



ORANGE COUNTY

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Westways

THE MAGAZINE FOR AUTO CLUB MEMBERS

FOOD ISSUE

FOOD HALLS + STAR CHEFS + HOT POT + PIZZA WITH A PURPOSE + WOW WATER
ROOFTOP DINING + TASTY TOURS + ICE CREAM SOCIAL + VIET-CAJUN CUISINE



[Orange County]

Marché Moderne

7862 E. COAST HIGHWAY, NEWPORT BEACH
(714) 434-7900; MARCHEMODERNE.NET

For years, Marché Moderne was the most consequential and consistent restaurant in Orange County, a benchmark of excellence by which countless others measured themselves. But its perch atop South Coast Plaza was always a bit peculiar. Now, the restaurant finally feels complete in its new oceanfront home.

Owners Florent and Amelia Marneau have relocated Marché Moderne to the craggy bluffs overlooking Crystal Cove. The restaurant's understated elegance—a crisp, sun-soaked dining room framed in wood and stone—is more apropos than ever. Watching the sun sink beneath the horizon from a seat here is a wonderful way to spend the day's last few golden hours.

The restaurant's vision remains the same: a particularly precise and global rendering of modern French bistro cooking. To start, there is house-made charcuterie and a pear salad stacked with fresh and oven-dried pear, fried walnuts, crispy onions, and truffle cheese, finished with a pear brandy-apple cider vinaigrette. On cooler nights, diners can warm up with the foie gras and chestnut ravioli, airy dumplings afloat in a rich chicken bouillon that's studded with celery root confit. Longtime fans might also recognize the wild Spanish octopus cut into curly, blackened lengths, dotted with a chorizo emulsion and tossed with celery, potatoes, and lemon.

There's a surprising soulfulness behind some of the restaurant's best dishes. The braised lamb shank is so tender that the slow-cooked meat slips off the bone with but a tap of the fork. It's slicked with a sweet-savory glaze nearly as dark and rich as oil and paired with a pile of pillowy little gnocchi and crunchy root vegetables. The hanger steak is expertly cooked, its rosy center encircled with just the right amount of char. Naturally, the duck confit is some of the finest you can find.

On Fridays and Saturdays, you can finish with a slice of the impressively layered Napoleon. But the lemon and almond gâteau Basque, a scoop of wildflower honey gelato atop warm cake and a pool of coconut tapioca pudding, is perfect for that fiery sunset. —Miles Clements



FOIE GRAS AND CHESTNUT RAVIOLI



PEAR SALAD

CUISINE

Modern, seasonal French

BEST DISHES

Foie gras and chestnut ravioli, pear salad, wild Spanish octopus, braised lamb shank, duck confit, steak frites, lemon and almond gâteau Basque

DINNER PRICES

Raw bar and charcuterie: \$8-\$44

Salads and appetizers: \$15-\$24

Entrées: \$26-\$49

Desserts: \$11-\$12



SPANISH OCTOPUS

[Los Angeles & Environs]

Côté Est

5022 YORK BOULEVARD, HIGHLAND PARK
(323) 739-6762; COTE-EST.COM



Los Angeles has seemingly thousands of Korean barbecue restaurants and Italian trattorias but curiously few modern-classic French bistros. Now

the Eastside has a Gallic winner in the new Côté Est, in the heart of Highland Park, next to The York. In a brick-walled, vaulted-ceilinged dining room and on a fetching walled patio, well-trained servers deliver perfect salads, foie gras torchon with country bread, steak with superb twice-cooked frites (inset), tender duck confit, and, to conclude, proper French cheeses. Wash it all down with a Côtes du Roussillon, and you'll want for nothing. Great happy hour, too.

—Colleen Dunn Bates

[The Valleys]

New Century Lobster

8518 E. VALLEY BOULEVARD,
B101 AND 102, ROSEMEAD
(626) 739-8896

We lobster lovers are in our element in the San Gabriel Valley, where several restaurants—Newport Seafood, Boston Lobster, and 626 Lobster among them—vie for customers who crave Southeast Asian-style wok-fried lobster. A recent entrant to this crustacean competition is New Century Lobster, which serves an excellent Boston House Special Lobster that is hacked into chunks, deep-fried, stir-fried with scallions and a special sauce, and roughly reassembled into a lobster shape on a platter (Boston refers to the lobsters' point of origin). New Century also has very good *bò lùc lac* (French-style beef cubes), fried salt-and-pepper shrimp, and clams with basil sauce. But really, get the lobster. —Jean T. Barrett

More Reviews >>>

FROM LEFT: ALAN DE HERREIRA; DI: VANESSA STUMP