

# Modern Luxury

ORANGE COUNTY

## Holiday Checklist

Perfect Gifts,  
Gorgeous Watches,  
Dior Cruise  
Essentials & More

## Giving Back

A Portfolio  
of O.C.'s  
Most Prolific  
Philanthropists

## Plus

Marche  
Moderne  
Dazzles in  
Newport  
Beach

# Tracee Ellis Ross

Fabulous & Fearless

# Marching ON

Back and better than ever, Marché Moderne stirs up *la belle cuisine* in Crystal Cove.

By Jamie Gwen // Photography by Dylan & Jeni



From left: The succulent wild Monterey Bay calamari gets an added punch of fresh sweetness from tomatoes on the vine and a lemon-basil emulsion; the cocktail menu delivers on freshness as well, with libations that team herbaceous flavors with citrus notes and top-shelf spirits.



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ew York has Daniel Boulud; Napa Valley has Thomas Keller; and we have Florent Marneau. Yes, the new Marché Moderne, in all of its fresh and fabulous glory, is open for indulgence. We're now a bona fide culinary mecca here in O.C., with innovative hot spots, ethnic greats and thriving *Top Chef* talents—and the bar has been raised once more to impressive heights.

Brilliantly talented husband-and-wife duo Florent and Amelia (a pastry chef) are once again delighting palates with fantastic French fare. After a seven-month hiatus to taste the globe, the Marneaus have taken their storied Parisian-chic dining concept to the coast in Newport Beach's Crystal Cove Shopping Center. The bar delights with a bistro feel. The dining room is decked out in style and sophistication, with

velvet, leather seating and crisp white tablecloths. And outdoors, the patio is refined yet casual.

But the focal point of the brasserie is the unadulterated view of the heart and soul of Marché—the kitchen. Enclosed in glass, with a Berkel slicer that delivers charcuterie excellence, the scene is a divine exhibition of art and dedication to the craft. Copper pots clank and chefs bustle about as culinary talents pour their hearts into every dish, while their perfectionist leader orchestrates the symphony. Decadent desserts adorn the backdrop, tempting you to skip dinner entrees and move straight to the mille-feuille. But pause to drool over the just-cultivated sea snails or fresh Baja sea bass and you'll reconsider.

Commence with an aperitif or a crafted cocktail to entice the palate. The Basilique Yuzu martini refreshes with citrus notes and an herbaceous finish

**MARCHÉ MODERNE**

7862 Pacific Coast Highway,  
Newport Beach, 714.434.7900,  
marchemoderne.net

Appetizers and salads, \$14-\$29;  
small plates, \$9-\$108; entrees,  
\$26-\$41; desserts, \$11-\$12

Dinner daily, 5-10PM



« *“Everything chef Florent touches is heavenly... you do not want to miss the foie gras and chestnut ravioles. Cooked in duck stock and vin jaune, it’s a flawless dish and the perfect excuse to order a glass of Sancerre.”* »



of microbasil. For an unexpected pairing, try the Fraise Romarin, which amuses with smoky rosemary layered on strawberry fields and a cut of Scottish gin. For oenophiles, the wine list delivers with splendid French selections, including the chef’s favorite—a shareable half-bottle of Billecart-Salmon, a brut rosé of French family fame. Then prepare your taste buds for a culinary masterpiece.

One must consider that it is a night meant for sheer clemency, so take a taste of the warm wheat boule for that tangy finish only a French baker searches out. Toasty edges enrobe the cloudlike crumb, and the billowy handchurned butter, shaved off the slab in the preview kitchen window, is simply dazzling.

For starters, the salmon trout gravlax is laced with juniper and dill, and offers a contrast of cool cucumber with a bit of richness from the Devon cream. The hamachi crudo—one of the chef’s previous specialties—is re-inspired with smoked sea salt and mango-jalapeno sorbet. Rillettes and terrines, painstakingly crafted with duck and rabbit, are nestled in jars and served alongside bright and acidic pickled vegetables to offset the full-flavored pate. But I will forever fawn over the Spanish octopus with chorizo and potatoes, and celebrate the addictive salad that Amelia designed early on in their restaurant success. French feta, cucumber, celery and mint offer a textural dynamic against candied almonds and raw beets—I can’t get enough. I’d also be remiss if I didn’t point you to the foie gras terrine, an explosion of flavors marked by preserved cherries and Szechwan pepper. Divine!

Small plates follow the season with top nods going to the sweetbreads with sorrel, and the duck confit embellished with charred figs and a reduction of Banyuls. Everything chef Florent touches is heavenly, and of the many standouts, you do not want to miss the foie gras and chestnut ravioles. Cooked in duck stock and vin jaune, it’s a flawless dish and the perfect excuse to order a glass of Sancerre. The Parisian braised short ribs, one of the chef’s many fortes, arrive with cremini mushrooms and cipollini onions, and uphold their reign as definitive comfort food.

But please do hold out for the decadent desserts. There aren’t enough adjectives to describe the endless layers of flaky puff pastry that Amelia assembles for her napoleon. Filled with Tahitian vanilla cream, it’s paired with tangerine orange blossom sorbet and serves as the ultimate palate cleanser. The Nougatine Glacé Boule is a masterpiece of dried cherries, hazelnuts and orange confit that meet in a luscious semifreddo under a shell of pate a choux, gilded with a Vietnamese chocolate ganache.

The new Marché Moderne is enchanting, impressive and delectable. We missed you, Florent and Amelia. Your unparalleled commitment to classic cuisine and impeccable service never disappoints. French bliss, indeed. ■

From left: The dining room is filled with sunlight and ocean breezes; the McGrath Family Farms beet salad pairs the young colorful roots with a rich fennel pollen goat cheese, candied pistachios and bitey garlic crostons.