

HOME DINING RECREATION TRAVEL COMMUNITY HEALTH STYLE

# 805 LIVING

MAY 2012

ARTS &  
CULTURE

A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a black top, patterned leggings, and black high-heeled boots, is crouching on a light-colored floor in an art gallery. She is looking up at a large, colorful abstract painting on the wall. The gallery has white walls and large windows in the background.

# The Last Bite



## Tangerine Chocolate Bar at Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

Pixie tangerines are Ojai's native son. While they're in season, the **Ojai Valley Inn & Spa** (ojairesort.com) makes the celebrated citrus its honored guest. Pastry chef Calvin Yeap pairs pixies—locally sourced from Friend's Ranches (friendsranches.com)—with chocolate in a lovely layered dessert. From the bottom up: A crunchy chocolate cookie bar supports tangerine curd infused with fresh juice and zest; then a layer of airy milk-chocolate mousse leads to a silky bittersweet ganache on top. Nearby on the plate is a scoop of top-shelf Valrhona bittersweet-chocolate gelato. Yeap likes his desserts not too sweet and not too heavy, and he also likes to include a twist. I say, twist away, especially when it's caramelized tangerine segments accented with saffron threads. This is one dessert sprinkled with a big dose of pixie-dust panache. It's on the menu at the Inn's Maravilla restaurant through May. ♦

BY SARENE WALLACE

black-and-silver color scheme is accented with crystal chandeliers inside and out. Small plates (Ahi tuna "tar tower," grilled half avocado stuffed with crab and asparagus, beef tenderloin truffle carpaccio) work well with the cocktails, beers, and many wines by the glass. Large plates include potato-crust halibut, Colorado rack of lamb, and grilled New York strip steak.

**TAVERNA TONY**  
23410 Civic Center Way  
Malibu, 310-317-9667  
tavernatony.com  
Greek; Entrées \$13-\$37  
Live Music

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

**TRATTORIA FARFALLA**  
160 Promenade Way  
Westlake Village, 805-497-2283  
farfallawestlakevillage.com  
Italian; Entrées \$13-\$30  
Live Music

The dark and sexy environs evoke both romance and fun, aided by a classical guitarist playing in the lounge area on Friday and Saturday nights. Excellent Italian fare from chef-owner Santino Coccia includes an extensive list of cheeses and a full-blown fresh mozzarella bar. Salads are created as either starters or main courses. The pasta list is long and has many interesting choices. Pizza, plus seafood like cioppino and branzino, and plenty of meats will satisfy most appetites.

**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.

**LUNCH BUNCH**  
*Perfect for a midday meal, these listings are casual spots and fabulous cafés (which might not be open for dinner) that are ideal for meet-ups.*

**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.

**BLUE TABLE**  
28912 Roadside Drive  
Agoura Hills, 818-597-2583  
bluetable.net  
Italian; Entrées \$8-\$11

A few blue tables provide seating for those dining inside this charming little deli with high-quality Italian eats. Different salads rotate through the deli case and the list of sandwiches is written on a blackboard. The prosciutto and *burrata* panini is not to be missed. Pizzas, soups, cookies, and everything else are made fresh daily. A small freezer carries pastas and sauces for home use, but anything on the menu can be packed and taken to go.

**CHAMPAGNE FRENCH BAKERY CAFÉ**  
180 Promenade Way  
Westlake Village, 805-379-5911  
champagnebakery.com  
French; Entrées \$7-\$9

A quaint bakery that harks 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.

**CHOCOLATINE**  
2955 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.  
Thousand Oaks, 805-557-0561  
chocolatine.net  
Bakery; Entrées \$7-\$10

A chocolate café with a Parisian accent, Chocoline offers tiny treats of chocolate, cookies, pastries, coffee, tea, and hot chocolate made from scratch by baker and owner Sabrina Barthe. The *macarons* are perfection. Check the blackboard for daily specials of salads, sandwiches, quiches, and crêpes. The service is friendly but very laid-back. Don't expect to be in and out in a hurry. Once a month Chocoline opens its doors in the evening for a special dinner; check the website for details.

**FRESH & FABULOUS CAFE**  
401 S. A St.  
Oxnard, 805-486-4547  
myfreshandfabulous.com  
American; Entrées \$5-\$11  
Kid-Friendly

The sandwiches here are served on house-made bread. Four different quiches are baked daily. Owner Magda Weydt is a registered dietitian so the salads and sandwich fillings have a healthful bent. There are also coffee drinks, cookies, and pastries to be enjoyed in this retro coffee shop in downtown Oxnard.

**NEW HIP VEGAN CAFE**  
928 E. Ojai Ave.,  
Ojai, 805-646-1750  
hipvegancafe.com  
Vegan; Entrées \$7-\$15