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Andaz



by Elyse Glickman

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New on the "Market"

On January 8, 2009, elite members of the Los Angeles food, entertainment and lifestyle press were prepared to be dazzled... but not blown away... by the latest incarnation of a familiar place—the **Hyatt on Sunset**. The locale, in the face of a competitive bar/restaurant marketplace that is the Sunset Strip, has undergone many makeovers, for better and for worse. Just prior to its latest dazzling transformation, it was famously the site for marauding rock stars in one decade and unfortunate casualty of celebrities-turned-restaurateurs in another.

Based on the reactions of fellow press members and tastemakers at the recent opening, it's unanimous that the current owners, chefs and mixologists have the right idea about what a 21st century restaurant should be all about. Goodbye dark smoky space and overdone Asian-Fusion. Hello, freshness and light. **Andaz West Hollywood** is a miracle of careful planning, with its open, warmly-lit and airy Mid-century-inspired dining space, customizable menu and three-dimensional open concept kitchen coming out to meet restaurant guests and the very Sunset Strip itself. It's art gallery-meets-wine cellar-meets living room, and it works brilliantly.

Though it's a given that most respectable L.A. restaurants have a "California Market" spin worked into their concepts, the staff under the leadership of **Executive Chef Sébastien Archambault**, turns it upside-down. The prices of menu selections range from \$12 to \$36, upscale yet rooted in reality. The value for the diner comes in with the **"market-to-table"** offering that allows guests to create their own feast with the freshest items available on the chef's table. That said, the "ready-to-wear" offerings sampled by the restaurant's first guests—**crisp, flavorful vegetables, savory scallops, crusty oven fresh bread, flaky mushroom tart, buttery short ribs and fingerling potatoes, tangy ceviche and indulgent field mushroom risotto** among the treats courtesy of Team Archambault—spotlighted all those good things from the good earth. Even with some undoubtedly caloric indulgences, you still walk out feeling healthy and well-nourished.

Beyond the food, Andaz West Hollywood has other attributed contributing to the sensory banquet. A stunning sculpture by **Jacob Hashimoto** greets visitors. Guests can see the latest L.A.-fashion in action, thanks to the fact that local designers **Velvet by Graham & Spencer and Vince** (aided by Los Angeles-based stylist **Gili Rashal-Niv**) not only provide the uniforms, but allow staffers to pick individual pieces that suit their personality and body types—much like the food menu.

If your initial reaction to the restaurant is, "this feels sooooo European," your instincts are spot on. This locale is the first branch of Andaz to open in the United States, followed by the original **Andaz Liverpool Street**, launched in London, in November 2007, which began building the concept of a multi-dimensional and highly experiential restaurant. While more locations will open across the U.S. (**New York, Austin**), cities are selected based on their artistic bearings. For now, feel lucky there's now something so unusual in your own front yard.

8401 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood. (323) 785-6058
www.myandaz.com

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... a ...

Ago

8478 Melrose Ave. Hollywood. 323.655.6333. Italian. Although it is mainly known for being owned by Robert DeNiro, the cuisine is noteworthy and reminiscent of traditional Italy. The primarily Tuscan menu includes favorites like flaky monkfish and brick oven pizza. Start with the burrata, which is not on the menu.

Andaz

8401 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood. 323.785.6058
 "California Marke". Open, warmly-lit and airy Mid-century-inspired dining space, customizable menu and three-dimensional open concept kitchen coming out to meet restaurant guests and the very Sunset Strip itself. The value for the diner comes in with the "market-to-table" offering that allow guests to create their own feast with the freshest items available on the chef's table.

A.O.C

8022 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles. 323.653.6359. Mediterranean. A wine and-tapas chic bistro by Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne (Lucques). Cheeses (daily selection), charcuterie, pâtés, boudins, lamb skewers, along with other French and Mediterranean delicacies. A great opportunity to experiment, with more than 50 wines offered by the bottle, carafe, and glass.

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Backyard

W Hotel, 930 Hilgard Ave., Westwood, 310.443.8211. French. The W Hotel's upscale poolside restaurant and bar serving summertime fare for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Sip The Backyard's signature cucumber martini, then let the perfectly chilled oysters on the half-shell slither down your throat.

Bastide

8475 Melrose Place. West Hollywood. 323.651.5950. French. Arguably the best French restaurant in Los Angeles. True to the extravagance of French haute cuisine, this prestigious restaurant does not skimp on indulgent luxuries like first quality truffles and foie gras. If you are in on an expense account, or feeling flush, we wish you luck getting a reservation at this exclusive eatery.

Bin 8945

18945 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood. 310-550-8945. Californian. Owner/sommelier David Haskell has created a real gem of a place that packs a lively "scene," fun small course dining and a thrilling wine experience into one dazzling little package.

Beechwood