



DINING GUIDE MENU

OCTOBER 9 - 15, 2014

BEST BITES

*Five dishes that
blew our minds
this year
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WINE

*By the bottle or
by the glass, the
best lists in town
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SUPERDINERS

Top chefs

A P P E T I Z E R S

★ RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

Juniper & Ivy is the most exciting eatery of 2014 | Page 6.00

M A I N C O U R S E S

RESTAURANT OPENINGS

San Diego welcomes The Headquarters and more | Page 11.00

★ CHEF OF THE YEAR

Three cheers for Addison's William Bradley | Page 7.00

DINING IN LITTLE ITALY

Can't-miss restaurants in the city's hottest neighborhood | Page 8.00

**Before Jesse Owens
Before Jackie Robinson
There was Jack Johnson**

THE ROYALE

By Marco Ramirez • Directed by Rachel Chavkin

Loosely inspired by the life of Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight Champion, Marco Ramirez's ("Orange is the New Black") new play brings to explosive life the sights and sounds of the early-20th-century boxing circuit, and the ultimate fight for a place in history.

**Playing Through
November 2**

Contains strong language.

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Robert Christopher Riley. Photo by Jim Cox.



DINING
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BY

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LITTLE ITALY'S GEMS

Bencotto:

750 W. Fir St., Suite 103

Buon Appetito:

1609 India St.

Davanti Enoteca:

1655 India St.

Filippi's: 1747 India St.**Juniper & Ivy:**

2228 Kettner Blvd.

Ironside Fish & Oyster:

1654 India St.

Indigo Grill: 1536 India St.**Kettner Exchange:**

2001 Kettner Blvd.

Mona Lisa: 2061 India St.**Monello:** 750 W. Fir St.**Prepkitchen Little Italy:**

1660 India St.

Queenstown Public House:

1557 Columbia St.

Solunto Bakery:

1643 India St.

Underbelly:

750 W. Fir St., Suite 101



Monello is among a handful of modern Italian restaurants that have popped up in Little Italy over the past five or so years.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH LITTLE ITALY

THRIVING NEIGHBORHOOD HAS BECOME SAN DIEGO'S CULINARY HOT SPOT

How hot is San Diego's Little Italy? The best new restaurant of the year, Juniper & Ivy, landed there in March.

The second most buzz-worthy spot, Ironside Fish & Oyster, opened a few weeks later.

Neighborhood stalwart Indigo Grill was revamped to bring in elements of Peruvian cuisine, a current foodie favorite.

And the just-opened two-story, 7,500-square-foot, \$3.6 million Kettner Exchange restaurant and bar was developed in Little Italy because, according to its owner,

the neighborhood is "becoming the food and cocktail epicenter of San Diego."

Still set to sizzle in the coming months? A remake of the landmark Solunto Bakery to include pizza, gelato and fine dining, along with Bracero, a restaurant by star Baja chef Javier Plascencia, a 10,000-square-foot Italian food-and-dining marketplace and an outpost of the popular organic vegan chain Café Gratitude, whose investors include local pop singer Jason Mraz.

Long after New York's Mulberry Street and San Francisco's

North Beach reached their peak of popularity and turned into sad, Disney-fied versions of Italian neighborhoods, San Diego's Little Italy continues to reinvent itself and remain as relevant as ever. And then some.

In the past give or take five years, a crop of modern Italian restaurants (Bencotto, Monello, Davanti Enoteca, Buon Appetito) opened alongside such traditional — and enduringly popular — earlier-generation places as Mona Lisa and Filippi's.

Now there's Prepkitchen Little Italy, from the hip team behind

La Jolla's Whisnkladle. Nearby, Underbelly specializes in "local ramen" and craft beer. Quirky and unpretentious Queenstown Public House serves New Zealand cuisine (lots of lamb) in a stylish renovated Victorian.

The list goes on, and everybody seems to be thriving. The crush of diners on India Street and beyond can attest to that. So can Little Italy's infernal parking shortage that's only gotten tougher (thank you, Juniper & Ivy, for \$5 valet service).

It could be worse. You could be in New York or San Francisco.

DINING
GUIDE

The Ricotta Gnudi at Tidal in Mission Bay features lobster, chanterelles and truffle froth.

BEST BITES IN TOWN

OUR WRITERS' TOP FIVE TOP DINING EXPERIENCES OF 2014

**MICHELE PARENTE &
PAM KRAGEN** • U-T

Figuring out the five best dining experiences we've had all year is a challenge, but we're up to the task. Here are our five best bites of 2014.

Porcini Mushroom Ravioli

Bellamy's Restaurant, Escondido

One of French chef Patrick Ponsaty's signature dishes bursts with the rich earthy flavor of finely minced mushrooms in hand-rolled ravioli, served in a ruby port wine reduction sauce with shaved Parmesan cheese. One bite encapsulates everything about Ponsaty's classic training, finesse, technique and focus on quality ingredients. 417 W. Grand

Ave., Escondido. (760) 747-5000 or bellamysdining.com

Ricotta Gnudi

Tidal, Mission Bay

We fell in love with chef Amy DiBiase's signature ricotta gnudi back in 2008 when she was at Roseville. When we recently tried her even-better version, with succulent lobster, chanterelles and truffle froth, we were waterside on Tidal's gorgeous patio, the sun was setting, two paddleboarders pulled right up, and all was right with San Diego. 1404 Vacation Road, San Diego. (858) 490-6363 or tidalsd.com

Radishes

Común Kitchen & Tavern, East Village

Farm-to-table may be the most

clichéd phrase in dining, but chef Chad White's appetizer plate of raw radishes — stems and roots intact — with a just sprinkling of sea salt and a dollop of coriander aioli serves as a spectacularly simple reminder of how fortunate we are to have such a bounty of fresh produce in our backyard. 935 J St., East Village. (619) 358-9707 or comunsd.com

Chocolate Peanut Butter Mousse Pie

Great Maple, University Heights

Comfort food has never been more comforting than this lusciously light pie, which we ordered whole and brought back to the office to share with a colleague just back from an extended medical leave. Seeing him brought a smile to all of our faces. The

chocolate peanut butter mousse pie kept it there. 1451 Washington St., San Diego. (619) 255-2282 or thegreatmaple.com

Oeufs Mayonnaise Le Comptoir

Bijou French Bistro, La Jolla

Bijou's talented chef de cuisine, Shaun Gethin, shatters the stereotype of French food being too fussy by drawing out the deliciousness in classic bistro dishes. Case in point: Velvety mayonnaise sauce with Dijon, olive oil, honey, paprika, cracked pepper and fleur de sel combine to elevate the humble hard-boiled egg into a flavor and texture tour de force. 1205 Prospect St., La Jolla. (858) 750-3695 or bijoufrenchbistro.com

STILL HUNGRY?

Can't get enough dining? In the coming weeks we'll highlight some of other favorite places, including:

Most stylish entrances of 2014: Puesto (at The Headquarters), Bottega Americano (East Village), Ironside Fish & Oyster (Little Italy), The Patio on Goldfinch (Mission Hills); Sea 180° Coastal Tavern (Imperial Beach), Savoie French-Italian Eatery (Chula Vista).

Under-the-radar places to put on your radar:

Caroline's Seaside Cafe (La Jolla), Tony's Jacal (Solana Beach), Hanna's Gourmet (University Heights), Kitchen 4140 (Bay Ho), Bistro Sixty (College Area), Savoie French-Italian Eatery (Chula Vista).

Best meat-free eating:

Jyoti-Bihanga Vegetarian Restaurant (Normal Heights), Sipz Vegetarian Fuzion Café (Clairemont/Kearny Mesa and North Park) Moncai Vegan (North Park), George's California Modern (La Jolla) Ranchos (North Park and Ocean Beach), Himalayan Cuisine (La Mesa).