

OrangeCoast

THE MAGAZINE OF ORANGE COUNTY

BEST NEW RESTAURANTS



Our selection for Restaurant of the Year plus eight more fantastic places to visit now

HAMILTON HYPE
Cal State Fullerton alum lands dream role in national tour

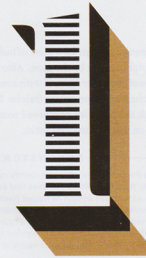
HISTORIC ORANGE FIELDS
O.C. packing houses and fruit crates from a bygone era



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BEST RESTAURANTS



MARCHÉ MODERNE

7842 COAST HIGHWAY, NEWPORT BEACH
714-454-7900, MARCHEMODERNE.NET



Disembarking the luxury liner that ferried you to unimaginable acclaim is a bold risk. Chef-owners Florent and Amelia Marneau were up for the adventure when they moved the Marché Moderne family from South Coast Plaza to the venue of their dreams in Newport Coast. For devotees, the painstaking construction felt longer than its eight months, but today, all traces of the doomed Tamarin of London are gone—replaced by an inviting space that stars coastal skies, an open kitchen, a sublime bar, and a secluded patio.

An extensive menu is bigger than it needs to be, meaning old favorites await and new obsessions are ready to be discovered. Consider prosciutto plucked from premier sources, expertly carved to melt on the tongue. Or a tasting of five silken Bordier butters that results in your forever crossing Land O'Lakes off your grocery list. Or mellow cassoulet that gets the Marneau treatment by means of suckling pig, cured 72 hours, married with velvety braised flageolet beans with vivid accent from lemon and garlic vinaigrette.

Chef Marneau includes nods to the past with dishes that pay tribute to people and places. I don't recall 1991 tasting as good as his version of Pascal Restaurant's braised rabbit with hand-rolled tagliatelle. It epitomizes the mining of O.C.'s dining history for touchstones that give rise to contemporary triumph. Other classic bistro fare includes a stellar coq au vin and a grilled Prime hanger steak with shallot jus and super frites. Both are soulful and filling, so do leave room for Amelia's virtuoso desserts. Any of her modern riffs on gateaux or profiteroles supply sweet thrills. Napoleons are a weekends-only offering but tend to be fabulous finales. The early results are in: The new iteration of Marché Moderne is a joyous coup.

TOUCHSTONE

With the 1998 opening of his rose-filled storefront Restaurant Pascal, Pascal Olhats became a star. Florent Marneau was one of several young chefs to pass through Olhats' kitchen, the current iteration of which now flourishes in San Juan Capistrano.

LEFT: SWEETBREADS WITH PARSLEY FOAM
BOTTOM: FOIS GRAS RAVIOLI

