

BRAD A. JOHNSON'S

BEST PLACES TO EAT 2020

5 hottest
new restaurants

Restaurant
of the
YEAR

**DATE
NIGHT**
2020 style





THE CAPITAL GRILLE • Shrimp and crab cocktail

Takeout: Worth the splurge

Birthdays and anniversaries in 2020 have definitely felt different. But not necessarily in a bad way, thanks to a handful of restaurants that stepped up to make special occasions at home even more memorable than usual. Here are five ways to celebrate in style at home and still let the restaurants do most of the work.

The Capital Grille

Nothing says celebration more than a big, fat, expensive USDA Prime steak. And The Capital Grille at South Coast Plaza now lets you enjoy their hand-cut steaks at home two different ways. One, you could let them cook it and package it to-go. Or two, they'll sell it to you raw. I prefer the latter because nothing compares to a 22-ounce ribeye that goes straight from the grill to the table. But you are celebrating, so you don't have to do all the work. Let the Grille take care of the chilled shrimp and crab cocktail. And maybe even the lobster bisque and bruléed cheesecake, too, if you don't plan on getting naked afterward. Three-course meals for takeout from about \$75 per person. • 3333 BRISTOL ST., COSTA MESA 714-432-1140, THECAPITALGRILLE.COM



MARCHÉ MODERNE • Charred figs, whipped blue cheese and candied walnuts on toast

Hana re

Hana re, the incredible Japanese kaiseki and sushi restaurant at the Lab in Costa Mesa, began offering very limited platters and bento boxes to-go. While the price for dine-in dinner at Hana re has always exceeded \$200 per person, the new takeout boxes allow anyone to enjoy truly exquisite sushi and sashimi — sweet raw shrimp, bafun uni, wild yellowtail, cherry trout, striped jack, black seabream, bluefin tuna belly, black sea bass and more — at home for as little as \$50 per person. You add a bottle of sake and even a whole Kegan hairy crab from Hokkaido,

and you might also quadruple the bill. But hey, it's a special occasion. Orders must be placed at least one day in advance.

• 2930 BRISTOL ST., COSTA MESA 714-545-2800, HANARESUSHI.COM

Hendrix

Maybe it's just a Sunday dinner. Or maybe it's even more special than that. Regardless of the splurge-worthy occasion, prime rib is always a celebratory choice, and Hendrix in Laguna Niguel offers a prime rib dinner for two every night of the week for takeout. Each slice weighs at least 14 ounces, and the package comes with a shareable Caesar salad, roasted potatoes and au jus. The prime rib for two package costs \$75, and, of course, you'll want to add a couple of sticky toffee puddings at \$9 apiece. If you don't already have something to drink, consider a pitcher of margaritas or a bottle of nice merlot, also available to-go.

• 32431 GOLDEN LANTERN, LAGUNA NIGUEL, 949-248-1912, HENDRIXOC.COM

Marché Moderne

Marché Moderne, easily the finest French restaurant in Orange County, rolled out a three-course dinner (four courses if you count



THE RANCH • Pecan pie and vanilla ice cream

the amuse bouche) packaged for curbside pickup. The menu changes weekly and hasn't been repeated. One week featured duck confit. Another, it was braised lamb à l'orange, and the week after that seared scallops and shrimp with lemongrass and coconut curry tossed with hand-rolled linguini. I missed out on all three of those, but I managed to snag the braised veal shank with mushroom and tomato risotto along with honey panna cotta with rhubarb compote for dessert. It's almost as good as having a private chef. The weekly

takeout specials cost about \$50 per person. Wine and freshly baked bread also available.
 • 7862 E. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, NEWPORT BEACH, 714-434-7900
 MARCHEMODERNE.NET

The Ranch

Anaheim's luxury cowboy-themed restaurant The Ranch has always been a popular choice for birthdays and anniversaries, and they offer their entire menu to-go, including some very special steaks and chops meant for two, such as a spectacular 40-ounce, 28-day



HENDRIX • Prime rib with pan-dripping potatoes and Caesar salad, served for two

dry-aged bone-in Delmonico (\$140) with duck-fat potatoes, or an even bigger 50-ounce porterhouse (\$150) with lobster mac and cheese. Both cuts are available rare, allowing you to very quickly reheat them under the broiler without likely overcooking. Also, the kitchen here usually features a weekly special meant for two or more, albeit in very limited quantities. The theme changes constantly and has ranged from barbecue ribs to cajun seafood boils.

• 1025 E. BALL ROAD, ANAHEIM
 714-817-4200, THERANCH.COM



HANA RE • Sashimi and sake to-go — amaebi, Bafun uni, wild yellowtail, cherry trout, striped Jack, black sea bream, bluefin tuna, octopus, wild amberjack, snapper, black bass, flounder