

MODERN LUXURY

RIVIERA

SAN DIEGO

THE RESTAURANT ISSUE

THE 50 FINEST

BEST NEW EATERIES,
OVER-THE-TOP DINING
EXPERIENCES,
MIXOLOGY MAGIC,
ICONIC CHEFS
& MUCH MORE!

TOUR DE FORK

EXCITING NEW RESTAURANTS
FROM COAST TO COAST

SMALL PLATES

S.D.'S TWEEN CHEF PHENOM

HEAD FOR THE BORDER

BAJA'S NEW FOODIE APPEAL



PLUS

ART & SOUL: THE CULTURAL SCENE SIZZLES
DEL MAR: SUMMER'S SURE BET
& INSIDE ALL THE FAB FETES!

MODERNLUXURY.COM



BOTTEGA AMERICANO

This madcap Italian caper of a restaurant features a gourmet-to-go market place; cocktails that lean heavily on Italian spirits; and tantalizing live-action taste zones focusing on housemade salumi (from \$16), pasta (from \$15) and thin-crust pizza (from \$15). Pair a food-friendly Antinori Super Tuscan (\$155) with the grigliata di carne mista for two (\$65). **POWER MOVE** Book seats 1 to 2 at the pizza counter or 17 to 18 front and center at the salumeria. That's where you're most likely to score off-menu bonus bites from chef David Warner. 1195 Island Ave., San Diego, 619.255.7800, bottegaamericana.com

BRACERO COCINA DE RAIZ

Javier Plascencia's ascendant star lights up Little Italy at this new bilevel best-of-both-worlds concept uniting Baja and Alta California, street food and fine dining. Downstairs, it's mariscos and Tijuana-style tacos, while upstairs, look for tableside preparations and dishes like a Caja China smoked whole fish (market price) that pairs beautifully with a specially decanted bottle of Adobe Guadalupe Kerubiel (\$106). **POWER MOVE** Sammi Woody van Horn's wine list includes some heavy-hitting but food-friendly firros—like bottles from Valle de Guadalupe's Torres Allegre y Familia that open up beautifully when decanted. Call ahead to request, and van Horn will prep a bottle a few hours before your reservation. 1490 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, bracerococina.com

CATANIA

At this La Jolla gem, up-and-coming chef Vince Schafeld dishes spit-roasted meats (market price), wood-fired Neapolitan pizzas (from \$13), impeccable seafood (don't miss the charred local spot prawns on weekends, \$42) and smoked-duck liver mousse that gets its voluptuous richness from foie gras. Pair that silky starter with an Amarone Della Valpolicella (\$91) off the eclectic, all-Italian list. **POWER MOVE** True foodies happily

forego the scramble for hot Friday night reservations, instead booking an early table on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Why? Because Schafeld makes it well worth their while, that's why. Upon request, on light(er) evenings the talented chef will go off-menu, creating memorable one-night-only dishes for those who know to ask. 7863 Girard Ave., La Jolla, 858.551.5105, wrihospc.com

COMÚN

Renegade chef Chad White brings border energy to his East Village spot on the booming J Street food corridor. The tostados (\$7) are legendary (try the escabeche), but save your appetite for grande dishes like the goat birria (\$26) or roasted lamb leg (\$25) with a Vena Cava Big Red Blend (\$75) from Baja. **POWER MOVE** Only eight tickets are made available for each of White's eight-course Caja Ocho dinners (\$80), which the chef customizes for the types of gastro-adventurers he calls "culinary explorers" and "fearless feeders." Get what it takes? 935 J St., San Diego, 619.358.9707, comunsd.com

JAMES' PLACE

Jet-setting theatergoers flocking to S.D. for world-premiere, Broadway-bound spectacles have made this La Jolla Playhouse-adjacent resto a hot spot. In addition to sushi and sashimi paired with premium Hagiura Honjazo sake (\$68), feast on grilled rib-eye with shitake demi (\$34) or miso-marinated sea bass (\$29). **POWER MOVE** Book a pre-curtain private party (price upon request) with a bespoke raw menu from chef James Holder, a sushi maestro and Café Japengo alum. 2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, 858.638.7778, jamesplacesd.com

S&M SAUSAGE AND MEAT

Park it on Park Boulevard for Scott Slater's passion to pork. Swine dominates the all-meat menu at this gimmick-free, gastronomically progressive eatery, but you'll also find kangaroo curry sausages (\$9), rabbit sliders (\$8) and a killer venison meatball sandwich (\$11), plus cocktails and on-tap craft brews. **POWER MOVE** Looking for something more exotic? The eatery's VIP catering program (prices upon request) sources off-menu proteins like camel, alligator and even ultrarare wild-caught beaver. Yes, beaver (the taste is like roast pork). 4130

10 MOST EXCITING NEW RESTAURANTS



Park Blvd., San Diego, 619.344.2177, sausageandmeat.com

SIRENA

This Little Italy sleeper hit scored with savvy foodies thanks to punchy Peruvian seafood preparations, like the flavor-bomb El Peruano ceviche with uni leche de figue (\$13). Mains like braised scallops with roasted cauliflower, coconut and ginger pair well with a Chateau Montelena Sauvignon Blanc (\$65). **POWER MOVE** Insiders demand the omakase menu (\$68 per person, \$83 with beverage pairings), which also has special vegan options on request. 1901 Columbia St., San Diego, 619.564.8970, sirenagourmet.com

STAKE

Chef Tim Kalanko presides at this elegant Coronado chophouse, where you're likely to find military top brass enjoying an all-American, all-out luxury dining experience—we're talking top-shelf cocktails, dry-aged bone-in rib-eye (\$54), steamed king crab legs (\$69) and fine wines (Grand Cru Burgundy, anyone?) from one of San Diego's deepest lists. **POWER MOVE** Put yourself in Kalanko's capable hands for the Stake Experience: a multicourse tasting menu (\$140) with dishes like seared foie gras; briny oysters on the half-shell; and the real-deal, so-marbled-it-hurts Japanese wagyu that's normally available a la carte for \$28 per ounce. 1309 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619.522.0077, stakechophouse.com

TABLE NO. 10

Chef-owned restos are as rare downtown as the natural beef is on chef-owner Jason Gethin's quail-egg topped tartare (\$16). The dish is indicative of Gethin's full-flavored cooking, styled as approachable fine dining, with sharable plates like California rabbit with pea risotto (\$28) or crispy chicken with a cornbread soufflé (\$22). **POWER MOVE** The kitchen counter has only four seats, but it's the only other spot in the house where you can order the custom-tailored tasting menu (price upon request) normally reserved for the 10-top chef's table. 369 10th Ave., San Diego, 619.550.1262, tablenumer10.com

THE PATIO ON GOLDFINCH

An instant hit in Mission Hills, this verdant, high-design resto buzzes all day long. Reservations are a must for both weekend brunch (the cured fox "sandwich" (\$12), is a favorite) and dinner (try the Spanish octopus (\$18). Libation-led exclusive dining experiences (from \$80) routinely sell out. **POWER MOVE** Tequila-loving regulars know to book catador Chris Simmons for private tastings. The resto's extensive collection includes bottles like Casa San Matias' 6-year-old Rey Sol extra añejo (\$55 by the glass). 4020 Goldfinch St., San Diego, 619.501.5090, thepatioangoldfinch.com