliance for the Arts children and youth programs, including hands-on workshops and performances at local schools. (allianceforthearts.org)

June 5: Our Community House of Hope (OCHH) end-of-life care hospice presents an onstage reading of **ONE DAY**, a play about hope, which is based on the life stories, dreams, and fantasies of residents of Sarah House, a pioneering hospice in Santa Barbara that provides end-of-life care for low-income and homeless residents (and is the only one of its kind in California). OCHH, which serves Ventura and northwest Los Angeles counties, strives to use the Sarah House model: providing quality hospice services and care at no cost to the poor. The facility will also serve as an educational center for end-of-life care issues.

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Insider

The reading takes place at California Lutheran University and is free of charge; reservations are required. (ourhouseofhope.org)

June 6: The Zarley and Van Huisen families host **CASA PACIFICA ANGELS 17TH ANNUAL WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL** at the California State University at Channel Islands. With 75 of the area's top restaurants serving up gourmet bites, and more than 100 wineries and micro-breweries offering samples, this is the largest food and wine festival in Ventura County. *805 Living* will again be a sponsor, and will participate in judging the "Best in Fest" chef's competition. (cpwineandfoodfestival.com)

June 6: Senior Concerns sponsors the **LOVE RUN** 5K and 10K races in Westlake Village. Proceeds go to the organization's Meals On Wheels program, which helps ensure that homebound seniors in the Conejo Valley receive warm, nutritious meals daily. (seniorconcerns.org)

June 6: Santa Barbara's Environmental Defense Center, the only nonprofit environmental law firm between Los Angeles and San Francisco, holds its annual **BENEFIT AUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HERO AWARDS** at the historic Stow House in Goleta. Wine and appetizers will be served, and there will be live music and live and silent auctions. (environmentaldefensecenter.org)

June 26: Bunko, a simple parlor game, will help raise much-needed money for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation at the second annual **BUNKO 4 BREAST CANCER** tournament in Santa Rosa Valley. Former Bunko world champion Sue Stonehouse will again host the event. (bunko4breastcancer.com)

June 28: The Men's Club of St. Paschal Baylon Church holds its annual **ST. PASCHAL BAYLON GOLF TOURNAMENT** at Moorpark Country Club. The Men's Club of St. Paschal Baylon supports the needs of the parish and school as well as various ministries and charitable organizations throughout the Conejo Valley, Catholic charities, scholarships, and other various youth and senior groups. (stpaschal.org)

June 28–July 4: The **VENTURA FILM FESTIVAL** at the Majestic Ventura Theatre helps raise funds for local and international forest- and ocean-preservation organizations and other select environmental charities.

Submissions include more than 100 feature films, shorts, and documentaries spanning a wide variety of genres and subjects. (venturafilmfestival.org)

JULY

July 21: Play a round of golf at Spanish Hills Country Club to benefit **CASA PACIFICA CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**. Hosted by the Rotary Clubs of Camarillo, the entry fee includes the tournament, skills contests, breakfast, lunch, and an awards dinner. (casapacifica.org)

AUGUST

August 1: The American Cancer Society of Ventura will once again host a gala fundraiser at a Santa Rosa Valley private villa. **JOIE DE VIVRE, EVENING OF HOPE** will have a French-countryside theme. The evening begins with a poolside reception, followed by a meal of signature dishes prepared by local chefs, silent and live auctions, and dancing under the stars. (Sandy Berg, 805-644-4237)

GIVEback

SANTA BARBARA BOTANIC GARDEN. In May 2009 the Jesusita Fire destroyed 60 acres of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden's 78-acre facility, including all tools and vehicles and several structures. In February, the garden received an insurance settlement that will help begin the rebuilding process. Recent rains have also helped to begin the process of healing, and the gardens are already showing signs of regrowth. Visitors touring the garden in recent weeks have seen sprouting in burnt stumps, and the return of some rare wildflowers. (It is predicted that the property will enjoy a spectacular wildflower show this year.) Volunteers are needed to help reestablish the garden's habitat and bring back this valuable scientific resource and natural treasure to its former stature. (sbbg.org) ■

If you would like to submit your event or organization for possible inclusion in Insider, please e-mail the information and a contact number/e-mail to insider@805living.com. Please submit your request no later than 14 weeks prior to the issue in which you'd like the information to appear.

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Mind/Body/Soul

By Maryann Hammers Photographs by Gary Moss

GOOD WORK

Women entrepreneurs merge their personal and professional passions to bring heart and soul to others.

AS THIS GROUP OF WOMEN PROVES, making others feel good is one of the best, most fulfilling endeavors. When there is deeper purpose behind their actions, their generosity can make a huge difference in the lives of others.

Dannielle Crouch

Island Spray Tan, Oxnard Shores

From the time Dannielle Crouch was in high school, she craved a deep, dark tan. She got hooked on tanning beds, often purchasing monthlong, unlimited-session tanning packages. She got the tan she sought, and she got something else, too: At age 29, she developed a small black mole on her arm. It was malignant melanoma—the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Crouch was shocked. She hadn't realized that tanning beds presented a skin-cancer risk, and especially not with her olive skin and dark hair. "They removed a chunk of tissue from my arm. Luckily, the cancer had not spread, or I probably wouldn't be alive," she says. "I feel blessed to be here today, raising my two young boys. I was young and stupid—and dying to be tan."

Sad that she could never tan again, and worried about other young women who were also unaware of the danger of tanning beds, she began researching safe, sunless ways to achieve a golden glow.

Last year she launched Island Spray Tan (islandspraytan.com), a mobile airbrush tanning service that goes directly to clients' homes. Now her clients get that golden hue without the risk.

"This is the perfect business for me," she says. "I love skin care; I love helping women look and feel bronzed and beautiful; and I love that I'm protecting my clients from skin cancer."

Kathy Hartley

Lavender Inn, Ojai

Seven years ago, Kathy Hartley took over a run-down motel with the goal of transforming it into a high-end B&B. In the process, she achieved something even more fulfilling.

Built in 1874 as Ojai's first schoolhouse, today's Lavender Inn (lavenderinn.com) has a garden courtyard, trickling fountains, a vintage chandelier swinging from the branches of a mulberry tree, and an on-site spa. It's popular with couples and wedding parties, but Hartley most enjoys when groups of girlfriends take over the place. "The house is so alive and fun when women are here," she says.

Wanting to share the joy, Hartley launched Inn Courage, a twice-yearly, all-expense-paid, three-day spa retreat for up to 10 low-income women with cancer. Hartley works with counselors, aestheticians, massage therapists, life coaches, and makeup artists, who all donate their services.

Many of the women have never before had a massage or spa treatment; some have never stayed in a hotel. The goal is for them to feel comfortable enough to take off their wigs, discuss their illnesses, and forget their woes for the first time since being diagnosed. They do yoga by candlelight, take healthful cooking classes, go on scenic hikes, and sit by the fire for warm-hearted gabfests.

"With Lavender Inn, I can run not only a business, but something with heart and soul, infused with joy," Hartley says.

Diane Loring

Spa by Diane Loring, Inc., Ventura

Diane Loring's résumé includes stints as a trucker and pole-climbing lineman. She's up for a second-degree taekwon do black belt next year, and she founded a nonprofit training program called WISE (Women Involved in Sports Evolution) to help women seeking a police or fire-fighting career pass through those respective academies.

With that kind of push-the-boundaries background, Loring wasn't about to run a froufrou day spa. Instead, she says, she aimed to build a "community of champions."

Located within the harbor-view Four Points Sheraton, Spa by Diane Loring (spaventura.com) is small in size but expansive in scope. Loring partners with sports psychologists, registered dietitians, exercise physiologists, yoga instructors, massage therapists, and aestheticians to create a women-oriented wellness community.

Guests sign up for surfing classes with professional surfer Mary Osborne. They go on meditation walks with Sondra Briggs, author of *Port Hueneme Beach Walks*. They take stress-reduction classes and healing-art workshops led by clinical psychologist and accomplished artist Dr. Priscilla Partridge de Garcia. The spa's retail shelves are stocked with jewelry made by Angolan women and sinfully rich Double Trouble chocolate-chip cookies, which Loring and de Garcia home-baked and entered in the Ventura County Fair (they took first place).

Cookies as spa cuisine? Surfing on the spa menu? Power lineman as spa director? Why not? "A champion never says 'no,'" Loring says.





“THE HOUSE IS SO
ALIVE AND FUN WHEN
WOMEN ARE HERE...”

—Kathy Hartley



Women who make a
difference (from top,
clockwise): Island Spray
Tan's Danielle Crouch,
Lavender Inn's Kathy
Hartley, and Spa by
Diane's Diane Loring.



Caroline Loureiro

Indulgence, The Home Spa, Santa Barbara

Ten years ago, Caroline Loureiro came to Santa Barbara from her native Brazil to learn English. She fell in love with the city, enrolled in Santa Barbara Community College, worked as a nanny, and earned a hotel-management degree. While working at an upscale resort, she met celebrity guests who wanted spa treatments but didn't want to be seen in the spa.

A lightbulb clicked. "Mobile spas are common in Brazil, so I saw an opportunity," Loureiro says. In 2004, still in her 20s, she launched Indulgence (indulgencethomespa.com), a mobile spa offering mani/pedis, foot treatments, yoga classes, massages, facials, and private-chef services in clients' homes, hotel rooms, and offices.

Indulgence was a quick success. Loureiro has contracts with several fine Santa Barbara and Montecito hotels. She has more than two dozen carefully trained therapists working for her, is building a franchise in Brazil, and launched an Indulgence product line. She has flown on a private jet for a client who likes foot massages en route to New York, and offered pedis on a yacht for a client who likes harbor views.

Loureiro's most fulfilling work is as a Breast Cancer Resource Center volunteer. Every week she visits women too weak to leave home and treats them to "the best pedicure ever," she says. "I never met a girl who doesn't enjoy getting pampered! Cancer has taken over these women's bodies, but they are still uplifting and full of life. I'm grateful to help them in a small way."

Shannon Neels

Le Rêve Organic Spa, Santa Barbara

Women's wellness has always been Shannon Neels' passion. So when she launched Le Rêve (le-reve.com) more than 10 years ago, she focused on therapeutic treatments in a healthy environment and insisted on pure, organic ingredients, making Le Rêve the first and only certified green spa in Santa Barbara.

"We've been doing that since 1999, long before 'green' was hip," Neels says. "From the beginning, I focused on health and wellness, not just outward beauty. That's how Le Rêve stands apart."

After losing a client to cancer, Neels wanted to do more to help, and began offering free spa treatments to people with cancer. But she was just one person, and the need was too great. To make a true impact, she needed more volunteers, so she created Angels List (angelslist.org), a foundation that acts as a conduit between volunteers and cancer patients.

"Angels List is made up of people—including everyone on my staff—who donate their services, such as dog walking, grocery shopping, yoga classes, house cleaning, spa treatments, and so forth," Neels says. "I'd like to see Angels List grow all over the country, so that every person who has cancer will also have an angel." ■

Le Rêve Organic Spa's
Shannon Neels.



Indulgence, The Home Spa's
Caroline Loureiro.



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ON THE UPSWING

Lady golfers make the rounds to defend their title.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, Diane Grimes (and her husband David) went country club hunting. They'd taken up golf after their kids were grown and played on a number of public courses. They also traveled to exotic locales like Hawaii and Whistler, British Columbia, for golfing vacations. "Ultimately, we wanted to find a place where we could play golf year-round," says Grimes. "But we're heat wimps so certain criteria had to be met. We don't like to play in hot weather."

When a friend suggested Las Posas Country Club in Camarillo and nearby Saticoy Country Club in Somis, they traveled from their home in San Gabriel to visit both locations. "We fell in love with Saticoy. Not only does it have a great golf course, but the weather rarely gets above 88 degrees," Grimes says. "It's absolutely ideal."

Now living on the 18th fairway, the two enjoy playing couples golf on weekends, and when time permits, Grimes plays during the week with female members. She also serves as captain of the women's golf team at Saticoy, winner of the 2009 Women's Southern California Net Team Championship, in which 82 clubs participated.

"We've never made it beyond the semifinals before, so to make it to the finals—and win—was a huge thrill. Afterward, we had champagne for hours," says Grimes, pointing proudly to her necklace's pendant. It's a replica of the Saticoy Country Club crest, and contains a diamond for each year she's played on the team, plus a sapphire for last year's victory.

She breaks into a smile: "The whole club was supportive when we won. The men were ecstatic and several players from the women's teams at Las Posas Country Club and Spanish Hills Country Club joined us for our celebration. We had a party on

the clubhouse deck, complete with music and dancing. It was a remarkable day."

Grimes will return as captain for the 2010 season, a post she's held for 14 consecutive years. "No one else wants to do it," she jokes about a task that she clearly enjoys. "Of course we're being positive about this season and defending our title, but realistically, it takes a lot of luck to win a championship. Last year, we never had a day when two teams fell apart. Everyone played to [her] handicap throughout the season, which is the whole point of golf. And no one

played 'lights out' against us, which of course can happen at any time." ("Lights out" refers to competitors who are playing so well that the opposing team has no chance of catching up.) "We also had home-course advantage for the [second day of the] final," Grimes says.

While some teams are made up of women with single-digit handicaps, Saticoy players have handicaps that range from 5 to 31. The format for competition is match play: Two players from one team compete against an opposing pair for 18 holes. (Seven teams from each club play in total.)

Grimes says that for players who have two really bad holes in match play, it's important to get over it, then go back in and have two better holes. "And even though it can be intimidating to be matched up against someone with a lower handicap, our attitude is 'So what?' We don't let it bother us and that seems to serve us well."

Deb Maruyama from Ventura, a newcomer on last year's team, was extremely flattered when she was asked to play. "The overwhelming acceptance from the ladies was incredible. I'd never played match play before so had no idea what to expect, but I found that I love the format and I'm more competitive than I thought," says



The 16th hole at the Saticoy Country Golf Club in Somis offers challenges for women and men alike.





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Talia Emery, MD (right) and Laqueta Gajewski, RN (left)

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» Pursuits



Captain Diane Grimes (second row, sixth from right) and her Saticoy Country Club team, winners of the 2009 Women's Southern California Net Team Championship.

Maruyama. "I enjoy the focus and intensity of team play, as well as the strategizing that takes place on the greens."

Maruyama says the best golf advice she ever received is to keep hands soft and let the club head swing: "If I concentrate on letting the club head swing instead of swinging the club, I make better contact with the ball and I hit straighter shots."

Women interested in learning to play golf should take lessons from qualified professionals that they feel comfortable with, says Maruyama. "It's very important to develop good habits and proper technique." She also recommends getting an appropriate set of clubs as opposed to hand-me-downs, which "will probably be all wrong for your swing and do more harm than good."

Match schedules are determined by the Women's Southern California Golf Association (WSCGA) and vary each season. This year, Saticoy will face Birnam Wood Golf Club (Santa Barbara), Village Country Club (Lompoc), Alisal Guest Ranch Resort (Solvang), and Sunset Hills Country Club (Thousand Oaks). Regular season play began last month and continues through the middle of June. Playoffs will be held in July. ■



Women's Southern California Golf Association (WSCGA)

This organization debuted in 1995 to provide a centralized source of information about the activities of California's seven women's golf associations.

WSCGA will host a Division 1 Desert Event, May 3-4. The format is "Better Ball of Partners" and will be played at The Lakes Country Club, The Springs Club, and Tamarisk Country Club in Palm Desert. (womensgolf.org)

WSCGA Clubs – Division 1

Birnam Wood Golf Club, Santa Barbara
womensgolf.org/clubs/BirnamWood

Calabasas Golf and Country Club
calabasasgolf.com

La Cumbre Country Club, Santa Barbara
lacumbrecc.org

Las Posas Country Club, Camarillo
lasposascc.com

Montecito Country Club, Santa Barbara
montecitocc.com

North Ranch Country Club, Westlake Village
northranchcc.org

River Course at the Alisal, Solvang
rivercourse.com

San Luis Obispo Golf and Country Club
slocc.net

Saticoy Country Club, Somis
saticoycountryclub.com

Sherwood Country Club, Westlake Village
sherwoodcountryclub.com

Spanish Hills Golf and Country Club, Camarillo
spanishhillsgolf.com

Sunset Hills Country Club, Thousand Oaks
sunsethillsgolf.com

Valley Club of Montecito
womensgolf.org/clubs/MontecitoValley

Village Country Club, Lompoc
villagecc.net

Woodland Hills Country Club
woodlandhillsgolf.com

Wood Ranch Golf Club, Simi Valley
woodranch.americangolf.com



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Good Deeds

Story and photographs by Mark Langton



Jay Leno



Bernadette Geckle, Heather Martin, Melissa Gissing, Nannette Leonard



Sophie Etemadi, Garine Lapoyan, Jonathan Batmanghelich



Joe and Gail Boskovich



Jack and Lorraine Maralian

A STAND-UP JOB

Jay Leno performs at Centennial Guild's gala fundraiser.

THE EVENT: This past March, Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles was the site of "Stand Up for Childrens Hospital Los Angeles." This is the Centennial Guild of Childrens Hospital Los Angeles' (CHLA) major fundraising event, and the evening began with a silent auction as attendees sampled food, wine, and cocktails. After a rousing live auction concluded, guests moved to the main hall, where Guild member Gail Boskovich was presented the Heart of Service Award for her vision of creating the first gala in 2006, as well as her guidance as chair for both the 2006 and 2008 galas. Following the presentation, comedian Jay Leno performed a stand-up routine. After his performance, the crowd enjoyed dancing for the rest of the night.

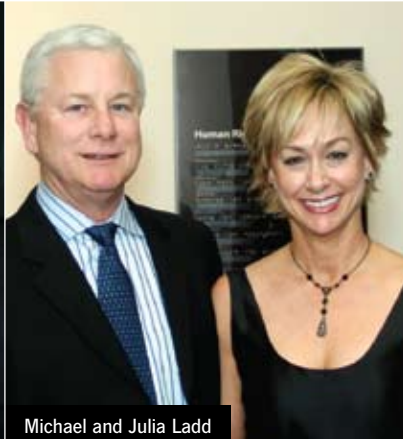
THE CAUSE: Founded in 2001 by a group of women from the Conejo and West San Fernando Valleys, the group's sole purpose is to raise funds and awareness for Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. For more than 100 years, CHLA has been treating seriously ill and injured children from all over the country, including 4,000 from the Conejo Valley. CHLA provides multidisciplinary care through more than 100 pediatric specialties and subspecialties to thousands of children each year. (centennialguildchla.webs.com; chla.org) ■



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Good Deeds

By Mark Langton Photographs by Judi Bumstead



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COSTUMES FOR A CAUSE

The National Charity League's annual luncheon raises funds with classic Hollywood fashion.

THE EVENT: This past May, Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks served lunch for members and supporters of the National Charity League of the Conejo Valley (NCL Conejo Valley). The highlight of the event was "An Afternoon With the Stars," a fashion show featuring glamorous costumes of female movie leads from the 1930s to the present. Costumes were provided by Adele's of Hollywood and modeled by NCL Conejo Valley members. The show was presided over by actress Morgan Brittany, a former National Charity League of San Fernando Valley member. Star of stage, screen, and television with hundreds of credits, Brittany is perhaps best known for her portrayal of Katherine Wentworth, the wicked half-sister of Pam Ewing on the former prime-time soap opera *Dallas*.

THE CAUSE: The NCL of the Conejo Valley (nclconejo.org) is made up of mothers and their daughters (grades 7 to 12) whose goal is to experience the rewards of volunteering to help others while raising funds for local charities and scholarships. Members strive to enhance mother-daughter relationships, foster leadership development, and enjoy cultural experiences. NCL Conejo Valley also raises funds through its thrift shop, Fibber McGee's Closet, in Thousand Oaks. ■



Debbie Triplett, Connie Brooks, Jacqui Irwin



Jenny Wolpert



Lisa Kolakowski, Darci Teobaldi



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1

2



1. The **AXIS EXTENDING DINING SET** from designer Mark Gabbertas for Gloster (chairs \$432 each; table \$3,068) in teak is a modern take on easy outdoor dining style; Patioworld, Thousand Oaks, patioworld.net.

2. Woodard's **SOUTH SHORE WICKER DINING SET** (chairs \$907 each; table \$780) offers the tradition of wicker with the elegant styling of fine furniture; Berks, Agoura Hills, berkspatio.com.

3. Oly's faux rattan **PALMER OUTDOOR SIDE CHAIR** (\$1,675) offers sleek extra seating around any table; Cabana Home, Santa Barbara, cabanahome.com.



3



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1

1. The **EMPEROR OUTDOOR DINING SET** (side chair \$1,084; armchair \$1,326; table \$4,407) from Padma's Plantation features woven detail in the chairs (matched with a center table insert) and a tabletop made of crushed bamboo; Great Rooms, Camarillo, greatroomsdesign.com.



2

2. The **HALO** collection from Summer Classics is designer Robert Taunton's updated take on the Adirondack chair, made of resin wicker to conform to the body—no cushion needed. **LOUNGE CHAIR** (\$800) and **54-INCH-ROUND SLATTED TABLE** (\$371 base; \$989 top); Dennee's Warehouse, Santa Ynez, 805-686-0842; Victory Furniture, Santa Monica, victoryfurniture.com.



3

3. Elegance is all about choices, and O.W. Lee offers mix-and-match tables and chairs for a customized look. Shown here, the wrought iron **CLASSICO DINING CHAIRS** with a **NOCHE TRAVERTINE TABLETOP** (set from \$8,499); Hayward's, Santa Barbara, 805-966-1390; Oasis Garden & Patio, Ventura, 805-641-9909.



4

4. Two surprising elements create a unified look in Padma's Plantation's **STONE STACK OUTDOOR DINING TABLE BASE** and **48-INCH-ROUND TABLETOP** (\$2,832) and the **PALM BEACH OUTDOOR DINING CHAIR** (\$1,273); Great Rooms, Camarillo, greatroomsdesign.com.

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Camelot Estates in Santa Rosa Valley www.1816Freeborn.com



Nestled on over an acre in gated Camelot Estates in Santa Rosa Valley, 1 story estate is brimming with radiance and light. 4 spacious bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms plus an office and additional bonus room. Includes fabulous gourmet island kitchen with granite counter-tops. The large master bedroom suite with full walk-in closet, French doors leading to the exterior. The majesty of this residence truly matches the splendor of its surroundings. Dual water service provides lower cost non-potable water for landscape use. Flat and useable lot. Adjacent to equestrian trails. offered at \$1,299,000

5-acre, 2-story Crown Jewel www.13486Andalusia.com



Over 5 acre incomparable 2-story residence perched as a crown on a hill-top featuring magnificent views. The superb resort size backyard seems to be at the top of the world, enjoying a swimming pool & spa, lush landscape & circular stamped drive. Estate of unrivaled luxury. 4 bedrooms plus detached office over garage. Gourmet kitchen w/breakfast nook, huge family room, granite slab countertops. Exposed vaulted wood ceilings. Superb craftsmanship w/stacked tile roof. Gorgeous wood windows & French Doors. Offered at \$1,499,000

Magificent 1 Acre Private Estate www.ChippenhamEstate.com



Situated at the end of a beautiful cul-de-sac, this magnificent estate presides on over an acre of private grounds. The authentic architectural & design details are accented w/lavish appointments of leaded glass entry doors, vaulted ceilings, spacious living spaces. Showcasing a flowing floor plan, the nexus of this estate features a dramatic sweeping staircase grand entry, formal dining room, family room w/fireplace, chef's dream gourmet island kitchen. Opulent master bedroom suite w/sitting area & balcony, 3 additional secondary bedrooms upstairs & large downstairs guest bedroom w/attached bath. Orchard includes 32 avocado trees. Spa in rear yard. Offered at \$995,000

Gorgeous Estate w/ 4-car Garage www.11998PraderaRd.com



Gorgeous views from every room this acre estate residence offers incomparable living and entertainment spaces complete with vaulted ceilings, French doors, 4 bedrooms or 3 bedrooms and office. Gourmet island kitchen with granite counters, stainless appliances open beam ceilings. Features include custom stone flooring, dual sided brick fireplace. In the park like rear yard there is ample space to play along with resort styled swimming pool complete with spa. Huge 4 car garage beautifully finished with epoxy coating on floor. Offered at \$1,089,000.

Help the fight against cancer- Sunday August 1, 2010. 3-7pm - Joie De Vivre, Evening of Hope 2010

Limiting to 300 tickets, holding the price this year to \$125 (More details to come)



I have been asked to chair an event with a wonderful group of dedicated American Cancer Society volunteers to create a special occasion to support the community work and scientific research of the American Cancer Society by creating Ventura County's second annual American Cancer Society gala. This year's theme is Joire de Vivre, Evening of Hope 2010. This event is an opportunity to make a difference in the health of our community. It is a chance to join the American Cancer Society in the fight against cancer. We look forward to welcoming you to Joire de Vivre, Evening of Hope 2010 on **Sunday, August 1, 2010**. Plans are underway to transform a villa in Santa Rosa Valley into an inviting corner of the French Countryside. You won't want to miss this event! Beginning with a poolside reception, the evening will include a meal of signature dishes prepared by some of our finest local chefs, silent & live auction, and capped off with dancing under the stars! Call Rosemary for ticket and sponsorship information.

Call Rosemary at (805) 491-2100 email: RosemaryAllison@aol.com

CA DRE # 00545184

VOICES *of* SURVIVORS

STORIES OF WOMEN WHO HAVE BEATEN CANCER.

Interviews by Anthony Head Photographs by Gary Moss

EVERY SURVIVOR'S STORY IS DIFFERENT, AND YET, AT THEIR HEART, EVERY SURVIVOR'S STORY IS THE SAME. There are the first moments of hearing a life-changing diagnosis. There are memories of coping with the physical battles and the emotional trials. There's the importance of family relationships and friends in their fight. And finally, there are the first liberating minutes of being able to say they are "cancer-free."

That's the ultimate goal of the *Breakaway from Cancer* initiative (breakawayfromcancer.com). Founded in 2005 by Amgen Inc. to complement its sponsorship of the Amgen Tour of California professional cycling competition, its mission is to increase awareness of the multitude of resources available to cancer patients and their families. The valuable partners of *Breakaway from Cancer* are Prevent Cancer Foundation (preventcancer.org), Cancer Support Community (cancersupportcommunity.org), Patient Advocate Foundation (patientadvocate.org) and National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (canceradvocacy.org). The support services offered from these organizations—including prevention, education, and financial assistance—play an especially crucial role for patients fighting to regain their health, take back their lives, and continue doing great things.

With the aid of these and other important programs, more men and women are living to tell their own survivor stories, like the ones here. In turn, these words of hope and strength might help make another person diagnosed with cancer a fighter and a survivor.

Editor's note: *For this story, we also interviewed Patricia Kosich, who is Senior Counsel for Amgen's Global Commercial Operations in Thousand Oaks, but the weekend before our photo shoot, she broke her leg. To read her story, go to 805living.com.*

ANN SOBEL

INTERIM CEO

Red Cross of Ventura County

It was breast cancer of the left breast and I found out last year on Friday, February 13. I'm not superstitious, but at the time it seemed ironic. It opened a door to a path in my life that I would like not to have gone through—but I wouldn't change the past.

Fear was my first emotion and it took me probably two days to come out of that. Those two days were out of character for me, but then I thought cancer is not the automatic death sentence that it used to be, and I still have time.

I finished radiation in December 2009. Days don't go by where I don't face a decision that I'm looking at a little differently than before. Before cancer I might have been sadder that my son is going

off to college. Now I'm a little sad that he's leaving, but I'm really celebrating the fact. It's a major milestone for both him and me.

Being the interim CEO of the Red Cross in Ventura County is actually a return for me because I worked for them for almost 25 years. Having worked with people in disaster situations I learned to see bigger pictures. I don't want to minimize cancer, but there's always someone else who can use our help. My compassion levels are even more sensitive now and I know that I can always share my heart with others.

In today's world, with the economy being what it is, having had cancer puts the little stressors in perspective.





GINA THERWANGER

CO-FOUNDER

ThinkGreat

I got married in October of 1998. Ten months into our marriage I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. I was 27 and I was devastated. I was shocked. I thought my life was just *starting* and now I was fighting cancer, and I was fighting to save my life. I didn't want to give up hope.

At one point, the cancer paralyzed my vocal chords and I couldn't speak for about three months. Now I use my voice to share my story and bring hope to others. My husband and I wrote and published a book, *Think Great: 5 Steps to a Greater Life*, about setting goals and expectations. We want to help as many people get through trying circumstances and make the most of every situation.

When you're told you have cancer, it brings an awful lot of things in life into perspective. I think a person's character is defined when diagnosed with cancer and a lot of character is defined for those caregivers of anyone going through it. For me, it redefined how important life is. I appreciate the little things and enjoy each day to the fullest.

I've been cancer-free for almost 10 years. Interestingly enough, when I was going through cancer I was told that I would never have kids because of the harsh treatments. Six years after remission, I went in for a normal check-up and discovered that I was pregnant. Now we have a daughter, who will be 4 years old in August.

RACHEL SHUR

FOUNDER & CEO

United Cancer Advocacy Action Network (UCAAN)

My dad died of melanoma when I was three; so since I was little I was terrified of cancer. Then, in December 2006, I was diagnosed with final-stage leukemia. At the time, I didn't even realize it was cancer. I learned later that my doctors didn't think I would survive; they gave me a 10 percent chance of surviving. I was 26.

When the doctors gave me the first round of chemo, my body went into shock and blood went up into my brain. They had to put me into a drug-induced coma for 10 days. When I came out, I had to re-learn so many things, including how to walk.

Through the whole ordeal, I knew I had to stay strong. Facing it head-on with a positive attitude is what it means to fight cancer. For

me, I try to find ways to laugh at the situation. It helps me deal with it. It certainly helped when my cancer relapsed in October 2007. I just thought, I have to go through this *stupid cancer* again. I was pretty fed up with the whole thing.

Is there a bright spot to all this? Definitely. I've been cancer-free since April 30, 2008, and I started a nonprofit, UCAAN, to raise awareness of cancer and how it can and will change lives. Before cancer I was an introvert. After cancer, I found my focus and the extrovert came out. Speaking publicly at high schools and colleges and for numerous organizations and to other patients going through it—it's changed my life. By starting UCAAN, I can incorporate all the things I love into one thing.



VICKI MURPHY

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS

Casa Pacifica Centers for Children & Families

I really hadn't shared that much with others about my experiences, but I recently did just that with someone going through [her own battle with cancer] and it seemed to have made such a difference with her. So I thought, I guess I should share more. It certainly helped me when I was going through it.

In May 2002 I learned that I had cervical cancer, and it eventually spread to my lymph nodes. I didn't cry. I wasn't frightened, because that wouldn't serve me or my husband or my children. For me, fighting cancer meant keeping my mental thoughts up—I visualized myself getting better, I visualized the bad cells being beaten—and I tried to focus forward. I wanted to be a grandmother more than anything. In my heart I just told

myself that I'll get through this and someday I'll be a grandmother. And today I am.

The work I do here at Casa Pacifica, a shelter for abused, neglected and at-risk kids, inspires me every day. The children are struggling with their own trials, and I worked here every day that I could during treatment because it gave me a lot of strength to see them facing their problems head-on. It brought perspective to me. My struggles were not any more difficult than theirs, they were just different.

Cancer was certainly a defining moment in my life. You don't realize until you're through it how tough it is. It was almost like I dreamed it, but I know for certain that I'll be eight years cancer-free in July.





Spectators will cheer on some of the world's top cyclists—including Lance Armstrong—hammering the hills of California's most scenic country.



RACE DAY ARRIVES IN THE CONEJO VALLEY

THE FINAL STAGE OF THE AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA
BRINGS THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST BIKE RACE
TO ITS THRILLING CONCLUSION.

BY MARK LANGTON

Editor's note: *(re: déjà vu)* If you think you've seen this story before, you're right. But after first publishing it in April, we've compiled enough new information to run this enhanced version. It's even handier this month.

THE AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA bicycle road race rolls into the Conejo Valley this month. Cycling enthusiasts from all over the country will be congregating on the roads of Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, and Agoura Hills to witness more than 128 elite professional cyclists compete in the country's biggest cycling event. With international superstars of the sport in attendance, including seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong riding with Team RadioShack, this may be the biggest thing to happen to this area since the widening of the 101 freeway.

The course consists of a 21-mile loop that riders will circle four times: up to Mulholland Highway via Agoura Road and Cornell Road, then dropping back down Westlake Boulevard. The Amgen Tour of California is a "stage race" format similar to the grand European tours. The event has racers riding more than 800 miles along eight separate courses around the state, and the rider with the lowest cumulative overall time is crowned champion. There are two other stages in Southern California prior to Stage 8: Stage 6, which ends in the town of Big Bear Lake, is the first time a stage has finished on a mountain; and Stage 7 is an individual time trial in downtown Los Angeles. There are also several awards that can be won by other riders through special categories and points systems (see "Races Within the Race").

For the spectators, the event producers are offering several premium packages, such as ride-alongs in an official race vehicle, VIP suite passes, and private hospitality tents. Visit amgentourofcalifornia.com for race and spectator package details.

ON YOUR MARKS

The Oaks Shopping Center serves as the race's neutral start line, from there riders will roll to the official start on Townsgate Road. A military flyover is scheduled and live music will be at the Muvico Outdoor Plaza following the start of the race. There will also be other family activities and services for spectators including:

AUTOGRAPH ALLEY

(Muvico Outdoor Plaza)

Meet and mingle with world-class cyclists prior to the race, starting at 11 a.m.

LOS ROBLES HEALTH FAIR

(JCPenney Court)

Because the Amgen Tour of California shines a spotlight on health and nutrition, The Oaks is partnering with Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center to host a Health Fair from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Blood testing, skin cancer screening, and nutrition consultations will be available for a service fee of \$25 (more than a \$1,200 value); to preregister and for complete details call 877-888-5746.

LIVE BROADCAST OF RACE FINISH

(Muvico Outdoor Plaza)

Watch the final miles of the race on Muvico's large outdoor marquee.

For additional special race-related activities, services, and information on extended shopping center hours, visit shoptheoaksmall.com.

RACES WITHIN THE RACE

A GUIDE TO THE JERSEYS AND POINTS

After each stage of the race, the rider with the lowest cumulative time (called "general classification") is awarded the yellow Amgen Race Leader Jersey. In a stage race format such as this event, however, a rider can have the lowest overall time to win the race without having won a stage.

Since the inception of stage racing with the Tour de France in 1903, other category distinctions have been identified over the years to make the races more interesting to both riders and fans. The Amgen Tour of California awards the following four category jerseys each day in addition to the Race Leader Jersey.

AMGEN'S BREAKAWAY FROM CANCER

MOST COURAGEOUS: Awarded to the cyclist who best exemplifies the character of those engaged in the fight against cancer. The blue-and-

King of the Mountain

Malibu Family Wines (malibufamilywines.com) in Malibu is hosting two special family-friendly events (below) for Stages 7 and 8 at Saddlerock Ranch, with various wines, including the limited-release King of the Mountains Cuvée, created especially for this year's Amgen Tour of California (see *Armchair Oenophile*, page 87). Proceeds from sales of the King of the Mountains Cuvée and event tickets go to the Local Organizing Committee, which funds the entire Stage 8 Overall Finish.

The tasting room's driveway serves as the final points line for the King of the Mountain competition (best hill climber).

TASTE OF THE TOUR, MAY 22. For Stage 7, a great variety of area restaurants will take part in an afternoon food and wine festival (\$35 for children, \$95 for adults; includes food, wine, and parking) on the Malibu Family Wines estate grounds. There will also be cycling vendors showcasing their products, a raffle to benefit *Breakaway from Cancer*, and the *805 Living Lounge*. A JumboTron will be set up to view the time trial stage live from the streets of downtown Los Angeles.

RACE DAY AT THE RANCH, MAY 23.

Guests can follow the race live on the JumboTron, then walk out to the road and see the riders climb up Mulholland four times. There will also be food, wine, and beverages available for purchase at this event (\$30 for admission, \$30 for parking).

yellow jersey will not necessarily be awarded to the fastest or best cyclist of the day, but rather to the rider who best demonstrates courage, sacrifice, inspiration, determination, and perseverance.

CALIFORNIA TRAVEL & TOURISM COMMISSION KING OF THE MOUNTAIN:

The red-and-yellow KOM jersey is awarded to the strongest climber. The first three riders across designated locations at the tops of major climbs are awarded points.

HERBALIFE SPRINTER: The green-and-black jersey is awarded to the rider who accumulates the most points based on designated sprint-line performances at each stage as well as finishes the stage in one of the top 15 spots.

RABOBANK BEST YOUNG RIDER:

Awarded to the best rider under 23 years old based on cumulative time, similar to the Amgen Race Leader Jersey.

IN THE SPIRIT

PAMPERED PERFORMANCE

Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village (fourseasons.com/westlakevillage)

Let the California Health & Longevity Institute experts assess your fitness and create a custom dietary plan for high performance. The two-night package (available through December 31) includes a thermal sports massage in the spa. Cost per person is \$495 per night and 48-hour advanced booking is required.

B.Y.O.B. (B as in bicycle, that is.)

Westlake Village Inn (westlakevillageinn.com) This one-night package for two comes complete with a map so you can ride at your own pace along the same route as Stage 8. Cost is \$315 and includes customized water bottles, an energy snack for the road, a power breakfast, and a commemorative bottle of King of the Mountains Cuvée. Westlake Village Inn will also be setting up bleachers (and offering refreshments) in its parking lot, which fronts Agoura Road, just a short walk from the Lifestyle Festival at the start/finish line.

CUSTOM CREATIONS

Area restaurants have certainly caught race fever. For instance, Ladyface Alehouse & Brasserie in Agoura Hills is brewing a special French Bière-de-Garde-style ale (see *Dialed In*, page 92); while Tra di Noi in Malibu is serving a unique Organic Italian Bicycle Stew with seasonal ingredients from the farmers market.





Best Places to Watch

Spectators can get up close (within reason) to the riders just about anywhere along the course, but there are some especially favorable viewing spots.

The Rock Store Climb ascends toward Kanan Dume Road. The entire climb affords good viewing, but just before it tops out there's a great overlook where the riders can be seen continuously for almost a half-mile.

Skip battling the traffic during the hours of the event. Ride your bike to a viewing spot and take in the action. Need to get there on four wheels? Take the hassle out of finding parking and pre-purchase your spot right at the finish line. The best place to find street closure information, shuttle service, parking, and prime viewing locations is at amgentourconejo.org.

The stretch of Westlake Boulevard from Mulholland Highway to East Carlisle Road will feature the riders negotiating the twists and turns and some very steep pitches.

Other points for interesting viewing include the section of Cornell Road as it passes by Paramount Ranch (just before turning on to Mulholland), and the hill on Mulholland that ascends past Malibu Family Wines, one of the King of the Mountain points lines.

The finish line on Townsgate Road between Westlake Boulevard and Lakeview Canyon Road provides excellent viewing.

While waiting for the riders, spectators can explore the MBT Lifestyle Festival, which features a JumboTron (showing live race action), a health and fitness expo, cancer awareness education, cycling gear, and family activities. ■

THE CONEJO VALLEY'S GREATEST HITS AND INSIDER'S TIPS A QUICK GUIDE FOR EITHER A DISCOVERY OR A STAYCATION.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: It should be noted that the following destinations are wonderful examples of what's in and around the Conejo Valley. Truth be told, the many communities that make up this part of Southern California are all amazing places to visit; each has its own personality, and each is filled with great restaurants, shopping, and attractions. (Why else would this magazine exist in the first place?)

But for first-time visitors to the area, especially the thousands of cycling fans gathering this month to cheer on the riders of the Amgen Tour of California, *805 Living* recognizes that there is limited time for tourism. These spots and activities are wonderful examples of what the area has to offer. Please feel free to return—frequently—and check out the rest of the place.

For locals, these diversions are certainly well-known. But seeing them here will hopefully serve as a reminder of the many great opportunities for entertainment and recreation that are so close by. Revisiting them is a perfect way to rediscover why the Conejo Valley is great place to call home.

WRITTEN BY ANTHONY HEAD AND ANGELA PETTERA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY MOSS





Opposite page: Spend a reflective moment in Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks (bottom); a must before going on any Conejo Valley tour is a stop at Chocolatine in Thousand Oaks to stock up on provisions like quiche, French pastries and decadent chocolate delights (top). **This page:** Air Force One makes an impressive sight at the Ronald Reagan Library in Simi (left); also in Simi, the humble bottle-abode of Grandma Prisbrey (below).

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

Simi Valley

As with most presidential libraries and museums, the focus of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is primarily dedicated to history and not blatantly to the politics of the 40th president of the United States. If for no other reason, however, getting to the mountaintop and seeing the views of beautiful Simi Valley are worth the drive.

Inside the Spanish mission-style building are permanent exhibits, films, and mementos from Reagan's childhood, his Hollywood career, and his terms as California's governor. Of course, the majority of artifacts, documents, and archives come from his time in the White House. Of special note: There is a full-scale replica of the Oval Office as it looked during his two terms.

The Reagan Library is also the only realistic chance for humble, everyday citizens to step aboard Air Force One, the actual Boeing 707 that served Reagan and other presidents for 28 years. There is also a 9½-foot-tall slab of the Berlin Wall, and a multitude of gifts presented to the Reagans from international dignitaries during their two terms in the White House. (reaganlibrary.com)

INSIDER TIP: Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village (bottlevillage.com) is a National Historic Landmark that could be easily missed because of its residential setting

in a Simi Valley neighborhood. Prisbrey's ramshackle, eclectic estate qualifies as serious folk art, with huts built of multicolored glass bottles and walkways embedded with car hood ornaments, costume jewelry, and license plates. Since the Northridge earthquake (1994), many of the huts have fallen down, but visitors can still get a keen sense of Grandma Prisbrey's unique building style from looking at the ruins from the sidewalk at any time. (To see the Bottle Village before the earthquake and to meet Grandma Prisbrey on film, go to folkstreams.net.)

Gardens of the World Thousand Oaks

Originally opened in 2001, Gardens of the World was a gift to the people of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Valley from Ed and Lynn Hogan. Today it remains a tranquil internationally themed setting, with hundreds of varieties of plants from around the world that attracts nearly 20,000 visitors a year.

Docents are on-hand to lead tours and answer questions about the various gardens. Guests are also free to stroll the grounds at their own pace and discover the enchanting flora and architecture spread out over 4½ acres.

Among the six distinct and immaculately groomed areas are the Italian Garden with a grape arbor, towering cypress trees, and chain fountain; the Japanese Garden featuring a mahogany pagoda and koi pond; the English



Perennial and Rose Garden with its trellised pergola; and the Mission Courtyard with traditional early-California architecture, Spanish fountain, and citrus trees.

On Sunday evenings throughout the month of August, Gardens of the World is hosting its 8th annual Summer Jazz Concert Series. Set in the grassy amphitheater and close to picnic facilities, the series features various styles of jazz presented free from 5 to 6:30 p.m. (gardensoftheworld.info)

INSIDER TIP: Since Gardens of the World allows guests to picnic on the grounds, we suggest stopping by **Chocolatine** in Thousand Oaks (chocolatine.net) for provisions before you go. Part French café, part patisserie, Chocolatine makes quiche, grilled sandwiches like croque monsieur with ham and cheese, Caprese salad, and Chinese chicken salad. They also bake wonderful treats like French *macarons* (soft,



This page: From Newbury Park to the Pacific Coast Highway, Sycamore Canyon offers eight miles of spectacular views (left); at the Satwiwa Native American Cultural Center, kids can visit a traditional Chumash hut (above); in Calabasas, visitors can double their pleasure by visiting the Farmers Market and the Leonis Adobe Museum (both below). **Opposite page:** The Blue Table Gourmet Deli in Whizins' Shopping Center.



ganache-filled cookies) and pastries. Drinks include passion fruit iced tea, iced coffees, Perrier, and Orangina. We recommend calling your order in ahead of time for a more efficient pick-up process.

Sycamore Canyon

Trailhead: Newbury Park

Sycamore Canyon offers some of the most beautiful scenery in the Valley year-round. The 8-mile trail, which runs from Newbury Park to the Pacific Coast Highway, is for the most part paved or smooth dirt; but it's all easily manageable via hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Beginning at the Satwiwa Cultural Center, the trek slopes gently downhill to Pt. Mugu State Park at the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, there are towering sycamore trees, picnic areas, restroom facilities, trickling streams, and gorgeous mountain and coastal views. The main trail is suitable for novice and intermediate users. (venturacountytrails.org)

INSIDER TIP: At the north end of Sycamore Canyon off of Lynn Road in Newbury

Park sits **Satwiwa Native American Indian Cultural Center** (satwiwa.org). There is no official street address for the center, but the Via Goleta turnoff is well-marked and the parking lot sits at these GPS coordinates: 34 degrees 9 feet north latitude; 118 degrees, 57 feet west longitude. The center is a quick quarter-mile hike up a gravel path. On weekends from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., park rangers staff the small welcome center stocked with bottles of water and books on both Chumash Indian culture and local wildlife. Outside sits a full-scale replica of a Chumash hut made of willow branches called an *ap*. All around the *ap*, the views of the hills are spectacular. A 2-mile loop trail affords a relaxing walk through the swaying grass. For a list of events taking place throughout the whole Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area including Satwiwa, visit the calendar at nps.gov/samo.

Leonis Adobe Museum Calabasas

The Leonis Adobe is somewhat of a mystery: Although the original builder's intention for

the building is unknown, Miguel Leonis remodeled a humble adobe structure in the mid-1800s for his family home. Today, this two-story, Monterey-style structure is the focal point of the Leonis Adobe Museum, which opened in 1966.

In addition to featuring such authentic 1800s architecture, the museum also shows visitors what ranch life was like in that time period, including learning how adobe bricks were made and how cooking was accomplished with a *horno* oven.

The "living" aspect of the museum is represented by the ranch animals, which were common to the time period. Visitors can learn about (and feed) sheep, goats, turkeys, Percheron horses, and longhorn cattle.

Visitors also have the opportunity to tour the Plummer House, which was moved from West Hollywood to the museum grounds in 1983. The Plummer House dates back to the same period as the Leonis Adobe, and now serves as the museum's visitor center. (leonisadobemuseum.org)

INSIDER TIP: Just up the street from the Leonis Adobe, across from Calabasas Creek

Park, the **Calabasas Farmers Market** takes place every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. There's always a wide range of organic fruits and vegetables, cut flowers, and orchid plants from local farmers. Other stalls feature prepared edibles: Old Town Baking Co. sells fresh-baked rolls and loaves of bread; Jinou Edible Art offers pastries, tarts, and tiny cakes; McLaren's has Scottish shortbread, and lemon curd and blood-orange curd made from the market's own produce. There's honey from Buckhorn Canyon Ranch, olives and dips from Brother's Products, plus oils and balsamic vinegars from Gourmet Blends. Visitors who can't transport produce across state lines can find non-perishable souvenirs like jewelry, Provençal table linens, Tealandia teas, and all-natural skin care products from Zona Spa.

The Canyon Club Agoura Hills

Despite the need for a face-lift, the 85,000-square-foot retail complex known as the Whizins' Shopping Center has been a mainstay of Agoura Hills since the 1970s. It's home to several businesses worth visiting, including The Canyon Club, a music venue.

Owners Lance and Caryn Sterling are former House of Blues executives, who recognized a need for a medium-sized venue to host local, regional, and national acts for customers for whom the drive to Los Angeles was too far for comfort. They opened The Canyon Club more than a decade ago, and about 250,000 people pass through the club's doors each year. Many of those visitors return each Thursday evening to party like it's the 1980s with new-wave cover band the Spazmatics.

But The Canyon Club is also a regular stop for national touring groups, like Dave Mason, Dr. John, and the Gin Blossoms. In May, the concert lineup includes Mick Taylor and Mark Knopfler, Patty Smyth and Scandal, and The Young Dubliners.

Bookended by two bars, there's a dance floor and a dining area. On popular show nights, a dinner reservation guarantees a seat for the show. (canyonclub.net)

INSIDER TIP: Next door to The Canyon Club at the new **Blue Table Gourmet Deli** (blue table.net), guests can sit at one of the quaint blue tables and enjoy a panini sandwich with burrata cheese and prosciutto di Parma

OVER THE HILL: EXPLORING MALIBU

By Angela Pettera

About 15 miles away from Westlake Village lies the storied colony of Malibu. The *nearly as storied* Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) runs past its famous rocky beaches, coastal cafés, stunning sunsets, and gorgeous celebrities. It's also the right road to be on to reach these nearby SoCal highlights.

Adamson House (adamsonhouse.org) is a Spanish Colonial Revival home built in 1930 for Rhoda and Merritt Adamson. Now owned by the state, Adamson House is renowned not only for its amazing views of Malibu Beach, Malibu Lagoon, and the Malibu Pier, but also for its gardens and fabulous decorative ceramic tiles made by the Malibu Potteries (1926–1932).

Tours of the house, the gardens, and the Malibu Lagoon Museum are given Wednesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; \$5 cash only.

The historic Malibu Pier is just about a minute's drive along PCH east of Adamson House, and a stroll along its wooden beams yields views of the coastline for miles in either direction. At the top of the pier, **The Beachcomber Cafe** (thebeachcombercafe.com) provides lunches and dinners in a retro surf environment. Some of its newest menu items include shrimp corn dogs—crunchy skewered shrimp fried in a cornmeal batter—with a spicy *sriracha* (Asian hot sauce) ketchup. The cold seafood Louie salad is refreshing with boiled shrimp, crab, and a lobster claw sitting atop dressed iceberg lettuce shreds with tiny tomatoes. Master sommelier Michael Jordan has expanded the wine list to include bottles from Malibu wineries for a true local experience.

Drive back along PCH toward Malibu Canyon for a few minutes and take a right at Cross Creek Road. Many actual Malibu residents end up at the unassuming **Malibu Country Mart** (malibucountrymart.com) on the weekends. A playground entertains the children of tattooed rock stars while shops like Madison, Malibu Rock Star, M.Fredric, and Oliver Peoples provide trendy shopping experiences. Within walking distance sits **Malibu Lumber Yard** (thelumberyard.com), another mall crawling with ponytailed celebs in expensive T-shirts acquired at Theory and James Perse. **ChocolateBox Cafe** (chocolateboxcafe.com), newly opened here, is a nice place to enjoy a pistachio gelato or pomegranate frozen yogurt along with a few chocolate pralines, truffles, or buttermilks for the road.





It's motorcycle madness at the Rock Store in Cornell, where weekend wheelers and serious bikers talk shop and show off their rides (left); the Cornell Winery offers a huge selection of local wines in a charming, rustic setting (below).

and a mixed green salad. Espresso drinks are made to order and are best enjoyed with one of the house-baked sweets like the cookies or the triple-chocolate brownies. The Whizins' Shopping Center is also home to the **Agoura Antique Mart** (agouraantiquemart.com), where decorators can score some wonderful antique furniture and vintage architectural items. It's also the place to find the **Carol Henry Studio | Gallery** (carolhenrygallery.com) with prints and paintings from the local artist as well as exhibits by other artists. This month, *The Obama Painting Project* exhibit runs through May 30.

Rock Store Cornell

Although normally a very popular weekend hangout for riders of two-wheelers with an engine (aka Harley-Davidsons, BMWs, and Triumphs), during Stage 8 of the Amgen Tour of California, enthusiasts of cycles propelled by pedal power (aka Cannondales, Treks, and Schwinns) will likely turn out at the Rock Store in bigger numbers.

That's because the race runs right past this mecca of motorcycle culture, first opened by Ed and Veronica Savko in 1961. Its world-renowned reputation for motorcycles has certainly been generated by the winding and steep Mullholland Highway, linking Malibu and Calabasas, which the Amgen riders will have to endure four times over the course of race day.

Indoors, the Rock Store's old-school diner ambience is just fine for enjoying a hefty breakfast of eggs, sausage, and hash browns; or a lunch of burgers, BBQ tri-tip sandwiches, or teriyaki chicken sandwiches. But the patio is where visitors can view the bicycles as they fly past on the final day of racing. (rock-store.com)

INSIDER TIP: Less than a mile east of the Rock Store in Cornell, **Cornell Winery** (cornellwinery.com) is tucked along Mulholland Highway and stocks wines from 50 local wineries. The tasting room is open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. After 5 p.m. on those same days, **The Old Place Restaurant** (oldplacecornell.com) next door starts



serving fish chowder, steak, and chicken for dinner in a very rustic, Old West saloon-style setting. Those without reservations for one of the few booths can just belly up to the long wooden bar and chow down. ■



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Paulette Lambert, a registered dietitian at the California Health & Longevity Institute, recommends a heart-healthy diet for women, emphasizing fresh fruits and vegetables, good fats, fish, and antioxidants.

NUTRITION FOR WOMEN

Want to live as long as possible, prevent disease, and slim down? The California Health & Longevity Institute has some ideas especially for women.

PAULETTE LAMBERT IS PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOD. As the director of nutrition at the California Health & Longevity Institute (chli.com) in Westlake Village, this registered dietitian has seen the big picture—and it's not pretty: In this country we lean toward processed, easy-to-prepare foods, while in Europe the pattern is to go to the grocery store every day for something fresh. Our love of convenience is doing much more harm than simply making us heavier than our continental counterparts.

"The food quality is horrible. It has high sodium and chemicals, and now we're all sick," says Lambert. "Real whole food is good food. People associate it with bland food; clearly it's not." For example, Lambert points out that flavorful herbs and spices are concentrated sources of antioxidants—and cooking with them adds more flavor and reduces the need for so much salt.

At the California Health & Longevity Institute, Lambert advocates what they call the longevity diet, which is a lot like the Mediterranean diet, stressing lots of fruits and vegetables, healthful fats, and fish (see box at right). Both diets are also what Lambert describes as "anti-inflammatory"—they help reduce and prevent inflammation in the body, which emerging research is pointing to as a precursor to certain types of cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and even Alzheimer's. While the longevity diet means many of the same things to both sexes, we women do have different problem areas. Here's what's most relevant. (Check back next month for more on men's health.)

Bone health. Protecting bone health means getting plenty of calcium, and also vitamin D, which helps prevent calcium loss in bones. "We [women] are lighter in frame and have smaller bone mass," Lambert says. "We have to protect our bones if we are to make it into longevity." For calcium, Lambert recommends nonfat yogurt and milk, and lower-fat cheeses like part-skim mozzarella and provolone. Other sources of calcium include leafy greens like spinach, kale, and arugula; and beans and lentils, which have fiber, too. And while shoring up bone strength with a smart diet, skip the soda to maximize efforts. "All cola products, diet or regular, block absorption of calcium and contribute to osteoporosis," says Lambert. "We prefer that you drink tea; all tea is good for you. If you're caffeine-sensitive, drink decaf."

Heart health. Heart attacks aren't just a problem for middle-aged men: Heart disease actually kills more women over age 45 in the United States than anything else. "We need to be healthy heart-focused; that's a new thing," says Lambert. "We now know it's a

Longevity Diet

THE LONGEVITY DIET RECOMMENDED BY THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH & LONGEVITY INSTITUTE IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING KEY COMPONENTS, FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN:

- Seven to 10 servings of fruit and vegetables per day
- High-fiber, whole-grain carbohydrates such as barley, oats, brown rice, and whole-grain bread, eaten in moderation
- Three to five servings of healthy fats
- Lean protein
- Eat fish at least three times per week
- Use nonfat dairy products when possible
- Substitute vegetarian protein for a third to half of total daily protein



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number-one killer.” A heart-healthy diet includes high fiber, less saturated fat, no trans fats, and an adequate level of healthful fats, like omega-3s. “We want healthy fats,” says Lambert. “Salmon is a great source of omega-3s, [which are] fatty acids that really reduce inflammation in the body.” Salmon is also a source of vitamin D, which research is linking to heart health as well. Besides salmon, sources of vitamin D include fortified milk and cereal, sardines, supplements, and sunshine.

Weight management. Every woman wants to fit into her skinny jeans, but maintaining a healthy weight isn't just a matter of vanity. “Obesity is a major health risk, and women have more weight problems than men do,” says Lambert. “We don't have the height and bone structure to carry the weight.” Fortunately, it's not about going hungry: Lambert says the key to combating obesity is to eat volumes of fruits and vegetables (a minimum of two cups of vegetables a day, plus a salad) in order to feel full but to keep the calories down to the 1,500–1,600 per day that most women need. Portion control with carbohydrates, a typical downfall for females, is another tenet of staying slim. “One extra carb serving a day is 10 pounds a year,” says Lambert, who recommends five to six carb servings a day for women (one cup of cooked pasta is two carb servings). While consuming whole-grain carbs offers extra fiber and is more filling than its stripped-down (non-whole-grain) counterpart, Lambert says portion control is still important. “Have your salad after your meal, the European way,” she says. “By the time you finish your salad, it's been 20 minutes since your meal, and you'll feel full without going back for seconds.”

IN THE KITCHEN



BREAKFAST OATMEAL

This recipe comes courtesy of the California Health & Longevity Institute. Institute director of nutrition Paulette Lambert says that it's a great way for women to start their day—it's low-fat and offers fiber, protein, and antioxidants.

- 1 cup vanilla soy milk
- ½ cup oatmeal (raw, steel-cut, or old-fashioned)
- ½ cup fresh or frozen berries
- 1 tablespoon chopped almonds
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar or honey

Place milk, oats, and berries in a large microwavable bowl. Microwave for 4–6 minutes on high, uncovered. Pour into cereal bowl, sprinkle with almonds and brown sugar or honey.

Makes 1 serving. Calories per serving: 350

At the Market

Snack smart. Nutritious snacks not only push health-conscious eaters closer to the recommended seven to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, they help satisfy between meals (so the vending machine won't be so alluring mid-afternoon). Here are some suggestions from Paulette Lambert, director of nutrition at the California Health & Longevity Institute, for healthful on-the-go snacks that require little or no preparation:

Fresh fruit (or one-quarter cup dried fruit)

Nonfat yogurt

Part-skim string cheese

Mini light popcorn bags

A slice of whole-grain bread with
1 tablespoon of natural peanut butter
or almond butter

Eight walnut halves and a piece of fruit

Nonfat latte (unsweetened or sweetened
with a non-calorie sweetener like Stevia)

Baby carrots, sliced red bell pepper,
celery sticks, grape or cherry tomatoes,
or cucumber slices with hummus

Broaden your tastes. Remember that old saying about an apple a day? Lambert points out that the same apple every day might not be the best practice, after all, considering that we get different antioxidants from different fruits and vegetables. “We don't eat enough variety, we need to move around a little bit,” she says. Shop local farmers' markets where the varied seasonal produce will inspire you to change up your daily repertoire, and when you're at the supermarket, look for local or frozen fruits and vegetables. While fresh fruits shipped long distances have generally been picked before they're ripe, their frozen counterparts are picked at the peak of ripeness, when their nutritional content is also at its highest. Using some frozen produce (such as berries) allows you to keep a broader variety of fruits and vegetables on hand without spoilage.

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WOMEN IN WINE

Gender equality in the cellar translates to more great wine for everyone.

SPEAK WITH ANY WOMAN WINEMAKER and she'll likely admit that, despite a decades-old trend to the contrary, the wine business remains a man's game. "It's certainly still a male-dominated industry," says Chrissy Wittmann, who's been winemaker for Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards in Templeton for about three years. "I went to a vineyard class a month ago at UC Davis and there were probably 75 people in the class; and I think there were maybe 12 women."

While there's no doubt more women have begun managing the cellars, and that their numbers have grown steadily since the 1960s, only an estimated 15 to 20 percent of today's California winemakers are female. Despite such low numbers, however, women winemakers are definitely making names for themselves, and the industry as a whole benefits enormously from their expertise, their drive, and their passion. So even though Wittmann says that she's often the only woman winemaker in attendance at various professional meetings and gatherings, she's quick to add that it doesn't really bug her. "I try not to pay attention to that," she says. "My mindset is if I need to get somewhere, I'll get somewhere, regardless of gender differences."

Still, for this issue of *805 Living*, which is devoted to shining the spotlight on "women to watch," a wine writer must soldier on and ask the tough question: Is there a difference between the sexes when it comes to making wines?

"I don't think you could sit down and taste wines 'blind' and say this one's made by a man, this one's made by a woman," replies Amanda Cramer, winemaker for Niner Wine Estates in Paso Robles. "That said, I think there may be differences in how a person may run a winery. The cellar is still sort of a male-dominated place. There can be almost a fraternity-like mentality with competitiveness. And even though it's sort of stereotypical to say women are more detail-oriented and neat freaks, I think it has some truth to it. In the winery, I'm a total clean freak."

But some insist that the basic biological differences between men and women will affect what ends up in the bottle. For instance, Deborah Hall, owner and winemaker at Gypsy Canyon Winery in Lompoc, thinks women approach most everything in life differently than men: "I almost hate to say it but we're just more touchy-feely. I think we also look at the feeling and emotional sides of things rather than just look at the straight analytical side. We don't just go by the numbers. There's something else going on there, so I'm sure that's got to make a difference in the final product of winemaking."

Hall may be right. It turns out that women could be more suitable to becoming successful winemakers because, generally speaking, women tend to have a higher number of taste buds than men, and are more likely to be categorized as "supertasters." Combine that heightened sense of taste with the fact that women possess a genetic predisposition for identifying more odors than men and it certainly appears as if the physiological formula is in place for significant aspects of winemaking.

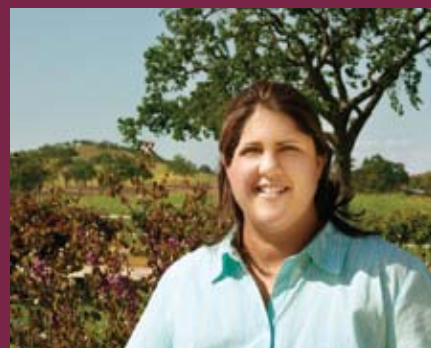


BOB DICKEY

Gypsy Canyon

2006 Pinot Noir, Lot 2,
Santa Rita Hills (\$75)
gypsyncanyon.com

"We have five acres of pinot, and every year I make wine according to what the vintage gives me," says winemaker Deborah Hall. "I prefer to let the vineyard speak for itself rather than stylizing the wine." This vintage, at 13.5-percent alcohol, is medium-weight and very food friendly. There are traditional and very expressive notes of red cherry and warm spice. (Note: Gypsy Canyon wines are sold by subscription only.)



Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards

2008 Cheval Sauvage Pinot Noir,
Santa Maria Valley (\$65)
wildhorsewinery.com

"This is our best of the best, top-of-the-line pinot noir," says winemaker Chrissy Wittmann. This Burgundian-style pinot is serious and age-worthy. There are high fruit notes of raspberry and strawberry with some green tea undertones, but it's continuously changing and evolving.





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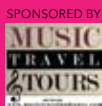
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» Taste

Of course, there still is nothing definitive or (as best as I can tell) even speculative about specific differences between XX and XY chromosomes' approach to the winemaking process. Science also hasn't demonstrated how differently, if at all, men and women appreciate wine, but Hall says in her experience men can a bit more competitive about tasting and discussing wines, a sentiment echoed by Cramer: "I think some people would argue with me, but men might be a little bit more aggressive about the process of trying to get it right, to figure out what the wine is all about."

As for the up-and-coming generation of women winemakers, gender equality in the cellar seems almost a tiring issue to discuss. "It was certainly male-dominated before, but more women are in the industry and men are respecting that. I think consumers are, too," states Brittany Rice, who has been making wine for her family's Santa Ynez winery, Sunstone Estate Vineyards, for the past seven years. She's also branched off to do her own thing at Millésimé Cellars, where she crafts wild-fermented wines in small lots. For her, more pressing issues like sustainable viticultural methods and organic and biodynamic farming practices are the more important topics. Says Rice, flatly, "It's the wine that matters, anyway."

And, of course, that is the bottom line: A good winemaker will make good wine. Individual preferences and passions, as well as the winemaker's expertise and personality, are the most important factors when it comes to crafting the final product. To that end, the bottles here also demonstrate something indisputable: Regardless of gender, world-class winemakers make world-class wines.



Niner Wine Estates

2005 Fog Catcher, Paso Robles (\$58)
ninerwine.com

This big Bordeaux blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, and merlot is elegant and complex. A bit firm right out of the bottle, but it mellows in the glass with layers of dark fruit, pepper, and cola. "This is our flagship. For me, it truly represents the estate," says winemaker Amanda Cramer.

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Millésimé Cellars

2006 Bleu Saphir, California (\$78)
millesimecellars.com

An unfiltered, wild-fermented blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, and merlot. It's very fruit-forward with lots of cherry and blackberry and some black licorice undertones. Winemaker Brittany Rice says, "You notice the tannins, but it's smooth. I'd pair it with pork with sautéed apples and subtle spices." ■



The Armchair Oenophile®

CENTRAL COAST WINES MADE EASY.

By Anthony Head

Without advocating drinking and biking, I would like to point out that this month there is going to be an awful lot of both happening. The good news, as I see it, is that most of it will take place separately. If there's an exception, it's bound to be at Malibu Family Wines, which celebrates the 2010 Amgen Tour

of California with a limited-release wine, Semler King of the Mountains Cuvée.

This blend of Bordeaux and Rhône varietals (a solid foundation of cabernet sauvignon supported by syrah, grenache, and mourvèdre) is dark and rich; it tips the alcohol scale at 14.5 percent, but the flavors of each grape are wonderfully balanced and the tannins are thoroughly tamed. This official wine of the Tour is seamless through to its finish, which will last long after the final biker has passed by the Malibu Family Winery for the fourth time.

Please, though, if you're at the winery during the final stage, hide the bottles until after the peloton has passed. Biking and drinking is a serious issue, and the cuvée's aromas are enticing enough to lure the riders out of their saddles. ■



Malibu Family Wines
Semler 2008 King of the Mountains
Cuvée, Saddle Rock-Malibu (\$32)
malibufamilywines.com



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ONE MORE WOMAN TO WATCH

A Stonefire Grill founder pushes forward, this time in Thousand Oaks.



"IT WAS NEVER MY INTENTION TO OWN RESTAURANTS," says the petite blond across the table from me. It's an unexpected statement coming from the co-founder of Stonefire Grill (stonefiregrill.com), a restaurant chain launched in 2000. The opening last month of the Thousand Oaks location in the former Marie Callender's space at Evergreen Plaza brings the total number to seven.

But Mary Harrigan is not your typical restaurateur: First of all, she's not a man. She's pretty and delicate-looking, and I swear her hands have never plucked a potato out of boiling water or accidentally grabbed a searing-hot pan handle. I have a hard time imagining her screaming across a kitchen at her line cooks or chewing down the price of a fountain-drink machine. She smiles and laughs and talks a mile a minute.

I hear about how she got into the hospitality business after following her sister's lead to get a part-time job at a local deli. I learn of Maureen Harrigan's marriage to Kaduri Shemtov, who opened Rattler's Bar-B-Que in Santa Clarita. Harrigan talks about how Shemtov took her under his wing; her mother taught her to "treat people well and create an environment they love to work in" while Shemtov taught her the business side of things. She tells me, "Rattler's is the mother of Stonefire" because it's where she learned "how to make simple, good food."

Harrigan, her sister, and Shemtov took Rattler's model and modified it to create Stonefire Grill. They scaled back the service style to fast-casual, where customers order at a counter, pay their bill, and then the food is brought out by runners. They decided to emphasize take-out orders by creating a separate entrance. They also expanded the Rattler's menu beyond grilled meats to include pizzas, pastas, and internationally flavored salads (think Greek, Italian, Asian).

"More and more families and moms were looking for someone else to do the cooking," Harrigan says as she pushes Stonefire's BBQ





Craftsman-style details of the new Thousand Oaks Stonefire Grill.

Chopped Salad in front of me in a sweetly maternal manner. The grilled tri-tip in the salad is tender, the greens are crisp, the tortilla strips crunch nicely, and the buttermilk dressing works perfectly.

All dishes at Stonefire are designed to be served family-style, in generous portions, but there are small or “petite” versions of almost everything. The grilled chicken is juicy and has plenty of flavor, whether it’s served on its own, topping one of the many salads, or in one of the sandwiches. As I bite into Stonefire’s Favorite Pizza with pesto sauce, red onions, avocado, and feta cheese, Harrigan says: “I’m most proud of the quality of our food in addition to the people behind it.”

Prices are moderate enough that a family of four can eat for as little as \$23. The most

expensive family meal on the menu is \$37. Large pizzas cost \$13 to \$17; a whole chicken is \$12; a full slab of baby back ribs is \$20. Small salads (\$6–\$8) feed at least two people and Harrigan knows a foursome of regular customers (“sweet older ladies”) who share a small salad and dispense only water for themselves from the soda fountain. “They eat lunch for about \$2 each.”

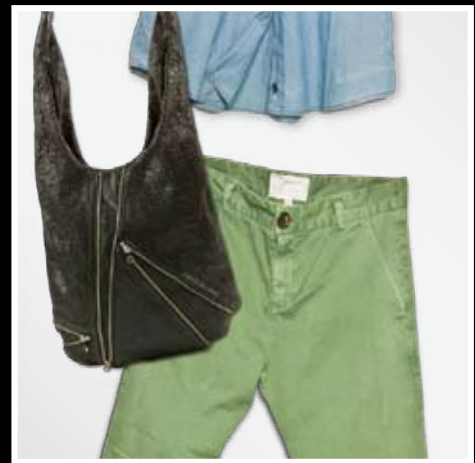
Harrigan, who lives in Thousand Oaks, is thrilled to have her newest creation in her own backyard. In the process of redoing the building for the opening, she hired several specialists to figure out how to protect an oak tree on the patio. Since the tree couldn’t be covered 24/7 and survive, they ended up installing a retracting roof to preserve the tree’s health.

Acting as general manager of the Thousand Oaks Stonefire Grill is Harrigan’s son, Kyle Lopez. Harrigan never expected him to go into the restaurant business, although he’s not as unusual a candidate as his mother. Lopez majored in business and communications at USC, whereas Harrigan studied psychology at Loyola Marymount. “It was a big surprise,” Harrigan says of her son expressing interest in joining the approximately 700-employee company in 2008. Now he’s worked his way up through the ranks and has learned to implement his mother’s ideals and attention to detail. Beaming with pride, Harrigan actually slows down a bit when she says of her son, “He’s definitely my hope for the growth of our company.” ■



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DIALED IN

News from the local dining scene.

KANDA SUSHI OPENS

The former Joannafina's space in Thousand Oaks' Paseo Marketplace has been transformed into a serene, beautiful Japanese restaurant: **Kanda Sushi** (kandasushito.com). Designers Mardee Stack and Debbie Driscoll at DeMar Interiors blended an Asian aesthetic with luxe touches to give Kanda its distinctive look. "We wanted to make it traditional Japanese, but hip and pretty, too," Stack says. She and her partner chose the white leather chairs and sushi bar stools for their comfort as well as their sleek look and soft feel. Pendant lights over the wood tables in back look like copper balloons, giving the whole place a "date-night" feel, as Stack puts it.

Chef Mitsu continues the slightly formal tone by creating mostly traditional Japanese dishes, like pristine sushi (\$5–\$18), delicate tempura (\$5–\$12), and chewy *kushiyaki* skewers (\$4–\$6) at both lunch and dinner. He allows a few American influences, like marrying cream cheese with *matcha* green tea powder for his green-tea cheesecake (\$6.50), but "I don't want any crazy rolls" he insists. When asked what inspired him to help open Kanda Sushi after selling his Oak Park restaurant, Sushi Tei, in 2007, he says: "Two years ago I was semiretired. Keith [Musante] was my customer for over 10 years. 'Oh Mitsu,' he says, 'why don't you make with me one more restaurant?'" So Kanda Sushi was born.

Mitsu prefers that his customers use proper sushi etiquette, so the menu suggests habits to avoid, like mixing the wasabi with the soy sauce or using too much of the latter. Of course, patrons can avoid this pressure altogether by sitting at one of the tables in the main dining room (out of eyeshot of the sushi bar chef) and ordering the wonderful small-plate cooked specialties, like the pitch-perfect soft-shell crab appetizer stuffed with fish cake (\$15), the savory beef short-rib skewers with green onions (\$6), or the silky black cod with miso (\$10).

SusieCakes Contest

In honor of Mother's Day, **SusieCakes Bakery** (susiecakesla.com) invites locals to submit their favorite recipes inherited from or inspired by their mothers or grandmothers. The bakery is accepting submissions via email (baked@susiecakesla.com) or in person. Entrants can provide a picture of their mom or grandma with an explanation or a memory of what makes the recipe so special. The contest ends May 3 and the winner will be announced on May 8. The winning recipe will be baked and sold at every SusieCakes location (Calabasas, Brentwood, Manhattan Beach, Newport Beach) throughout the rest of this month. Inspiration for the contest comes from the fact that SusieCakes owner Susan Sarich grew up baking with her grandmothers.

Amgen Fun Brewing

Ladyface Alehouse & Brasserie (ladyfaceale.com) is right on the route for the Amgen Tour of California, and Stage 8 of the bicycle race passes the brasserie four times. Ladyface owner Cyrena Nouzille promises: "Our patio is a prime viewing area." She'll also be sure to have the televisions on the patio tuned to race coverage from May 16 to 23. Brewer David Griffiths has created a special French Bière-de-Garde-style ale this month in honor of the French teams that will be racing. As another homage to the race, Ladyface bartenders will be pouring a beer-lemonade cocktail called a *radler* in German, which means "cyclist" in English.

HAVE A TIP FOR OUR RESTAURANT NEWS PAGES? E-mail our dining editor at angela@805living.com.

New Chef at El Paseo

Santa Barbara's oldest restaurant, **El Paseo**, (built in 1922; elpaseosb.com) has brought in chef Alex Castillo. "I want to make it special," Castillo says of the classic Mexican menu that patrons have gotten used to over the years. He's taking things to the next level by using filet mignon in the enchiladas, which he serves with black-bean risotto; grinding and making his own chorizo that he swirls into mashed potatoes; and mixing up his own mole sauces. He's also ordering whole fish and breaking them down himself for the seafood dishes. "I want to do things no one else has done," he explains when telling me about his chocolate flan inspired by the flavored crême brûlées he's made at other restaurants. Since he's "cooked every kind of cuisine" at places like Wine Cask, Lucky's, and Piatti, Castillo features multiethnic dishes at the brunch buffets to "surprise and delight" his regular customers. ■

805 DINING GUIDE

The *Dining Guide* includes restaurants from Santa Barbara to Malibu. Our aim is to inform you of restaurants with great food that you might not have experienced yet. The 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. "A Good Bet" listings are just that—solid, casual, and delicious. "The Chain Gang" highlights the best of the national restaurant chains, and the "Fun, Fun, Fun" category brings you spots geared toward a good time. Enjoy!

KEY TO SYMBOLS:

NEW Denotes restaurants new to the *805 Living Dining Guide*.

LOOK Indicates an update to an existing listing.

Restaurant information is subject to change without notice.

We will be adding new listings to the Dining Guide each month. Please send any comments and suggestions to angela@805living.com or write to us at 805 Living, 3717 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Westlake Village, CA 91362, attn: Taste of the Town.

FINE DINING

These restaurants have a skilled kitchen team, a lovely dining room, and great service. Some of the spots require elegant attire, but most allow for all styles of dress, from fancy to casual.

71 PALM FRENCH & AMERICAN BRASSERIE

71 N. Palm St.
Ventura, 805-653-7222
71palm.com
French-American
Entrées \$8–\$28
Romantic

More casual than it might seem at first, this brasserie-style eatery proves very friendly through and through. For instance, there are bowls of water on the porch of this Craftsman house to welcome pets; and the patios upstairs and down are great for kids. The bar area offers beer, wine, and cocktails with its own happy-hour specials. The French-American menu from chef Didier Poirier offers addicting nibbles, like french fries with garlic aioli, black tiger shrimp cocktail, Alsatian-style pizzas, and warm duck confit salad. Main courses include steaks, a double-cut pork chop, a Kobe burger, Atlantic salmon, and New Zealand rack of lamb. Poirier teaches cooking classes each month that culminate in a three-course meal paired with wines. He also hosts occasional winemaker dinners featuring wines from the Central Coast, Napa, and Sonoma. 71 Palm is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday.

NEW BELLINI OSTERIA BAR & LOUNGE

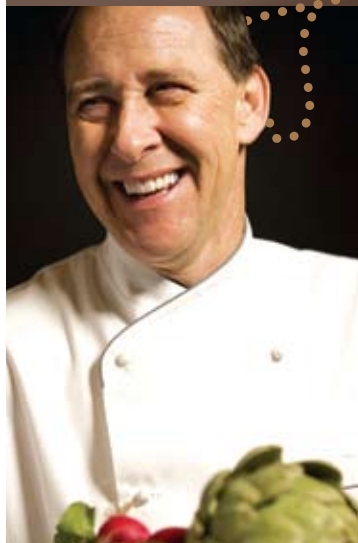
951 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-497-8482
belliniosteria.com
Italian
Entrées \$11–\$34
Romantic

Delicious Italian food comes from the hands of chef Gianluca Sarti at this stylish trattoria. Patrons enjoy authentic pastas, osso buco, and a few fish dishes inside the main dining room or out on the patio, where black-and-white movies—mostly Italian in origin—are screened. A wine bar near the entrance has a communal table and a happy hour (4 to 7 p.m., Sunday through Friday). Service from an attractive wait staff is attentive and helpful. Bellini is open for lunch and dinner daily.

root 246

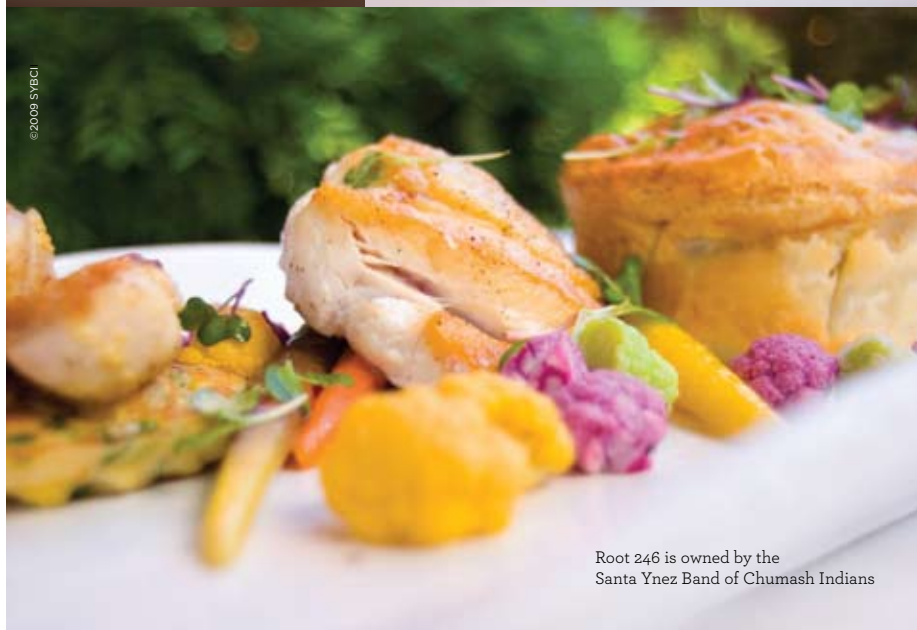
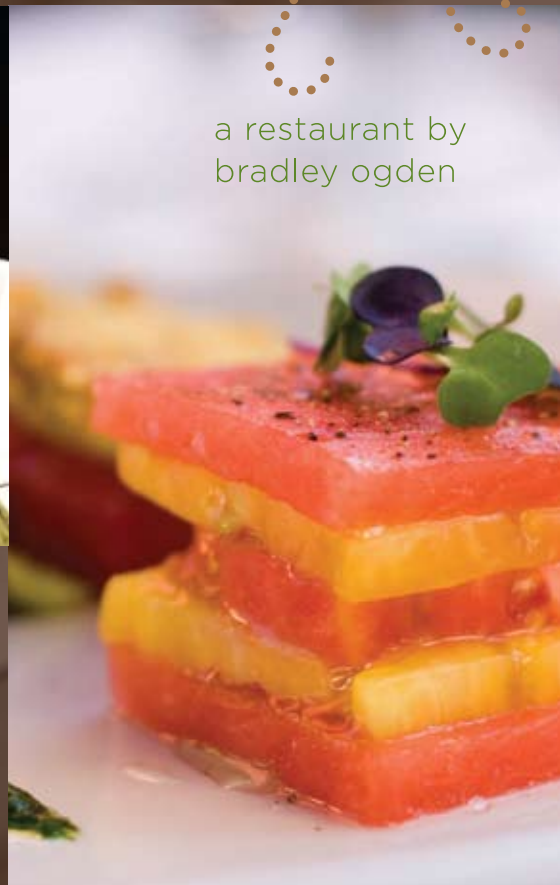
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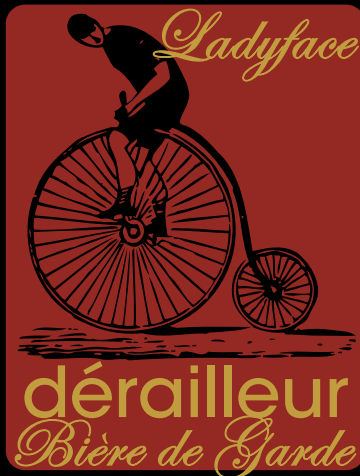
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➤ 805 DINING GUIDE

BOCCACCIO'S

32123 Lindero Canyon Road
Westlake Village, 818-889-8300

Continental

Entrées \$12-\$27

Saturday & Sunday Brunch, Great View

The floor-to-ceiling windows offer great views of the lake from inside the restaurant. The outdoor patio is the most popular spot for dining, however. Either way, it's a perennial favorite for ladies who lunch and the senior set. The seafood is always perfectly cooked in the Mediterranean manner (fried calamari, lobster ravioli, seafood risotto, Dover sole meunière). At lunch, a wide range of salads from Waldorf to Cobb to niçoise really satisfies. Brunch dishes up classics like French toast, omelettes, and eggs Benedict.

BOUCHON

9 W. Victoria St.
Santa Barbara, 805-730-1160
bouchonsantabarbara.com

Wine Country

Entrées \$24-\$35

Romantic

The name is French for "wine cork" and this theme carries throughout the restaurant. Wines from the Santa Barbara area (the Santa Ynez and Santa Maria valleys), especially chardonnay, pinot noir, and syrah, are the focus of the wine list. More than 40 varieties are available by the glass. The highly seasonal cuisine is created to pair well with the wines. (In other words, no strong vinegars or sauces that might fight with and kill the flavor of the wine.) Ingredients are mostly sourced locally, especially produce and seafood. Some dishes you might see more regularly than others include baby beet and carrot salad with goat cheese; bourbon-and-maple-glazed duck; lightly smoked Pacific ahi tuna; venison loin in a blackberry demi-glace; and apple tarte tatin.

CA' DARIO

37 E. Victoria St.
Santa Barbara, 805-884-9419
cadario.net

Italian

Entrées \$15-\$28

Romantic

Chef and owner Dario Furlati features dishes from his native northern Italy at this popular trattoria that gets high marks for service from regulars. His menu features some unusual choices like fusilli pasta with artichokes, shiitake mushrooms, and truffle oil; radicchio and ricotta-cheese crêpes; terra-cotta-baked chicken with a tomato and red-wine sauce; and a classic rib-eye steak with white beans and sage.

CAFÉ PROVENÇAL

2310 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-496-7121
cafeprovençal.biz

French

Entrées \$16-\$37

Romantic

This small French bistro run by Serge Bonnet in the Select Conejo Plaza can get you in and out quickly at lunchtime with its "Formule Express" three-course lunch (\$16). Dinner offers a more relaxed experience but there are still bargains to be enjoyed. Come on Monday night for a surf-and-turf special (\$26); on Wednesday and Thursday nights a "Deluxe" five-course dinner is paired with wines (\$45). On the à la carte menu you'll find a few pastas plus fish—like sand dabs, sole, and salmon. Meats include veal, lamb, chicken, and beef prepared in a Continental style. Café Provençal serves lunch Monday through Friday and dinner nightly.

CHAPTER 8 STEAKHOUSE & DANCE LOUNGE

29020 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-889-2088

678dine.com

Steakhouse

Entrées \$17-\$39

Live Music, DJ, Dancing

Chef Michael Carierro has fancied up the menu at this over-the-top dance lounge with a red and black color palette. The pan-seared scallop appetizer gets a kick of flavor from some Spanish chorizo and basil oil. Lobster lollipops are complemented by white-corn sauce. The truffle and Parmesan fries are addictive, but there are plenty of other potato options that go with the à la carte wood-grilled steaks. Fish lovers can enjoy a chilled seafood platter served with tequila cocktail sauce and spicy mustard sauce. For dessert, the warm rockslide brownie comes with chocolate lava, pecans, and a caramel macchiato shot. Live music on Friday and Saturday nights. Dinner Tuesday through Saturday nights.

CHARLIE'S MALIBU

22821 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, 310-456-3132
charliesmalibu.com

American

Entrées \$16-\$45

Romantic

Across the street from the Malibu Pier, Charlie's feels like a Malibu resident's living room. The bar is usually stocked with locals checking out wines by the glass, taste, or flight via the Enomatic system. Sommelier Caitlin Stansbury focuses on small producers like the vintners in Malibu. In the dining room, beautiful leopard-print chairs and paintings by Jane Seymour lend color to the otherwise minimalist white decor. A few tables dot the raised back patio, which sits behind a pane of glass. The menu is chock-full of steakhouse classics by chef David Linville. Charlie's is open for dinner nightly.

COAST RESTAURANT & BAR

31 W. Carillo St.
Santa Barbara, 805-879-9100
canarysantabarbara.com

California Bistro

Entrées \$13-\$28

Romantic, Sunday Brunch

This restaurant sits a bit below street level in the fun Canary Hotel. The main dining room is quiet and comfortable, but most people seem to take dinner in the bar area where it's much livelier. The entire menu is available in either venue. Go for the Santa Barbara mussels with chorizo, the tasty wild mushroom ravioli, the perfectly grilled and juicy pork chop, and the pudding-like chocolate lava cake. Chef Brian Parks keeps things interesting with his farmers' market dinners on Tuesday nights and a Sea Captain's dinner every Friday with fresh seafood from that day's fishing boats. Sunday brunch has live music from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Happy hour has great deals Monday through Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. Coast is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily.

ELEMENTS

129 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, 805-884-9218
elementrestaurantandbar.com

Eclectic

Entrées \$19-\$36

Romantic, Great View

Soaring ceilings inside plus fresh air on the patio with great views of the Santa Barbara courthouse keep everyone happy. Dishes here are eclectic and imaginative. A panko-lemongrass-crust sea bass comes in a green coconut-curry sauce. Short ribs get the Szechuan treatment and a ginger-orange gremolata, while a veal burger benefits from caramelized onions and Gruyère cheese. Save room for desserts, like the mini cupcake sampler or the mint-chip ice cream sandwich. The bar scene is lively, especially during happy hour (4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday). Bottles from the wine list can be purchased from the Elements website.

ENOTECA TOSCANA WINE BISTRO

2088 E. Ventura Blvd.
Camarillo, 805-445-1433
enotecatocanawinebistro.com
Mediterranean
Small Plates \$8-\$18; Entrées \$22-\$39

Live Music

The emphasis is on the wine at this intimate space in Camarillo's downtown district. Owner/chef Antonio Anderson personally selects all the bottles to showcase wines from Spain, Italy, and California. Anderson puts together a different flight of wines every day. Every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. there's a wine-tasting session that includes a cheese plate (\$14). The menu of small plates—like the wine list—skews to Spain and Italy, with dishes like shrimp in olive oil with lemon and garlic, or marinara meatballs. The large plates appear as nightly "Bodega specials." You might see braised short ribs or Tuscan chicken. At lunch-time, panini sandwiches are available. Enoteca Toscana is open for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday.

ERIC'S RESTAURANT & BAR

495 N. Ventu Park Road
Thousand Oaks, 805-716-4100
palmgardenhotel.com
Californian
Entrées \$15-\$36

The minimalist decor and the slate water wall lend a peaceful ambience to this large space. A wraparound patio fills up when the weather is nice. The service is polished, making this a fine spot for a business meeting at lunch or dinner. Chef Robin Nishizaki's plates are all well-executed; we haven't found any clunkers on the seasonal menu. Salads, sandwiches, pizzas, and pasta dishes dominate the lunch menu; chicken penne with kalamata olives and a chardonnay sauce is particularly nice. At dinner, there is grilled salmon in a basil sauce as well as steaks and chops. The full bar features a long martini list and its own tantalizing small-plates menu with beef and taters and a lobster quesadilla. Such nibbles can be paired with 20 wines by the glass, many from California vintners. Eric's serves lunch and dinner daily with happy hour specials Monday through Saturday from 4 to 7 p.m. Check the website for weeknight dinner specials on items like prime rib and lobster.

FINS CREEKSIDE

23504 Calabasas Road
Calabasas, 818-223-3467
and FINS SEAFOOD GRILL
982 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-494-6494
finsinc.com
Seafood
Entrées \$12-\$32

Live Music

The creekside patio is the draw at the Calabasas location. The owner and chef also run Moz Buddha Lounge. The menu features interesting takes on seafood like macadamia-crust halibut, oven-roasted seafood over yakisoba noodles, and a lazy-man's bouillabaisse in which the shellfish are removed from their homes for you. You can also choose your cut of steak and its preparation.

FLEMING'S PRIME STEAKHOUSE & WINE BAR

6373 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Woodland Hills, 818-346-1005
flemingssteakhouse.com
Steakhouse
Entrées \$24-\$40

Romantic

This snazzy steakhouse keeps the prices relatively low while maintaining high energy levels, especially in the bar, which has its own appetizer menu. Big salads, prime meats, and seafood dishes rule the dining room, though, and sides are meant to be shared (read: big), so order accordingly. Desserts are large and come with a huge bowl of freshly whipped cream. The wine list is encyclopedic and award-winning. Almost every style is represented, from sparkling whites to petite



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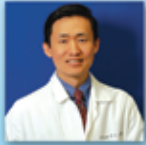


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805 DINING GUIDE

sirahs to deep cabernets. There are also 100 selections by the glass available nightly. Check the website for special-event wine dinners and seasonal prix-fixe menus. Fleming's is open for dinner nightly.

GEOFFREY'S MALIBU

27400 Pacific Coast Highway

Malibu, 310-457-1519

geoffreysmalibu.com

Cal-Eclectic

Entrées \$25–\$77

Great View, Saturday & Sunday Brunch

The alfresco dining and the panoramic ocean views from every table make this a spectacular dining venue. You can't help but feel like a Malibu socialite when sipping a glass of gewürztraminer with your lobster Cobb salad at lunch or brunch under the umbrellas. For dinner, there's ahi tuna, Chilean sea bass, seasonal oyster selections, and the Kobe New York steak. Service is always polished and polite, beginning and ending with the efficient valet parking.

GIANNFRANCO'S TRATTORIA

666 Linden Ave.

Carpinteria, 805-684-0720

Italian

Entrées \$13–\$28

Great Patio

The family of owners welcomes you here with open arms. In good weather, opt for a seat on the back patio with its garden setting. Some customers always start dinner with a glass of wine and the calamari appetizer, which comes with perfectly grilled baby squid and shrimp next to a crock of slightly spicy dipping sauce. It's a great idea. Salads are also quite nice and take advantage of the local growers. The pastas are lightly sauced and there's a daily fresh risotto. Meats include grass-fed free-range lamb chops and rib-eye steaks as well as farm-raised chicken. Giannfranco's is open for lunch and dinner Wednesday through Monday.

THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY

120 E. Promenade Way

Westlake Village, 805-418-1760

thegrill.com

American

Entrées \$19–\$42

Sunday Brunch

The glass-walled kitchen and the low partitions between booths keep the energy level of the room high while the dark wood floors against white walls and the marble-bedecked bar area add a bit of refinement to the mix. Expect to see some TV stars chowing down here, and for good reason. The chicken potpie is one of the best items on the menu. Steaks and lamb chops are popular, especially if you're indulging in an old-fashioned cocktail like a whiskey sour or sidecar martini. The Grill also offers lobster bisque and calf's liver with onion. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

GRISSINI RISTORANTE ITALIANO

30125 Agoura Road

Agoura Hills, 818-735-9711

grissiniristoranteitaliano.com

Italian

Entrées \$10–\$32

The name means "breadsticks" in Italian and you'll find one of two kinds on your table: either long and crunchy or rectangular and soft, depending on the day. The pretty rooms are lit by chandelier and candlelight, making it a sweet spot for romance. Host and owner Giuseppe Bellisario works the room like a master, making guests feel special. The large menu offers good versions of Italian standbys plus a few new twists. The salads are fresh with zingy dressings. There are multiple shapes of pasta and ravioli with fillings like mushroom, walnut, and lobster. Mix and match any pasta with sauces like pesto, puttanesca, carbonara, Alfredo, or limoncello with cream. The wine list offers many reasonably priced bottles and glasses.

HAMPTON'S AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE

2 Dole Drive
Westlake Village, 818-575-3000
fourseasons.com/westlakevillage/dining.html
Californian
Entrées \$23-\$50

Romantic, Great View, Sunday Brunch

The view of the rock waterfall is soothing and beautiful, whether you sit outside on the back patio or inside the posh main dining room. Service is Four Seasons spectacular with waitstaff nearby for all the right moments and none of the wrong ones. Chef Jelle Vandembroucke's cooking is well-thought-out. He uses foams intelligently: piquing the palate, not confusing it. Dishes are spa-light on cream and butter but rich with texture and flavor. His cooking technique is magnificent so don't be afraid to order lobster or pork loin. The menu here is seasonal so dishes will change, but all of the ingredients are top-notch. Salads are dressed with interesting vinaigrettes, often employing fine aged balsamic vinegar. Black truffles might show up to wonderful effect in mashed potatoes or under dabs of goat cheese. Meats are organic whenever possible. Desserts follow the fresh and light philosophy, too.

HOLDREN'S STEAKS & SEAFOOD

1714 Newbury Road
Newbury Park, 805-498-1314
and 512 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-965-3363
and 6920 Marketplace Drive
Goleta, 805-685-8900
holdrens.com
American
Entrées \$19-\$41 (more for surf-and-turf combos)
Romantic

The decor here is masculine enough for business, while the lighting is low enough for romance. The comfy seating and the friendly servers encourage lingering. The cheese-heavy menu is not for the faint of artery, but the food sure is good. Appetizers—like the cream-cheese-laden spicy crab-and-artichoke dip, and bacon-wrapped prawns stuffed with feta—are hearty enough to be main courses. The grilled Castroville artichoke has a nice smoky flavor to it. Steaks are well-marbled, tender, and seasoned right. The signature Cowboy Cut is huge and sits atop a pile of onion rings. All steaks come with a crock of sauce, a side dish, plus soup or salad. Check the website for dinner specials Monday through Wednesday. Holdren's is open for lunch Monday through Friday, and for dinner nightly. The original Santa Barbara location serves brunch on Sunday.

MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE

2087 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-418-1811
mastrossteakhouse.com
American
Entrées \$26-\$76

Live Music

For an extravagant night out, try this expensive and posh steakhouse. The cocktails are huge and potent. The salads serve at least two (unless you ask for a half-portion) and the seafood tower starter is a showstopper. For your entrée, stick with the meats unless you want to eye your date's dinner with envy. The veal porterhouse is fantastic. All the cuts are thick and oversized. Sides are à la carte, and the list of potatoes and veggies is long but unremarkable. Resist ordering more than one so that you can indulge in a giant dessert, which will be ferried out with a bowl of freshly whipped cream. The wine list features local vintners as well as highly rated wines from France and Italy.

MEDITERRANEO

32037 Agoura Road
Westlake Village, 818-889-9105
med-rest.com
Mediterranean
Entrées \$14-\$33
Kid-Friendly, Great View, Sunday Brunch

A marble bar, wrought-iron screens with glowing candles, and jet-black crystal chandeliers lend a luxurious feel to this dining venue on the grounds of the beautiful Westlake Village Inn. Roomy booths and large tables inside and out make for a comfortable night. Chef Alberto Vazquez cooks with style. His dishes will change seasonally but look for a wonderful calamari salad with crispy fried squid tentacles and grilled rings over warm potatoes with a mustard vinaigrette. The shrimp Brindisi appetizer has sautéed shrimp on a square of grilled bread, which soaks up the white-wine-caper sauce. You can always count on fresh fish dishes in zesty sauces with interesting accompaniments. Amongst the pasta dishes, the *orecchiette* (little pig's ears) with sausage and Swiss chard is already a classic. Steaks, pork, lamb, and occasional game dishes round out the menu. Sunday brunch is served buffet-style with lots of wonderful pastries, salads, and egg dishes to choose from.

MOZ BUDDHA LOUNGE

30105 W. Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-735-0091
mozbar.com
Pan-Asian
Entrées \$17-\$36
Live Music

The crowds come for the cover-free live music in the lounge, but the large plates of pan-Asian cuisine hold their own in the dining room. Tiger prawns are tossed with *yakisoba* noodles and a ginger-garlic sauce; mahimahi comes with coconut rice and tropical fruits; chicken is stuffed with crab and asparagus. Though dishes can be ordered in individual portions, the menu suggests family-style servings for sharing, so bring some friends. If your friends are energetic and hip—all the better. In warm weather, the patio with expansive views is a nice place to be.

NOBU

3835 Cross Creek Road
Malibu, 310-317-9140
nobumatsuhisa.com
Asian-Fusion
Entrées \$8-\$32 or Omakase menu \$80-\$120

The stars love to come to Nobu Matsuhisa's small sushi bar and Asian fusion restaurant for the *omakase* (chef's choice) menus, the yellowtail with jalapeño, the lobster salad with lemon dressing, and the black cod. The rest of us like to go to see the culinary stars, for the rock shrimp tempura, and for the bento box of desserts (you have to ask for that one), but be prepared to pay the price.

ONYX AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE

2 Dole Drive
Westlake Village, 818-575-3000
fourseasons.com/westlakevillage/dining.html
Japanese
Entrées \$10-\$45

Romantic, Great View

This lovely Japanese restaurant inside the Four Seasons offers salmon skin rolls and crunchy shrimp with jalapeños as a hand or cut roll. Amber jack, tuna belly, and sea bream are sliced into sashimi. Hot dishes include asparagus tempura, wok-fried Manila clams, and a whole fish of the day. The room is adorned with thinly sliced onyx and other semiprecious stones that are lit from behind, giving it a gorgeous glow. The seats on the patio and some spaces at the main bar and sushi bar overlook an outdoor rock waterfall. Onyx serves dinner nightly.

PADRI CUCINA ITALIANA & MARTINI BAR

29008 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-865-3700
padrirestaurant.net
Cal-Italian
Entrées \$11-\$26
Live Music

Chef and owner Saverio Posarelli also shares a partner interest in Cafe Fiore on California Street in Ventura. The spirits flow freely at the Martini Bar's happy hour from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The outdoor patio is great

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for smoking cigars or tucking yourself away in a private cabana and listening to live music Wednesday through Saturday nights. Inside, get cozy with a Cal-Italian menu of beef carpaccio, crab cakes, *burrata* cheese with arugula and pine nuts, lobster and leek ravioli, seafood risotto, osso buco (braised veal shank), and coconut crême brûlée with caramelized bananas.

RIVIERA RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

23683 Calabasas Road
Calabasas, 818-224-2163
rivieracalabasas.com

Continental
Entrées \$14–\$39

Beautiful glass doors open into a cozy lounge offering a full range of cocktails and about 30 wines by the glass. At dinner, Chef Maurizio Ronzoni serves Northern Italian dishes with a twist like *fritto misto* with sand dabs, veal parmigiana, or *bucatini* pasta topped with strips of filet mignon. He also adds California dishes like tuna tartare with cucumber, sweet carrot and ginger soup, or Sonoma County rack of lamb in a mustard crust. European classics show up, too. Witness the five-spice crispy duck with port-cherry sauce or the salmon fillet with lobster sauce and a potato crust. At lunch a panini sandwich of lamb and bell pepper and the chopped Cobb salad are standouts.

ROY'S

6363 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Woodland Hills, 818-888-4801
roysrestaurant.com

Hawaiian Fusion
Entrées \$21–\$33

Romantic

Blazing tiki torches greet you as you enter this lovely homage to the islands created by Roy Yamaguchi, the father of Hawaiian-fusion cuisine. It's basically Pacific Rim cooking using products like macadamia nuts, Maui onions, and Kona coffee. The fish is always fresh and the menu is mostly seasonal, but some classics are always available like the Aloha Roll (spicy tuna topped with *hamachi*, salmon, avocado, and a ginger-ponzu sauce), lobster potstickers, Maui Wowie shrimp salad, macadamia-crust mahimahi, and a hot chocolate soufflé cake. On special occasions, drummers and hula dancers perform in the restaurant.

SEAGRASS

30 E. Ortega St.
Santa Barbara, 805-963-1012
seagrassrestaurant.com

Seafood
Entrées \$25–\$36

Romantic

A charter member of the Sustainable Seafood Program through Santa Barbara's Ty Warner Sea Center, Seagrass serves local seafood without promoting overfishing or taxing the ocean. Owner Mitchell Sjerven and his wife, Amy, also own Bouchon in Santa Barbara, so the atmosphere is classy and the wine list deep. Chef John Pettitt does everything imaginable to fish and shellfish. On any given evening, his seasonal menu offers appetizers like chilled oysters, and fresh seafood such as sashimi, carpaccio, or in a bisque. Scallops might be seared or suspended in a panna cotta. Santa Barbara halibut, salmon, and sea bass serve as main courses. There are also meat dishes, like the veal duo (rack and belly with sweet potato puree, turnips, pink lady apples, and caramelized shallot jus), a Kobe beef rib eye with a bordelaise sauce, or a rack of lamb with its braised shank in a rosemary sauce.

THE SIDECAR RESTAURANT

3029 E. Main St.
Ventura, 805-653-7433
thesidecarrestaurant.com

Continental
Entrées \$10–\$25

Sunday Brunch, Live Music

Set in a 1910 Pullman train car, this restaurant has been around since 1933. The current owners have a devotion to fresh, locally grown produce; artisanal cheeses; and farm-fresh eggs. Chef Tim Kilcoyne turns out beautiful steaks,

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www.grissiniristoranteitaliano.com

creamy polenta, and a build-your-own salad with options like organic greens, niçoise olives, roasted butternut squash, English cucumber, Point Reyes blue cheese, smoked salmon, focaccia croutons, and spiced hazelnuts. At brunch, the hollandaise is tangy and the house-made lemon curd is irresistible. Tuesday night is grilled cheese and jazz night. Look for purveyor dinners and murder mystery theatre nights.

SPARK WOODFIRE GRILL
1555 Simi Town Center Way
Simi Valley, 805-823-4756
sparkredfish.com
Seafood
Entrées \$14–\$28
Live Music

Value is the unexpected pleasure at this good-looking grill in the Simi Town Center. The open floor plan lets you scan the whole room as well as the kitchen for interesting action. At lunch, one page of the menu is devoted to 10 items under \$10, and they're all high-quality. The pub burger is thick and flavorful; the fish-and-chips moist on the inside and crispy where it counts. At dinner the prime pepper-crusted sirloin steak is only \$14. The smashed new potatoes are creamy and laced with butter and chives. In the lounge (and sometimes on the patio) live music plays Wednesday through Saturday nights. You might hear classic rock, jazz, or blues while noshing on addictive fried artichoke hearts, crispy hot chicken wings, or zingy baby back ribs.

SUZANNE'S CUISINE
502 W. Ojai Ave.
Ojai, 805-640-1961
suzannescuisine.com
Cal-Med
Entrées \$15–\$28
Romantic

Travelers to Ojai make Suzanne's a part of their itinerary so they can explore what she's up to in any given season. Relying heavily on the produce around her, Suzanne Roll turns out lunch and dinner dishes that are interesting and handcrafted. Breads for the sandwiches are made by a local bakery; soups change daily. You might see a rainbow trout grilled with rosemary and lemon or a stuffed Cornish game hen with an apricot-marsala sauce. The atmosphere is casual with seats on the back patio next to the garden and a most pleasant gurgling fountain and outdoor fireplace. For cooler weather, there's also an enclosed patio. Note: The restaurant is closed on Tuesdays.

**TIERRA SUR RESTAURANT
AT HERZOG WINE CELLARS**
3201 Camino Del Sol
Oxnard, 805-983-1560
herzogwinecellars.com
Kosher Californian
Entrées \$25–\$44

Kosher food is complex and flavorful here at this restaurant inside Herzog Winery. Chef Todd Aarons employs local ingredients for his seasonal dishes. You might see butternut squash soup with lemon oil, ahi tuna carpaccio with an avocado gelato, or a spicy venison and bison sausage with a potato croquette. Desserts include a flourless Mexican chocolate cake with caramel frozen custard and an orange-almond flan. Aarons puts together three-course menus paired with wines for easy ordering. Reservations are required on Sundays. On Fridays, only lunch is served. The restaurant is closed on Saturdays in observance of the Sabbath.

TRATTORIA FARFALLA
160 Promenade Way
Westlake Village, 805-497-2283
farfallawestlakevillage.com
Italian
Entrées \$10–\$20
Romantic

The warm and sexy environs here make this a superb spot for a date. The lighting is flattering at the high pub tables in the lounge, at the brown leather booths running the length of the restaurant along the open kitchen, and on the

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tented patio. The cooking from chef-owner Santino Coccia is good enough to swoon over. Any selection from the fresh Mozzarella Bar will be wonderful. Add some prosciutto to the cheese selection to create a light meal. The mushroom risotto is scooped out of a giant wheel of Parmesan onto your plate. Flavorful skirt steak comes as a main course or on the Piemontese salad. The popular dessert, Torta della Nonna (grandmother's cake), is a warm and sweet ricotta cake with lemon zest and pine nuts.

TUSCANY IL RISTORANTE

968 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-495-2768
Italian
Entrées \$18-\$32

Romantic

Village dwellers pack this beautiful space for its warm, friendly service and top-notch food. The menu is small, but the nightly specials are worth investigating. High rollers and celebs consider this their neighborhood boîte. Others come just for special occasions. The lobster and shrimp martini salad has hearts of palm, avocado, and pink grapefruit segments; the baby greens salad has shaved fennel and toasted pine nuts; the whole Dover sole is topped with a lemon-chervil sauce; and the chicken breast comes under a sun-dried tomato pesto.

VINEYARD HOUSE

3631 Sagunto St.
Santa Ynez, 805-688-2886
thevineyardhouse.com
Eclectic

Entrées \$11-\$28

Sunday Brunch, Kid-Friendly

The large, wooden, wraparound deck allows diners to gaze upon the rolling hills of Santa Ynez Valley—whether enjoying the fruits of its vines or teetotaling with the Bleeding Heart spritzer (ginger ale, grape juice, and lime). A wide range of cuisine styles share the menu space. Sandwiches are filled with pesto chicken, Virginia pulled pork, or the catch of the day with wasabi mayonnaise. Burgers, pizzas, and pastas compete for your attention with the spicy venison chili verde with tomatillos and green chiles. The crispy chicken salad and the crab cake spinach salad are also crowd pleasers. At night, choose from a 12-ounce rib eye, rack of lamb, chicken “three ways,” or butternut squash ravioli (among other things). Sweet endings include a warm, chewy, chocolate-walnut brownie topped with McConnell’s vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce.

WATERMARK

598 Main St.
Ventura, 805-643-6800
watermarkonmain.com
New American
Entrées \$23-\$45

Romantic

Gorgeous Art Deco surroundings make for a “swellegant” evening at this posh downtown Ventura landmark. Large tables and oversized booths plus friendly service keep the atmosphere comfortable and inviting, not stuffy or snooty. Drag out the vintage duds and you’ll enjoy the evening even more. The menu isn’t inexpensive but the cuts of meat are excellent, especially the 18-ounce bone-in rib eye and the herb-crusted rack of lamb with mint hollandaise. Most of the items are rich, like the braised short ribs, lobster potpie, and ono drizzled with green curry coconut sauce—so go easy on the appetizers. The Watermark Signature Salad is a refreshing start that won’t fill you up. Taking dessert and after-dinner drinks up on the third-floor lounge allows you to cap the night by soaking up the views of downtown Ventura and the ocean.

ZIN BISTRO AMERICANA

32131 Lindero Canyon Road
Westlake Village, 818-865-0095
zinbistroamericana.com

American
Entrées \$15-\$35

Great View, Romantic

Right on the lake in Westlake Village, Zin takes advantage of the gorgeous view with floor-to-ceiling windows that double as doors; the small patio is cozy with a fire pit. The tables inside without a water view let you focus on your date in the romantic booths. Executive Chef Roberto Leyva (also of FINS and Moz Buddha Lounge) turns out comfort food like chicken-fried lobster, braised short ribs, an Angus beef hamburger, and the cioppino from FINS. Lots of little starters like fried oysters and cheese fondue make tasting different wines easy.

FOODIE

Restaurants whose cuisine shines—regardless of decor, service, ambience, or even views—to make food lovers swoon time and time again.

BROOKS

545 E. Thompson Blvd.
Ventura, 805-652-7070
restaurantbrooks.com
New American

Entrées \$17–\$28

Part of the upscale dining scene in downtown Ventura, Brooks has a classy vibe without being too fancy. Chef-owner Andy Brooks gets lots of inspiration for his seasonal menu from local farmers. You can depend on seeing plenty of seafood including some form of oysters coated in cornmeal and fried just until crispy on the outside. There's usually a flavorful cut of steak or two. Desserts are fun, including parfaits, chocolate pound cake, crème brûlée, and cinnamon roll bread pudding. Bottles on the deep wine list go for half-price on Wednesdays. Every night Andy offers a three-course menu for a bargain price of around \$35, and his signature five-course menu (for the entire table) for around \$60 (\$90 with wine pairings).

CAFÉ 14

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

Eclectic

Entrées \$24–\$34

Chefs and co-owners Neil Kramer and Claudine Bernard turn out very nice eclectic cuisine in this small space, tucked in the corner of the Reyes Adobe Plaza. The patio feels a bit more expansive than the main dining room if you like a little elbow room around your table. The menu changes frequently but you'll always be treated to a mélange of flavors and styles from around the world. A steak au poivre might be listed next to short ribs in hoisin sauce with sticky rice; or seasonal fish might vie for your attention with a bouillabaisse or Parisian chicken fricasse. Desserts tend toward hearty American crumbles and dense flourless cakes with ice creams made daily. The full bar mixes cocktails with fresh fruits and herbs. Café 14 is open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday nights.

DOWNEY'S

1305 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-966-5006
downeyssb.com

Cal-French

Entrées \$29–\$37

Romantic

Chef and owner John Downey sources ingredients like meat, seafood, and organic vegetables locally and prepares them in imaginative, but not overwrought, ways. His wife Liz runs the front of the house, which is dotted with her own paintings of local scenes. The menu, which changes daily, might include a porcini soup with crème fraîche and chives; squab salad with a garlic-mustard dressing; or a boneless veal chop with chanterelles, marjoram, and fettuccine with spinach.

THE HUNGRY CAT

1134 Chapala St.
Santa Barbara, 805-884-4701
thehungrycat.com

Seafood

Entrées \$16–28



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www.tire-man.com

805 DINING GUIDE

A tiny raw bar and seafood house that specializes in New England-style food and cocktails, this Santa Barbara twin of the Hollywood original celebrates the purity of oysters, clams, lobster, Santa Barbara spot prawns, and fresh vegetables. Preparations from chef and owner David Lentz are sometimes simple, sometimes complex, but always spot-on delicious. The Maine lobster roll is smeared with a Meyer-lemon aioli instead of standard mayo. Baltimore crab cakes sit on frisée with pancetta and a coddled quail egg. The space is small and reservations aren't taken, so some waiting may be involved, but an East Coast cocktail with muddled fruit ought to take the edge off. Open for dinner nightly.

LOOK KANDA SUSHI

3637 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-230-0101
kandasushito.com

Japanese
Sushi \$5–\$18; Small plates \$4–\$14

Serene and beautiful with comfy white leather chairs, this Japanese restaurant is perfect for a date. The small plates and sushi rolls are high-quality and delicious. Service at the tables from kimono-clad girls is very sweet. Note: If you sit at the sushi bar, be prepared to follow proper sushi etiquette.

LEILA'S RESTAURANT & WINE BAR

752 Lindero Canyon Road
Oak Park, 818-707-6939
leilasrestaurant.com

Cal-Eclectic
Entrées \$15–\$30

An exhibition kitchen dominates this little but lovely space so diners can watch chef Richard De Mane turn out his Peking duck confit pancake, port-roasted pear salad, and Moroccan spiced salmon. There's also a communal table up front for more social dining. The adjoining wine bar and patio expand the space nicely for comfortable dining everywhere.

MARCELLO RISTORANTE

140 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, 805-371-4367
marcelloristorante.com

Italian
Entrées \$13–\$29

Whether you're at a table inside or out on the front patio, the service here is snappy and professional. Owner and chef Tino Di Marcello doesn't speak much English (only Italian and Spanish) but what he lacks in words he gives to his customers in flavor. The specials are always interesting and he's not afraid to put salt cod or tripe on the regular menu. The olive oil is first-rate and many of the pasta shapes are handmade. The *cappellacci* sheets, folded around ricotta and spinach then splashed with a tomato-cream sauce, are wonderful. For dessert, don't miss the chocolate crème brûlée with a hint of lemon. The wine list is long with plenty of pinot noir, chianti, and a few barbaresco choices, not to mention a nice assortment of pinot grigio (and friends).

OLIO E LIMONE

17 W. Victoria St.
Santa Barbara, 805-899-2699
olioelimone.com

Sicilian
Entrées \$16–\$34

Romantic
Husband and wife Alberto and Elaine Morello treat this gem of a restaurant like a precious stone. No ingredient is too good to employ. The olive oil (from a family grove in Sicily) is so fantastic, people take home bottles of the stuff. Chef Alberto's salads are fresh, his pastas are handmade, and his sauces are excellent. If you do veer from the pasta or risotto (which is hard to do), you won't be disappointed with the fresh fish or tender veal. There's also fantastic roasted chicken or rib-eye steak at dinner. Lunch has a nice range of salads, pastas, and a couple of panini sandwiches. Cocktails and spirits now accompany the award-winning wine list, too.

ROOT 246

420 Alisal Road
Solvang, 805-686-8681
root-246.com

New American
Entrées \$14–\$35

Romantic, Sunday Brunch

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians tapped celebrity chef Bradley Ogden to create this temple to New American dining in downtown Solvang. The decor is modern and whimsical with oversized armchairs in one of the bar areas, lounge furniture on the outdoor patio, flat-screen televisions in a subdued interior lounge, a mixture of sleek booths and tables in the main dining room, and a glass-walled chef's table adjoining the huge kitchen. Executive chef Jonny Hall collaborates with Ogden on the seasonal menu, which changes ever so slightly each day. Fresh vegetables are the stars of the show here, along with artisanal cheeses and sustainably raised meats. The New American creations aren't exotic, but they do bring together familiar tastes in new ways. For example, a Maytag blue cheese soufflé is paired with Bing cherries while ahi tuna gets a companion five-bean salad, olive tapenade, and a quail egg on the plate. Everything from the small collection of breads that hit the table at the start of the meal to the diminutive desserts is top-notch. The entire menu is available in all of the different seating areas. The collection of wines is impressive, with 90 percent coming from California. Every Wednesday night a different local vintner plays guest sommelier. Root 246 is open for dinner nightly, for lunch on Saturday, and for brunch on Sunday.

SADDLE PEAK LODGE

419 Cold Canyon Road
Calabasas, 818-222-3888
saddlepeaklodge.com

New American
Entrées \$37–\$47, Tasting Menus \$80–\$200

Romantic, Sunday Brunch

Step through the wooden doors into another world where the elk is delicious and buffalo heads serve as decoration. You'll feel like a 19th-century gourmand dining on a game reserve in Alaska or Africa. Chef Adam Horton creates wonderful seasonal tasting menus with either four or seven courses using produce from the farmers' market and the best game from all over the world. That elk tenderloin grown in New Zealand benefits immensely from the accompaniment of *griottines* (morello cherries macerated in a French liqueur). A warm lobster salad includes matchsticks of green papaya and leaves of sweet basil. At brunch a duck confit hash is plated between a fried egg and rye toast. The wine list has increased dramatically so be sure to ask for suggestions.

SLY'S

686 Linden Ave.
Carpinteria, 805-684-6666
slysonline.com

American
Entrées \$12–\$55

Saturday & Sunday Brunch

Sort of casual, sort of stylish, this Carpinteria gem is a must-visit. With its Vespa hanging over the bar, glass-wall wine room, and polished wood accents, it's great for formal occasions. But the service is super-friendly and most of the patrons are comfortably dressed, so there's nothing stuffy about an evening here, either. Chef and owner James Sly has been cooking for more than 40 years, and his cuisine tastes like it. You really can't go wrong with anything on this American menu of steaks and seafood, but the abalone is a real treat. Unlike most chophouses, Sly's offers a list of pastas as well as sandwiches and small cuts of steak for those who don't have a huge appetite. Desserts are wonderful, too. Sly's is open for lunch Monday through Friday, dinner nightly, and lunch and brunch on Saturday and Sunday.

NEW WINE CASK

813 Anacapa St.
Santa Barbara, 805-966-9463
winecask.com
Wine Country
Entrées \$19-\$32
Romantic

Minimal decor enhances the attention paid to the food on the plate and the wine in the glass. Proprietors Doug Margerum and Mitchell Sjerven have so much experience serving wine and food to Santa Barbarans, they typically know just what their clientele wants. Chef David Sundeen crafts a seasonal menu of wonderful treats using wild fish, farmers' market produce, and meats like quail, lamb, and beef. Open only for dinner, it's Santa Barbara's signature restaurant and next-door wine shop (called The Alliance).

A GOOD BET

Not too fancy, not too expensive, and a good experience all around—these are the qualities you'll find at the restaurants in this section.

BELLA TERRAZA RESTAURANT AT THE HYATT WESTLAKE PLAZA

880 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-557-4710
hyattwestlakeplaza.com
Californian
Entrées \$10-\$28
Kid-Friendly

Open for breakfast and lunch daily, this airy, classy space is great for meeting friends or conducting a business conversation. Try to get a table near the windows or on the patio for a view of the green lawn and waterfall. Breakfast items include smoothies, steel-cut oatmeal with roasted fruits, and the California Benedict with artichokes, avocado, and roasted red pepper. At lunch, a roasted tomato soup comes with crème fraîche and croutons. The Cobb salad gets a light lemon-Dijon dressing. The pressed turkey panini is topped with smoked Gouda and pepperoncini. The half-sandwich, half-salad lunch deal is a steal at \$10.

BODEE'S

3304 Maricopa Highway
Ojai, 805-646-5300
bodees.net
Californian
Entrées \$18-\$34

This small indoor dining room with its dark wood and low-beamed ceiling has been around since the late 1940s; the sprawling patio area with its sculpted stream and waterfall was revamped in 2005. Tables are set up on terraces under trees and a large canopy. In the winter months, a huge stone fireplace keeps everyone warm. The peaceful environs go together with relaxed service, so meals can take a while. Chef Myk Aviles turns out seasonal Cal cuisine like lollipop lamb chops with cherry mint sauce in the spring or spinach salad with strawberries in the summer. Main dinner courses tend toward the exotic: Aviles stuffs chicken with spinach and sun-dried tomato pesto, then wraps it in prosciutto and serves it over a Gorgonzola-basil risotto. Filet mignon gets wrapped in pepper bacon and topped with a crab butter. Just off the main drag of Ojai, it's a quiet place to while away an evening or weekend.

BRENT'S DELI

2799 Townsgate Road
Westlake Village, 805-557-1882
brentsdeli.com
Deli
Entrées \$6-\$20
Kid-Friendly

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

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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 FIRENZE

563 W. Los Angeles Ave.
Moorpark, 805-532-0048
cafefirenze.net

Italian
Entrées \$15–\$39

Romantic, Live Music

Dramatically high ceilings and beautiful chandeliers make this an elegant spot for dinner. Seating is broken up into many different spaces, like the bustling bar area, a main dining room with a long family table, a quieter wine room, and the pretty back patio with a gurgling fountain. Classic Italian dishes rule the menu: There are wonderful pastas, pizza, antipasti, and salads. If that's not enough, check out the main courses like a dry-aged rib eye, chicken marsala, and lamb shanks.

CHOLADA THAI CUISINE

1282 Newbury Road
Newbury Park, 805-498-7801
choladathaicuisine.com

Thai
Entrées \$9–\$17

Kid-Friendly

The Malibu location has been a well-kept secret for years. The second location, in Newbury Park, is equally unassuming; the attention goes into the food. Thick juicy chicken strips are grilled on skewers and served with very tasty peanut sauce and cucumber relish as the satay appetizer. The fried spring rolls are sliced and given a fancy presentation. You can find curries and steamed fish dishes here alongside unusual offerings like roasted duck salad and fried rice with pumpkin and Chinese broccoli. Most entrée prices are around \$10. Beer, wine, and soju cocktails are available.

NEW CIGALE CAFÉ

702 Lindero Canyon Road
Oak Park, 818-991-2442
cigalecafe.com

Cal-French
Entrées \$14–\$32

Chef and owner Denis Rion named his café after a cicada, the symbol of hospitality in southern France. He creates some classic French dishes like onion soup, steamed mussels, frog legs, and *boeuf bourguignon* for dinner, but he also offers some Mediterranean and Californian fare. At lunch a wide range of salads is on offer including one with the grain quinoa and some grilled veggies. There's also paella, pasta dishes, and a bouillabaisse for both lunch and dinner. The surroundings are great for a business meeting.

THE COUNTER

30990 Russell Ranch Road
Westlake Village, 818-889-0080
thecounterburger.com

American
Entrées \$7–\$14

Kid-Friendly

It's mod and hip at this burger bar, where you can build your own creation for lunch or dinner. Start with a menu on a clipboard and begin checking off preferences for your patty, cheese, toppings, sauce, and bun. It's a control freak's dream. Those who want a little less decision-making in their life can simply opt for one of the signature burgers (the Old School is quite good). The fried pickle chips are way too tasty, as are the milkshakes.

C-STREET RESTAURANT

450 E. Harbor Blvd.
Ventura, 805-652-5151
cpventura.com/dining.html

Californian
Entrées \$15–\$45
Kid-Friendly

If you sit close to the windows of this dining room in the Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach hotel, you can just make out the surfers riding the waves here where the ocean meets California Street. Chef Nic Manocchio honors the sea and its bounty along with the local farmers in his seasonal cooking. The fish tacos taste as fresh as Baja. The lobster—in a club sandwich layered with flatbread and bacon at lunchtime or simply served with drawn butter and asparagus at dinner—is perfectly cooked. Entrée salads are ferried out in huge bowls, and any salad can also be made into a wrap using a spinach tortilla (a nice option) upon request. At dinner, salmon is planked on cedar wood and topped with a balsamic reduction. Lamb chops get a pistachio crust and cherry compote. Desserts are presented to you on a tray for optimum choosing conditions.

DARBAND GRILL

868 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-449-1323
and 19337 Ventura Blvd.
Tarzana, 818-654-9918

Middle Eastern
Entrées \$10–\$19

Live Music

Both locations of this Persian eatery have a slightly lush look thanks to nice fabrics. The service is quick and the patrons are usually large families or groups of friends having a nice time together. If you like crispy rice, the *tadig* won't disappoint. Plenty of delicious soups and stews are made daily, sounding more exotic than they taste—don't be afraid to try them. The kabobs are more straightforward, threaded with fish, chicken, beef, or lamb and set on a bed of basmati rice. Turkish coffee and baklava make a nice finish to a large meal. Look for guitarists and singers on weekends and belly dancers on Friday nights.

ELADIO'S

1 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-963-4466
harborviewinnsb.com

Italian
Entrées \$10–\$20

Great View, Sunday Brunch

The outdoor patio here is wonderful for people-watching since the restaurant is at the beginning of State Street near the beach. Since it's on the ground floor of the Harbor View Inn, a lot of tourists congregate here, but locals love it, especially for breakfast. Sunday brunch offers brioche French toast filled with mascarpone cheese; eggs Florentine over English muffins; and smoked salmon and red onion scrambled with eggs and crème fraîche.

FEAST BISTRO

254 E. Ojai Ave.
Ojai, 805-640-9260
feastofojai.com

New American
Entrées \$12–\$20

Romantic

This small bistro in Ojai's arcade has a long open kitchen near the front with counter seating. At it, patrons can partake of espresso and pastries, taste wine or beer, and eat a full lunch or dinner. Tables scattered inside and out back on the patio provide more seating options. Chef and owner Susan Coulter turns out seasonal New American eats like crispy oysters on polenta cakes, shrimp Louis salad, five-spice duck, and flat-iron steak with mission fig butter. At lunch there's an organic beef burger, a frittata of the day, and an oyster po'boy. Check the website for occasional winemaker dinners.

GINO'S BISTRO

1620 Newbury Road
Newbury Park, 805-498-3188
ginosbistro.net

Italian
Entrées \$13–\$29

Kid-Friendly

Gino DeFelice and his family run this friendly *cucina*. No salt is added to any dish and many options are quite heart-healthy. The pastas are plated in large portions,

enough to serve as main courses. The lasagna Bolognese is rich, meaty, and filling. Meat dishes are made from high quality veal, lamb, beef, and chicken. The veal à la Gino is pounded, breaded, pan-fried, and layered with eggplant, tomato, and cheese. (A nice twist on the usual veal Milanese or Parmigiano, which he also serves). For dessert, the cannoli gets a dash of banana liqueur for that extra zing. Gino's bistro is open for lunch Monday through Friday and for dinner nightly. Happy hour runs from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

KING'S FISH HOUSE

4798 Commons Way
Calabasas, 818-225-1979

Seafood

Entrées \$10–\$39

(and up to \$72 for a 3-pound lobster)

Kid-Friendly

Huge dining room, large menu, well-executed. Part of the King's Seafood Company (Water Grill, I Cugini), so the fish is always fresh. The menu is printed daily; expect the best picks to be sold out by the end of the evening. The fried oysters and the clam chowder are reliable favorites. This place is big enough to handle energetic kids and good enough to satisfy adult tastes.

KUMO SUSHI

860 Hampshire Road
Westlake Village, 805-494-5250

Japanese

Entrées \$13–\$26; Sushi \$3–\$13 per roll

Kid-Friendly

Set downstairs in the Water Court office building, this somewhat secluded sushi bar has a loyal following. Most diners just eye the specials board hoping for live scallop, Japanese snapper, or mackerel, but plenty of options can be found on the printed menu. The owners like to emphasize healthful eating, so any dish with rice can be served with brown rice. Alternately, rolls can be made riceless and wrapped in thin sheets of cucumber for a carb-free experience. Tofu salad and grilled sea bass will also satisfy health-conscious eaters. Full bar with Japanese beer and sake. Open for lunch Tuesday through Friday, dinner Tuesday through Sunday.

THE LANDING GRILL AND SUSHI BAR

32123 W. Lindero Canyon Road
Westlake Village, 818-706-8887

thelandinggrill.com

Californian/Sushi

Entrées \$8–\$21; Sushi \$3–\$11 per roll

Great View, Kid-Friendly

The buzzword for The Landing is "flexibility." There's a sushi bar, tables inside for those who prefer milder temperatures, tables outside with great views of the lake, grassy areas for kids to run around on, and a menu so diverse that no one can complain. Choose from sushi, sashimi, Japanese bento boxes, seafood chowder, seared albacore, Greek salad, a burger with bacon and avocado, pasta dishes, or stir-fries. It's all there and all well-executed.

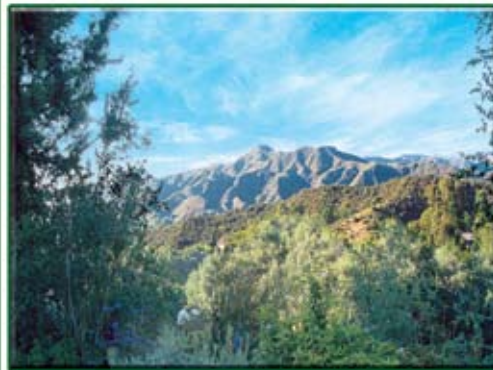
MARMALADE CAFE

4783 Commons Way
Calabasas, 818-225-9092
and 3894 Cross Creek Road
Malibu, 310-317-4242
and 3825 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-682-5246
and 140 Promenade Way
Westlake Village, 805-370-1331
marmaladecafe.com

American

Entrées \$8–\$24

If you like Country French decor, this is a cozy lunch spot and a perfect wedding- or baby-shower location. Breakfast and lunch are more popular than dinner due to the great sandwiches like the Reuben, turkey with cranberry sauce, and New York steak on garlic bread. Portions are big enough for two, so don't be afraid to doggy bag it or order the half-portion of the many pasta dishes.



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MI PIACE ITALIAN KITCHEN

4799 Commons Way
Calabasas, 818-591-8822

Italian
Entrées \$8–\$20
Sunday Brunch, Kid-Friendly

We love the pumpkin ravioli in the butter and sage sauce and all of the freshly baked breads. There's also a great chicken piccata and shrimp scampi. Baked goods and sweets are displayed in a glass counter that beckons you as you walk by it to your table. Smart.

MY FLORIST CAFÉ & BAKERY

76 S. Oak St.
Ventura, 805-653-0003

myfloristcafe.com
American
Entrées \$10–\$14

Live Music

The name of this chain is confusing, but it harkens back to the Phoenix location that opened in a historic building originally housing a florist. Here in Ventura there aren't any flowers for sale but there are freshly baked breads and pastries (not on display—only on the menu). The menu is casual with breakfast dishes like baked oatmeal or two poached eggs on ciabatta (available from 8 to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday and until noon on the weekends). The delicious pastries sell out fast. The lunch/dinner menu is served from 11 a.m. to midnight daily. It features an assortment of fresh and large salads like the Caprese with pesto dressing and roasted garlic cloves or The Asparagus with its namesake plus feta cheese and artichoke hearts. Each salad gets its own two slices of toasted bread so carbaholics don't have to be jealous of the sandwiches. On Saturday nights, take advantage of the full bar and live piano music while snacking on a cheese plate or mini tuna melt.

THE NATURAL CAFE

508 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-962-9494
and 361 Hitchcock Way
Santa Barbara, 805-563-1163
and 968-12 Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-449-0099
and 840 New Los Angeles Ave.
Moorpark, 805-523-2016
and 1714 Newbury Road
Newbury Park, 805-498-0493
thenaturalcafe.com

Healthy
Entrées \$5–\$9
Kid-Friendly

The Santa Barbara State Street location launched all the others. Lots of vegetarian and vegan options make this a magnet for the health-conscious. The same casual menu is available for lunch or dinner with extremely reasonable prices. At night there are soup, pasta, and fish specials. Fresh vegetables abound in the Buddha Burrito wrapped in a whole-wheat chapati. The Zen Burger is a Gardenburger done right. The Ranch Salad is a favorite with grilled chicken breast over baby greens with carrot, jicama, and feta cheese.

PIERRE LAFOND WINE BISTRO

516 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-962-1455
pierrelafond.com

Californian
Entrées \$13–\$21

A modernist setting in downtown Santa Barbara with plate-glass windows and exposed ductwork displays bottles from the Lafond Winery in refrigerated cases and on racks. Tourists and locals pop in with their kids for breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. The bistro menu from chef Nathan Heil offers classics like French onion soup, a Kobe beef burger, a half-roasted chicken with crispy fingerling potatoes, and a hanger steak with spoon bread. An artisan cheese plate is available all day with selections changing regularly.

POOKIE'S THAI CUISINE

900 Hampshire Road
Westlake Village, 805-381-0094

Thai
Entrées \$7–\$13
Kid-Friendly

Downstairs in the Water Court Plaza office complex, owner Pookie creates delicious Thai dishes for lunch and dinner daily. Lunch specials are a steal at \$7 to \$8 each. She also has a wide selection of interesting salads like the Outrageous Beef Salad with a spicy lime dressing and the protein-rich Yam Yai salad with shrimp, chicken, egg, and peanuts in a sweet-and-sour dressing. Noodle dishes are generously sized and include the classic pad thai and the interesting Hi Yo Silver with fried noodles, shrimp, and bean sprouts. Curries, vegetarian options, and fish dishes (such as the crispy sole with tamarind and chili sauce) give diners lots of great choices not found elsewhere.

THE RANCH CATERING

30843 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, 818-575-9033

theranchwestlake.com
American
Entrées \$4–\$10

Kid-Friendly

A catering company decided to create a small dining room for its biggest fans, who wanted to be able to chow down on amazing sandwiches at lunchtime. This is the result. A few pub tables provide seating. Order at the counter and the staff will bring out your sandwich or burger in a foil carrying case. The buns are a kind of brioche with mondo caps that look silly but taste fabulous. You'll need a fork to get through the Philly with cheese spread. It's juicy with tender meat inside. The staff recommends trying the whole-wheat bun on the chicken salad sandwiches. Sides, like the pasta salad, are quite tasty. So are the homemade sweets. The Ranch is open daily for lunch and early dinners.

STELLA'S RESTAURANT

2385 Michael Drive
Newbury Park, 805-498-0989

American
Entrées \$10–\$21
Kid-Friendly

Stella Scholle has been charming her customers for more than 25 years with eggs with creamed spinach and artichokes over an English muffin, stacks of pancakes, and omelettes. Since breakfast is her most popular meal, she offers it seven days a week, from opening to closing. At lunch, the burgers are named after stars, the sandwich selections are extensive, and the salads move fast. Try stopping in for dinner—served Tuesday through Saturday—when it's less crowded. Look for specials like clam chowder, reasonably priced steaks, chicken with chardonnay-cream sauce, and the amazing apple pie.

THE SUNSET RESTAURANT

6800 Westward Beach Road
Malibu, 310-589-1007

thesunsetrestaurant.com
American Bistro
Entrées \$13–\$20

Great View, Saturday & Sunday Brunch

Sitting on the sands of Zuma Beach, this casual bistro feeds much of Malibu. Start with fresh oysters, shrimp cocktail, bruschetta, baked flatbreads, a cheese plate, or salads made with farm-fresh greens. Main courses run from fish tacos with spicy aioli and Napa cabbage slaw to baked trout with an heirloom tomato, olive, and cucumber *tzatziki* to seasonal specials with fresh ingredients. There's also grilled hanger steak, a chicken BLT, and a burger with caramelized onions that can be customized with bacon and/or aged cheddar cheese. Live music plays in the bar area Tuesday through Friday nights. The upstairs rooms can be booked for private events.

SUSHI AGOURA

5015 Cornell Road
Agoura Hills, 818-991-0245

Japanese
Entrées \$11–\$14

Unusual ingredients like soft-shell crab, lobster, quail eggs, and giant clams (when in season) in their sushi rolls keep diners devoted to this intimate space with an army of sushi chefs. Easy-to-order dinner combinations and reasonable prices also put this spot on the top of most lists.

TERRI'S CAFÉ

30135 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-707-1934

American-Italian
Entrées \$8–\$15

Huge café lattes, addictive lemon-ricotta pancakes, and delicious eggs Benedict over crab cakes draw fans of breakfast (served until 3 p.m.) to this charming spot. Tables on the patio outside or inside the cheery dining room have equally friendly service. Lunch, also served daily, offers plenty of salads (like tuna), sandwiches (turkey), and wraps (chopped barbecued chicken). Chili, tortilla soup, and a soup of the day can stand on their own or come alongside sandwiches and salads. Dinner, with entrées like meatloaf and grilled vegetable pasta, is served Thursday through Saturday nights.

TRA DI NOI

Malibu Country Mart
3835 Cross Creek Road

Malibu, 310-456-0169
Italian
Entrées \$12–\$29

The patio is the draw in good weather (warm or cold) for this great people-watching scene packed with Malibu locals, which means low-key millionaires, power players, celebrities, and good-looking soccer moms. They're all chowing down on the thin-crust pizzas and creative salads. Try prosciutto and cantaloupe over arugula for an appetizer or add grilled skirt steak to the spinach salad with figs and dates for a healthy main course. Pastas, fish, veal, and chicken complete the menu.

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SAFIRE

4850 Santa Rosa Road
Camarillo, 805-389-1227

safirebistro.com
New American
Entrées \$12–\$40
Romantic

A New American menu by chef and co-owner Michael Muirhead (who worked under chef Lee Hefter at Spago) includes wood-fired pizzas, short ribs with mascarpone polenta, scallops in a red Thai curry sauce, double-cut pork chops with a green-apple slaw, and a roasted Tuscan *branzino*. The classy setting matches the quality of the food, which should bring a smile to Camarillo residents looking for more fine-dining options in their neck of the woods. A glass-walled wine cellar holds a table for eight. Safire is open for lunch and dinner daily.

TUTTI'S OFF MAIN

34 N. Palm St.
Ventura, 805-643-0880
tuttisoffmain.com
Mediterranean
Entrées \$13-\$33

Kid-Friendly, Saturday & Sunday Brunch

About a half-block off of Main Street in downtown Ventura, this bustling restaurant has a courtyard covered with a vine-laced pergola. The eats are solid, if a bit on the mild side. Pizzas are blistered in a wood-burning oven, which makes for a chewy crust. The mushroom pizza is topped by cremini, shiitake, and portobello 'shrooms plus Gorgonzola cheese, then drizzled with balsamic vinegar. At lunch, salads and sandwiches (open-faced or deli-style) both get plated with crunchy house-made potato chips. At dinner, large plates offer seafood choices (cioppino, grilled ahi tuna), pasta (penne with mushrooms and asparagus, capellini with shrimp and tomatoes), and meat (pork chop with whipped sweet potatoes, grilled rib-eye steak, braised lamb shank). A full bar offers plenty of local wines.

VIVOLI CAFÉ & TRATTORIA

3825 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-373-6060
vivolicafe.com

Italian
Entrées \$10-\$24

Kid-Friendly

A cute, casual little spot for lunch and dinner any day of the week, Vivoli Café makes its own pastas, daily breads from scratch, and desserts (tiramisu, cannoli). The healthy salads (19 of them for lunch, seven for dinner) made with low-fat dressings and grilled fish are hugely popular. Pastas like the spaghetti in a veal and mushroom sauce can be ordered as appetizer or half-portion at lunch. The main meat dishes are plentiful, ranging from chicken breast with artichoke hearts and white wine to pork medallions in a strawberry-balsamic vinegar sauce to veal parmigiana. The small area off of the bar is great for private parties or business gatherings. Look for live entertainment on the weekends in the future.

THE WHALE'S TAIL

3950 Bluefin Circle
Oxnard, 805-985-2511
thewhalestail.com
Seafood

Entrées \$10-\$43

Great View, Sunday Brunch

Set in the Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard, this wooden seafooder affords fantastic views of the harbor with its boats and surrounding mountains. Sit in the Shellfish Bar upstairs for drinks and live entertainment (although in the afternoons it's a quiet spot to watch the water). The main dining room downstairs also has great views, so don't fret over where to sit. The bar mixes up martinis, mojitos, and mai tais. Lunch and dinner is served daily; brunch on Sunday. The owners are dedicated to natural foods, buying organic when possible, and only using sustainably raised or wild-caught fish. The menu lists the origin of each fish whether it swam in local waters (swordfish, red snapper, halibut), Alaskan waters (cod), or Scottish seas (salmon). Lunch has lots of sandwich and salad options while dinner has more pasta and steak choices.

WILLY'S SMOKEHOUSE

28434 Roadside Drive
Agoura Hills, 818-991-7227
Barbecue

Entrées \$9-\$24

Kid-Friendly

The meat is smoked for hours and hours over hardwoods using a formula from a former USO chef named Willy, who served this authentic 'cue to Bob Hope, among others. The pulled pork is very popular, but the tri-tip is great, too, as are the baby back ribs. If you want to venture outside the world of barbecue, you could opt for the prime rib, Atlantic salmon fillet, ahi-tuna-topped salad, shrimp scampi, or New York strip steak.

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WOLFGANG PUCK L.A. BISTRO

30990 Russell Ranch Road West
Westlake Village, 818-597-1902
wolfgangpuck.com/bistro
Californian

Entrées \$9–\$15

Kid-Friendly, Sunday Brunch

This hot restaurant has delicious pizzas, focaccia sandwiches, and fresh salads that hit your table less than 10 minutes after ordering. Heartier dishes include meatloaf, rotisserie chicken, and teriyaki salmon. Some menu items change seasonally (with Puck himself vetting every dish). The look is smart and sleek with indoor dining plus two outdoor patios. Wine bottles hanging on the wall suggest good drinking options; by day there are GuS sparkling sodas. Brunch gets the addition of egg dishes and waffles. It's tasty; it's fast; it's crowded; so go at off-peak hours if possible. Curbside pickup is a handy alternative to dining in.

THE CHAIN GANG

Chain restaurants run the gamut from casual to very elegant, but the main component of any chain is consistency. You know what you're getting when you walk into a chain. There are no star chefs, but if you find the listing here, you will get good food, good service, and clean environs. We've left out those places with interminable waits and mediocre fare.

CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN

2200 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-777-1778
and in Westfield Topanga
6606 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Canoga Park, 818-884-8858
cpk.com

Cal-Italian
Entrées \$9–\$15

CPK has so much more than pizza these days. Take the sautéed salmon, for instance, which comes with asparagus and pasta in a lemon-caper sauce. Or the Thai Linguini with a spicy peanut-ginger sauce to which you can add shrimp or chicken. Even the surroundings have changed dramatically since this chain's beginnings. The Lakes location features a large dining room decorated nicely with stone walls and wine displays plus a separate bar and lounge area. You can still get huge salads like the original chopped version that helped propel this restaurant to fame. And there are definitely pizzas—more than 30 of them with interesting toppings like pear and Gorgonzola, BBQ chicken, steak and chiles, and goat cheese and roasted red peppers. A call-ahead seating list plus curbside service makes the Westfield Topanga location a bit more user-friendly.

CHAMPAGNE FRENCH BAKERY CAFÉ

180 Promenade Way
Westlake Village, 805-379-5911
champagnebakery.com
French

Entrées \$7–\$9

A quaint bakery that hearkens back to France with chalkboard menus and large mirrors, this outpost of the chain is a welcoming place. Nice sandwiches, quiches, crêpes, and salads vie for your attention with an array of delicious baked goods including croissants, madeleines, custard brioche, and crispy *palmier* cookies.

THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY

442 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, 805-371-9705
thecheesecakefactory.com

American
Entrées \$9–\$32

Kid-Friendly, Sunday Brunch

Still going strong after all these years, The Cheesecake Factory excels in offering generous portions of stylish food in a casual setting. This branch of the chain that began in 1978, set in The Oaks, has a slightly Egyptian-movie-set look. On the encyclopedic menu you'll find everything

from a Kobe hamburger to Cajun Jambalaya Pasta to orange chicken to chicken marsala. Really, there's a bit of every cuisine imaginable. Most folks come here with one dish in mind: cheesecake. Look for flavors like Godiva chocolate, Kahlua-cocoa-coffee, chocolate-chip cookie dough, lemon-raspberry cream, key lime, Oreo, low-carb cheesecake made with Splenda, or The Original cheesecake topped with fresh strawberries.

CLAIM JUMPER

2150 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-494-9656
claimjumper.com

American
Entrées \$10–\$31

Kid-Friendly

You would never know this casual dining spot with Craftsman-inspired architecture (stone walls, fireplaces) began life as a gold-miner-themed chain restaurant. There are still huge portions of ribs, steaks, and rotisserie chicken, but there are also daintier dishes like cedar plank grilled salmon, personal pizzas, and a veggie burger. The adjoining saloon celebrates happy hour (Monday to Friday, 3 to 7 p.m.) with small bites of food and deals on cocktails, craft beers, and wine. Open for lunch and dinner daily.

DAMON & PYTHIAS

4719 Commons Way
Calabasas, 818-224-1555
damonandpythias.com

American
Entrées \$8–\$13

Create your own salad or sandwich using their gourmet ingredients or choose from the regular menu, which features items like Cuban black bean soup and smoked turkey and chicken habañero sausage. A long list of salads includes Southwest Steak Salad and a spinach and bacon salad. Sandwiches can be healthy like the California Garden Sandwich. Dinners include teriyaki salmon or turkey with all the trimmings. Beer and wine help make this an upscale quick-food experience.

P.F. CHANG'S CHINA BISTRO

2250 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-277-5915
pfchangs.com

Chinese-American
Entrées \$6–\$18

Two huge Ming horses guard the entrance to this Chinese-American temple at The Lakes where you can sip up-to-date cocktails and down large portions of minced chicken in lettuce cups, double-pan-fried noodles, Cantonese roasted duck, salmon steamed with ginger, wok-seared lamb, and New York-style cheesecake or the The Great Wall of Chocolate (cake). Big round tables make gathering in groups a treat.

WOOD RANCH BBQ & GRILL

5050 Cornell Road
Agoura Hills, 818-597-8900
and 540 New Los Angeles Ave.
Moorpark, 805-523-7253

and 1101 E. Daily Drive
Camarillo, 805-482-1202

and 3449 E. Main St.
Ventura, 805-620-4500

woodranch.com
Barbecue

Entrées \$11–\$27
Kid-Friendly

Many find it worth waiting in line for the slowly roasted meats and grilled steaks at this beloved local chain. The barbecue-sauced ribs, chicken, and tri-tip are tender and flavorful. The Original BBQ Chopped Salad with black beans, crunchy tortilla strips, and ranch dressing is perfect when topped with tri-tip. The turkey sliders on the appetizer menu make a satisfying meal for a low price, especially at happy hour when the full bar offers drink specials (except in the Ventura location, which offers half-priced appetizers). They will soon add ily coffee to the dessert menu to make the end of your meal even more satisfying.

FUN, FUN, FUN

Whether they have crazy food, a festive atmosphere, or high-energy servers, these are the places to go if you're looking for a good time.

ADOBE CANTINA

29100 W. Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-991-3474
Mexican

Entrées \$9–\$17
Kid-Friendly

This wide-open cantina has all-outdoor seating for a festive atmosphere. Don't worry, there are heaters on the many patios for the winter months. Choose from 40 premium tequilas to wash down achiote pork fajitas, crab enchiladas, shrimp in a tequila-cream sauce, fish tacos, or even baby back ribs or a pulled-pork plate.

LOOALOA STEAKHOUSE

5800 Santa Rosa Road
Camarillo, 805-484-1422
and at 364 S. California St.
Ventura, 805-652-1799
alohasteakhouse.com

Steakhouse
Entrées \$20–\$50

Ten different cuts of steak are available at these two Hawaiian-themed steakhouses with laid-back servers. All the entrées come with soup or salad and a side of potatoes, rice, or veggies at dinnertime. The house salad with hearts of palm and a good vinaigrette is nice. The tables are large to accommodate the big portions. If you don't want meat, the salads can be topped with shrimp, salmon, or ahi tuna. There are plenty of fresh fish dishes, too. Early-bird specials from 4 to 5:30 p.m. will save a bundle, as will the lunch specials, some from \$10. Desserts are great fun, from bananas Foster flambéed tableside to volcanic soufflé.

AZU

457 E. Ojai Ave.
Ojai, 805-640-7987
azuojai.com

Mediterranean

Tapas \$6–\$17; Entrées \$24–\$31

A long, dark-wooden bar is the focal point of this popular lunch, dinner, and tapas spot. Happy hour stretches from 4 to 7 p.m. nightly. A long list of cold and hot tapas are offered, like olives, a cheese plate, stuffed dates, lamb kebabs, and fried calamari. Larger entrées cast a wider Mediterranean net and might include Moroccan chicken cooked in a tagine, veggie paella, or filet mignon with a cabernet reduction sauce. Eat in the lounge area or at one of the many tables inside or on the sidewalk out front. Cocktails and homemade gelato help keep everyone happy.

BANDITS' GRILL & BAR

589 N. Moorpark Road
Thousand Oaks, 805-497-7427
and 1980 Ventura Blvd.
Camarillo, 805-445-4742

banditsbbq.com
American

Entrées \$10–\$20
Kid-Friendly

Barbecue goes high-tech here, where the meat is slow-cooked in gleaming stainless steel smokers and slow cookers kept at the perfect temperature for 24 hours at a time. The decor is Frank Lloyd Wright meets the Old West and it works. The bar is hopping and so is lunch, so come early if you have limited time. The potato skins topped with ranch-style beans and cheese are a meal in themselves. Jalapeños stuffed with crab and cream cheese are a unique touch. But the real draw is the barbecue, of course. The tri-tip sandwich and the beef ribs move fast. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights go for the prime rib. The burgers and salads are satisfying lunch options.

THE BEACHCOMBER MALIBU PIER

23000 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, 310-456-9800
thebeachcombercafe.com

American

Entrées \$19-\$45

Great View, Kid-Friendly

The fantastic decor here celebrates seaside life in the 1940s when tiki bars were first trendy. Waiters deliver old-fashioned wide-mouthed bottles of purified water to set the tone. Wooden tables keep things casual. Jazz and swing music on the sound system is low enough to hear the waves crashing below. Food here, like in the forties, is decadent—rich with flavor and calories but new in style and ingredients. Clam chowder is creamy. The velvety mac and cheese has flecks of black truffle along with a touch of white truffle oil. The lobster potpie has chunks of tender seafood in a fantastic brandy sauce with a slice of crust sticking out. The s'mores dessert is brilliant: scoops of vanilla ice cream pierced with graham crackers and drenched in hardening chocolate and a torched marshmallow. It's hard not to have fun here, and a walk on the pier or the beach after a meal makes it even better.

BELLA VICTORIAN VINEYARD WINERY & BISTRO

2135 Ventura Blvd.
Camarillo, 805-383-8800
bellavictorianvineyard.com

California

Entrées \$9-\$12; Specials \$17-\$35

Part tasting room for the Bella Victorian Winery, part lingerie boutique (tastefully done), and part bistro. Chef G el Lecolley works the tiny open kitchen to create small plates like sushi and thin-crust pizzas to go with flights of wine. If you stop by at lunchtime, there are a few tables on the sidewalk out front to settle into for dishes like Chinese chicken salad and roasted leg of lamb sandwich topped with caramelized onions and feta cheese. The bistro is open Wednesday through Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Tuesday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

BOGIES NIGHTCLUB AND LOUNGE

32001 Agoura Road
Westlake Village, 818-889-2394
bogies-bar.com

American

Small plates \$8-\$15

Live Music

This mostly outdoor bar is a beautiful place to relax—what with all the surrounding greenery and water. Grab a cabana or a spot on one of the couches near the outside fireplace. Entertainment in the form of bands or DJs happens Thursday through Saturday nights. On Friday and Saturday nights there is a cover charge. Nibble on small bites of food like chicken lettuce cups, flatbread pizzas, Southern fried chicken, or a cheese plate.

BROPHY BROS. CLAM BAR & RESTAURANT

119 Harbor Way
Santa Barbara, 805-966-4418
and 1559 Spinnaker Drive
Ventura, 805-693-0865
brophybros.com

Seafood

Entrées \$10-\$21

Great View

Both locations are strategically located on harbors with wonderful views of water and sailboats. The outdoor tables are the most sought-after, but the indoor seating near the bar can be just as fun. Lacquered wood tables hold bottles of Heinz malt vinegar (a must for fish). The seafood is always fresh and simply prepared. Main courses include classics like shrimp scampi, blackened mahimahi, and seafood pasta. Daily specials might include local thresher shark marinated in olive oil and citrus juices, or local swordfish with a mango-papaya salsa. All meals come with coleslaw, clam chowder, and fries or rice. A clam bar menu has seafood nibbles that go well with beer and cocktails.

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CAFÉ FIORE RESTAURANT & MARTINI LOUNGE

66 S. California St.
Ventura, 805-653-1266
fiorerestaurant.net

Italian
Entrées \$14–\$28
Romantic, Live Music

Lively and loud, this martini bar and restaurant is beautifully decorated. A tall, dark-wood bar dominates the room in which it stands and showcases the bartenders mixing up cucumber martinis and blueberry cosmos. Booths and tables are usually crowded with friends enjoying themselves either indoors or out on the patio. The kitchen turns out many flavorful Italian dishes like pizza with pesto sauce, grilled chicken, mozzarella, and sun-dried tomatoes; or ravioli filled with lobster and braised leeks then doused in a tomato-cream sauce. A classic osso buco is served over saffron risotto, as it should be. Whole-wheat pasta makes an appearance on the spa menu, which is geared towards lighter fare. The dessert list offers plenty to smile about including a chocolate trio with molten-chocolate cake, bittersweet chocolate pot de crème, and a frozen custard with pistachios and white chocolate. Live music plays in the lounge area Tuesday through Saturday nights.

CHAR FASL

5843 Kanan Road
Agoura Hills, 818-889-9495
Persian

Entrées \$13–\$20

A handmade Persian backgammon set beckons patrons to linger over tea and a friendly game. Kabobs of filet mignon, lamb, chicken breast, or ground beef are served over heaps of fluffy basmati rice. The *tahdig* appetizer is the crispy crust of the rice from the bottom of the pan topped with your choice of stew. It's crunchy and addictive. Try the pomegranate juice; it's a great source of antioxidants. On Friday and Saturday nights there's singing and belly dancing after 8 p.m.

COSMOS GRILL

23663 Calabasas Road
Calabasas, 818-591-2211
cosmosgrill.com

Eclectic
Entrées \$10–\$20

Cozy and cute, this neighborhood café is packed on the weekends. The casual menu has lots of salads like the warm spinach chicken version, a Cobb, spicy Thai chicken, and seared ahi salad. Sandwiches run the gamut from a triple-decker club to a turkey meatball sub, to burgers, wraps, and even a po'boy made with ahi tuna. Pastas include heart-healthy options like the asparagus and mushrooms in pesto or the whole-wheat fettuccine with artichokes and sun-dried tomatoes. There's also fish-and-chips, liver and onions, and roasted rosemary chicken. Open for lunch and dinner daily.

DON CUCO MEXICAN RESTAURANT

254 W. Los Angeles Ave.
Moorpark, 805-523-2261
doncucorestaurants.com

Mexican
Entrées \$8–\$19

Kid-Friendly, Sunday Brunch

The Yucatan style of cooking prevails in this appealing Mexican restaurant with stained-glass depictions of what look like Aztec pyramids. Inside, booths are styled in tan-and-green striped fabric while lanterns and an iron candelabra hang from the ceiling. On the covered patio, wooden tables and chairs are comfortably spaced. The food enlivens your palate with zesty flavors, starting with the spicy salsa. An intense mole sauce blankets a chicken enchilada. The long bar pours plenty of tequilas and mixes large margaritas.

DUKE'S MALIBU

21150 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, 310-317-0777
dukesmalibu.com

Hawaiian/Seafood
Entrées \$17–\$30

Great View

The gorgeous ocean views are maximized in the dining rooms and bars of this large Hawaiian-themed seafood and steak house. Every staff member sports a laid-back smile and friendly demeanor. Skip the starters and go straight for the main courses. The seasonal fish choices are prepared six different ways—the Parmesan-crust version with macadamia nuts and a lemon-caper sauce rules. For dessert, the Mile-High Hula Pie is stuffed with macadamia-nut ice cream and topped with fudge. Check the website for happy-hour specials and hula dance performances on the patio.

NEW EL REY CANTINA

2302 Ventura Blvd.
Camarillo, 805-484-4433
and at 294 E. Main St.
Ventura, 805-653-1111
elreycantina.com

Mexican
Entrées \$3–\$13

This pair of tequila bars in Old Town Camarillo and downtown Ventura pays homage to The King ("El Rey" in Spanish) of rock 'n' roll: Elvis. Fun decor, complete with velvet Elvis paintings, sets the mood at these cantinas with happy bartenders and servers. The food is reasonably priced and unbelievably good. Super-fresh guacamole and chips, beer-can chicken, and baby back ribs in tomatillo sauce are some of the delights that await.

FIAMME

3731 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-497-9444
fiammerestaurant.com

Italian/American
Entrées \$12–\$26

Live Music

Red is a major accent of this restaurant, whose name means "flames" in Italian. The fire theme carries through to some of the grilled menu items, like the baby back ribs and the spicy heat of the *peperonata* sauce on the pork chops. Along with those American dishes, you'll find Italian specialties like thin-crust pizzas, pastas, veal marsala, and tiramisu. The large and attractive space, complete with its own bar/lounge area and tented patio, can handle a crowd. A small stage in the main dining room offers live music and there are plans for other forms of entertainment. If that's not enough, rides in a Simcraft racing car simulator can be had for \$5 a pop (about five laps). Fiamme is open for lunch and dinner daily with a short breakfast menu available until 4 p.m. Happy hour in the lounge runs from 4 to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOX SPORTS GRILL

30970 Russell Ranch Road
Westlake Village, 818-338-7080
foxsportsgrill.com/westlake

American
Entrées \$6–\$27

Sports on 20 screens

Say hello to the modern sports bar: a sophisticated environment with more than 20 plasma and projection televisions, which all broadcast different channels. A full bar mixes up martinis, frozen drinks, margaritas, beer, and wine—even beer cocktails. The most fun way to eat is to grub on all the appetizers while your eyes are glued to the tennis match or football game. The spinach-artichoke dip comes with toasty crostini for dipping; the blue cheese-covered potato chips are absolutely addictive. Jumbo lump crab cakes have a bit of a Cajun kick; the build-your-own pizzas have a nice chewy crust.

BOOK GALLETTTO BAR & GRILL

982 S. Westlake Blvd.
Westlake Village, 805-449-4300
gallettoabarandgrill.com

Italian/Brazilian
Entrées \$15–\$26

Live Music

The Brazilian dishes are nice and full of flavor: Marinated chicken and mesquite-grilled meats come with black beans and rice and plantains; skirt steak is topped

with chimichurri sauce, (parsley, lemon, and olive oil); chimichurri sauce also tops a breaded, pounded chicken breast in a dish called Milanesa do Borghetti. Italian dishes here are also solid, from chicken piccata to mushroom risotto in a Parmesan wheel. Live music comes from a Spanish guitarist (Monday through Wednesday) and bands of various genres (Thursday through Saturday), which provide the appropriate ambience, as does the long bar in the front.

GINO'S TRATTORIA

720 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-494-7743
Italian

Entrées \$10–\$17

Kid-Friendly

Owner Gino Setola likes to be very personal with his patrons. Instead of writing menu specials on a board, he prefers to give them out to the whole room verbally. It's casual, it's friendly, and the menu has classic Italian dishes like veal piccata, fettuccine Bolognese, pizza, and Caprese salad. Don't miss the gelato truffles for dessert.

KABUKI JAPANESE RESTAURANT

20940 Ventura Blvd.
Woodland Hills, 818-704-8700
kabukirestaurants.com

Japanese
Entrées \$10–\$18

Kid-Friendly

Groups of coworkers and friends gather here for reasonably priced sushi and cocktails, delivered with a smile in a boisterous room. Some of the special rolls are a bit unusual but tasty, like the Ana-Kyu Garlic Roll with sea eel tempura and cucumber with garlic chips on top. Most of the rolls and cooked dishes are more traditional. There's tempura, teriyaki, ramen, and miso-marinated black cod. The hot appetizers are fun to explore and share, especially the ginger shrimp on crispy rice, the fried soft-shell crab with ponzu, and the garlicky but mild grilled *shishito* peppers. Non-alcoholic drinks—like the green-tea smoothie and the "Karate Punch" with cranberry, peach nectar, and cherry syrup—should satisfy any designated driver. Open for lunch and dinner daily; happy hour 3 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

NEW LADYFACE ALEHOUSE & BRASSERIE

29281 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, 818-477-4566
ladyfaceale.com

French-American
Entrées \$9–\$15

With the feel of a French Brasserie, this alehouse provides a one-of-a-kind dining experience. The communal table allows camaraderie to develop, while the proprietary wheat beers and ale lend local flavor to the upscale pub. The food is better than it has to be, given the fun atmosphere and the top-notch pours from brewer David Griffiths. Chef Ray Luna knows his way around Belgian fries, artisanal sausages, and salad *niçoise*. But he can also turn out some serious fish-and-chips and *moules frites*.

LAZY DOG CAFÉ

172 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, 805-449-5206
lazydogcafe.com

American
Entrées \$8–\$24

Saturday & Sunday Brunch

Who loves puppies? Everyone, right? So a café decorated with fire hydrants, puppy photos, paw-print fabrics, and bone-shaped door handles has to be fun. The inexpensive eats represent what Americans love, from pizza and pasta to burgers and grilled cheese. Salads are topped with items like roasted veggies, the fish of the day, or even chicken tenders. Bigger meals include meatloaf, flatiron steak, chicken potpie with a cap of puff pastry, and Idaho trout baked in a cast-iron skillet. For dessert, a hot fudge sundae comes to the table in a porcelain dog bowl. Lazy Dog Cafe, located at The Oaks mall, is open for lunch and dinner daily.

LIMÓN LATIN GRILL

1555 Simi Town Center Way
Simi Valley, 805-955-9277
limongrill.com
Pan-Latin
Entrées \$8–\$20 (some steaks up to \$40)
Live Music

The flat-screen TVs above the bar make this a great spot to catch a sporting event, while the area around the fireplace on the patio near the cabanas is great for listening to live music. Chef Ron Tavakoli features flavors from all over Central and South America as well as Cuba and Puerto Rico. His preparation of yucca (sliced, fried, and drizzled with a garlicky mojo sauce) makes you actually yearn for this normally bland root vegetable. The chicken *alcaparado* with olives and capers is sensational. At lunchtime there are American-style sandwiches like a California wrap and a hamburger. If you see the pulled-pork special, go for it. The servers are knowledgeable about the cuisine and can help you deconstruct the long menu, which also offers salads, pastas, seafood, and steaks. Limón Latin Grill is open for lunch and dinner daily. Musicians play on Sundays from 2 to 9 p.m. and at different times during the rest of the week (except Mondays). Call for the schedule of artists. There's also a DJ spinning tunes late in the evening on Friday and Saturday nights.

THE MELTING POT

3685 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, 805-370-8802
meltingpot.com
Fondue
Entrées \$18–\$23 individually or \$59 for two
Kid-Friendly
Swirl, swish, and dip your way through cheese fondue, hot broth fondue, and chocolate fondue for an interactive meal that will keep even your kids interested. For the adults, a full bar and a large wine list make the night fun. The sauces, salads, and sides round out the meal nicely.

MOONSHADOWS

20356 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, 310-456-3010
moonshadowsmalibu.com
Cal-Asian
Entrées \$19–\$30
Great View, Saturday & Sunday Brunch
The owners got serious about this former surfer hangout a couple of years ago when they remodeled a bit and hired chef Joachim Weritz to create a menu worthy of destination dining. He flies in sweet quahog hard-shell clams for his chowder and buys American Kobe beef for his braised short ribs. His menu changes four times a year to follow the seasons, but you can always count on really fresh seafood with Asian touches, a pasta or risotto, homemade fruit cobbler, and a cheese plate. Views of the Pacific are great from every table, indoors or on the party deck outside. Brunch is always crowded.

OLD PLACE RESTAURANT

29983 Mulholland Hwy.
Agoura Hills, 818-706-9001
oldplacecornell.com
American
Entrées \$11–\$34
Typically, the gals get the one fish dish on the menu (whatever it happens to be that night) and dudes get the sirloin grilled over oak at this Old-West-style saloon that serves a few microbrews on tap and local wines by the glass or bottle. Swing open the spring-loaded wooden door and squeeze through the crowd to the bench at the bar. Or rustle up a group of four or six or eight and call ahead to reserve a narrow wooden booth. It's a one-of-a-kind experience. Cornell Winery & Tasting Room sits right next door. The Old Place is open for dinner Thursday through Sunday nights and for breakfast on the weekends.

SCHECK & SHAY'S ROCKIN' DINER

3907 Cochran St.
Simi Valley, 805-306-9566
simidiner.com
American
Entrées \$7–\$12
Kid-Friendly
Styled like a 1950s diner with plenty of chrome, formica, and vinyl, this homage to car-hop culture offers vintage foods with updated flare. Don't miss the Rednecks and Rings appetizer (fried pickles and onion rings) on a cute cast-iron stand with three good dipping sauces. Burgers go from big (Just a Burger with a half-pound of meat) to genormous (Da Bomb piled with avocado, bacon, onion rings, and double the cheese). The chicken-fried steak gets homemade country gravy. The premium sides include fire-roasted creamed corn, or pasta salad loaded with artichoke hearts and kalamata olives. Shakes, malts, and floats ensure you won't leave hungry.

SHEILA'S PLACE WINE BAR & RESTAURANT

330 N. Lantana St.
Camarillo, 805-987-9800
sheilawinebar.com
Californian
Entrées \$10–\$24
Live Music
It's a long wine bar with quite a few cozy tables available next to the wine racks lining the walls. The lighting is low and romantic, the music is mostly acoustic and jazzy. Plenty of small plates are on offer, the better to snack on with a bottle or two of wine. The Boursin cheese ravioli comes with a scattering of sweet-vermouth-soaked mushrooms. The combination is delightful. The Mediterranean olive pizza utilizes both green and black olives to nice effect. The angel hair pasta with tomatoes and basil could be a primer on how to make this ubiquitous Italian dish.

TAVERNA TONY

23410 Civic Center Way
Malibu, 310-317-9667
tavernatony.com
Greek
Entrées \$11–\$29
Live Music
Owner Tony Kursaris is a solicitous host, overseeing your good time either inside by the fireplace or outside on the patio. Weekends bring live Greek music, dancing waiters, and belly dancers. Eat your flaming cheese, moussaka, and grilled lamb family-style if in a big party (which is the best way to experience the fun here). If you can't save room for the baklava (and you probably can't due to the huge portions), take it home.


TUPELO JUNCTION CAFE

1218 State St.
Santa Barbara, 805-899-3100
tupelojunction.com
Southern
Entrées \$14–\$33
Kid-Friendly, Live Music
It's always crowded at this friendly brick-walled café where the cute waitresses don white T-shirts and jeans and the drinks arrive in mason jars. Chef Amy Scott lets loose with bacon in her Southern-inflected dishes. It's in the spinach and Gouda scramble on the breakfast menu (served until 2 p.m. every day); cooked in with the collard greens accompanying the rich mac and cheese; and scattered on top of the slightly sweet coleslaw that sits next to two pan-fried crab cakes made from fresh Dungeness. The fried green tomatoes will remind any Southerner of home, although they're elevated by a dill-and-lemon dipping sauce that mom (probably) never made (at lunch) or stacked between rounds of goat cheese (at dinner). Even the seafood sticks to your ribs here. The shrimp and scallops come with cheddar jalapeño grits and Creole lobster butter. On Thursday nights, stop in for live music and happy hour specials from 5 to 7 p.m. ■

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MEET BRIG VAN OSTEN

In April, Brig Van Osten of Simi Valley was crowned the winner of the third season of *Shear Genius*. This reality show with a hairstyling theme on Bravo features contestants competing at different hair challenges, which are judged by professionals in the beauty industry. Even though she has now returned to work full-time as owner and head stylist at Play Hair Lounge, Van Osten remains a woman to watch.

A year ago I was just working, and trying out for *Shear Genius*, and waiting to hear if I was going to be on the show. We were already successful at Play and had been open almost four years. Flash-forward to now and we're completely booked out a couple weeks ahead. New faces stop by to just say hello and share that they're happy we're a part of the 805 community.

Because of the whole adventure we've been taken on, things are still very colorful at Play and are elevated to a new level of excitement. But our salon remains a destination for beautiful high-end hair without all the fuss. I'm surrounded by a passionate group of hairstylists that make up our team. Our clients love to watch the stylists at work, so we eliminated that front-desk reception wall. When you walk in the door you immediately become part of the social architecture.

I've always gone against the grain to stay true to myself.

My first and foremost role model would be my mom. She started her own business and I got to see and experience and learn from her strength. In recent years, I saw her survive a cerebral aneurism and continue to be so strong. It was a shock to see this perfectly healthy 65-year-old woman go through that, but she's always shown incredible strength no matter what happens.

Within these last few years, there has been an increase in my clients who have been affected by cancer. As I get to know them better, it makes me appreciate each day and make sure I'm doing something that makes me happy.

The [Amgen Tour of California] will be a great thing for the area. I always appreciate the brightly colored clothing that cyclists wear when I pass them on the roads. But my mountain bike is rusted up on my patio. These days I'm more of a roller skater. ■

For more information on Brig Van Osten and Play Hair Lounge in Simi Valley, go to playhairlounge.com.



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