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tart



by Elyse Glickman

Sweet Tart

When Peter and Ellen Picataggio decided to take on the challenge of the ultimate Hollywood makeover—transforming the humble and past-its-prime **Farmer's Daughter** motel opposite the Farmer's Market into a boutique hotel experience—their transformation included the creation of **Tart**. The new restaurant, like the hotel that cradles it, embodies the best of both L.A.'s, those sides being the chic side and the old-school Hollywood we all know and love.

"We took something that had been an icon for years and were very specific about what we wanted to accomplish," says **Peter Picataggio**. "While we were making the Farmer's Daughter a boutique hotel, we still wanted it to have that friendly old school Bed-and-Breakfast flavor. It is designed for gatherings, and we make it a point to talk with our guests and interact with them directly. We wanted to do the same thing in creating Tart, a place where the food has to be good but the vibe has to match. It needs to be a place where people feel right at home."

With former Bastide chef **Dennis Mejia** in place and a décor that is as warm and home-y as the wonderful cafes you can find in Napa Valley and Santa Barbara, the formula is perfectly executed and the food is sophisticated while still being flavorful and fresh (after all, it does come from the Farmer's Daughter, right?)

At dinner, our group enjoyed samplings of a velvety **salmon carpaccio**, a lighter than air **crab cake** and a **lobster, mango and lime ceviche** that is as fresh as they come. The salads (the baby spinach and warm goat cheese salads on our night), are gently dressed and beautifully presented (as to be expected on a farm, though be warned—portions are small as to save room for the main courses). The mains (we tried the **seared ahi with coconut purple rice, chicken papardelle with forest mushrooms** and an off-the-menu cowboy steak which is the chef's pride and joy) all score points with innovative mixes of flavor, freshness and ingenuity—but yes, are still quite user friendly.

And what would a place called Tart be without dessert? Naturally, you will find daily tart specials as well as the decadent **Banana Cream Tarte with Crème Fraîche** and a

restaurants

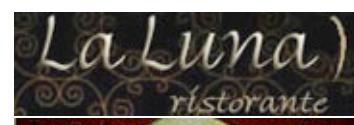
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S'Mores Sundae with homemade graham (an American take on a French-style dessert and a French take on an American classic, respectively, as the pastry chef explains it). The prices for such a chic-yet-homespun experience are quite refreshing too. Checks average \$15 for breakfast to \$45 for dinner.

115 South Fairfax. Los Angeles, CA 90036. 323-556-2608

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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.

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, patés, boudins, lamb skewers, along with other rare French and Mediterranean delicacies. More than 50 wines are offered by the bottle, carafe, and glass.

Angelini Osteria

7313 Beverly Blvd. Los Angeles 323.297.007. Italian. You know in the movies when someone walks into an Italian eatery and they are greeted by a maitre D who treats them like long lost family? If you go to Angelini often enough, this eatery (across from El Coyote) is that movie. With rustic and traditional Italian cuisine, chef Gino Angelini creates a neighborhood home. ... One of the best steaks outside of Florence, and don't miss the salt crusted sea bass.

Aphrodisiac

10351 Santa Monica Blvd. Century City, 310-282-8870. Burton (Porterhouse Bistro) has created a concept fully dedicated to love and the making of it. While it is a "regular" restaurant with tables, chairs and booths, the most experiential part of the place is the private bedroom- complete with a deep red comforter strewn atop a king size bed and a personal butler who serves an eight-course meal- each course focused around one central theme- aphrodisiacs. You can opt to have the video cameras turned on, documenting your rendezvous for future at-home pleasure. www.aphrodisiacrestaurant.com

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The 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. Undeniably one of the best french restaurants in Los Angeles. True to the extravagance of french cuisine, this prestigious restaurant does not skimp on indulgent extras. If you are in the mood for truffles served properly and authentic french accents then we wish you luck getting a reservation.

Border Grill

1445 4th St., Santa Monica. 310.451.1655. Mexican. Star chefs, Susan Fenigan and Mary Sue Milliken, of 'Two Hot Tamales' fame serve up Pan-Latino fare.

The Belmont

747 N La Cienega Blvd. 310.659.8871. Californian. In a party atmosphere setting this restaurant serves up palate-pleasing appetizers, entrees and cocktails.

Beechwood

822 Washington Blvd. Venice 310.448.8884. New American.

One-on-One
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