

Angeleno

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Italy's New Jet Set Hot Spot

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FOOD DRINK *Guide*

Where to eat now. *This is a discriminating list of L.A.'s best restaurants sorted alphabetically by neighborhood. Prices reflect the average cost of a three-course dinner for one, excluding drinks, tax and tip.*

\$\$\$\$ Very Expensive (\$60 and up) U Updated N New
\$\$\$ Expensive (\$40-\$60) 🔥 Hot Spot
\$\$ Moderate (\$30-\$40) ★ 8th Annual Restaurant Award Winner
\$ Inexpensive (under \$30)



COLD FUSION Ceviche sampler with a Japanese twist at Zengo.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Mad About Mexicasian

Chef Richard Sandoval lives in O.C. and owns more than a dozen restaurants worldwide, including **Raya**, which opened at the Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel this spring, followed by **Zengo** (395 Santa Monica Pl., Santa Monica, 310.899.1000, richardsandoval.com) and **La Sandia**, both at Santa Monica Place this summer. So far, I'm loving Zengo, which serves an odd-sounding fusion of Mexican and Asian cuisines. But as weird as it might sound, Sandoval's food is fantastic, especially the sea bass ceviche with hot peppers, cucumbers, apples, tomatoes and, yes, shiso. Peking duck makes a great taco filling, and the short ribs braised in spicy soy sauce are some of the best around. —Brad A. Johnson

Beverly Hills

Bar on 4

Serious shopping and strong Martinis, naturally, go hand in hand at this bar tucked away in the men's department at Neiman Marcus. 9700 Wilshire Blvd., 4th fl., 310.975.4370, neimanmarcus.com \$

Barney Greengrass

Atop Barneys New York, this upscale deli serves its agent and actor clientele exceptional cold cuts, salads and omelets, as well as bagels and lox flown in from New York daily. Its vodka and caviar bar proves there is such a thing as "deli chic." 9570 Wilshire Blvd., 310.777.5877, barneygreengrass.com \$\$

The Belvedere

Chef James Overbaugh, whose American haute cuisine we truly loved at Erna's Elderberry House in Oakhurst, has taken over the kitchens at the Peninsula. The service is as polished as ever, and the wine selection is one of the best in town. The Peninsula Hotel, 9882 S. Santa Monica Blvd., 310.975.2736, peninsula.com \$\$\$\$

The Blvd

Incoming French chef Gilles Arzur (most recently of Four Seasons Bora Bora) has totally revamped the menu at this chic, all-day café at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The ahi tuna *poke* with lime and coconut milk is astonishingly delicious. And, of course, this will always be an amazing burger. 9500 Wilshire Blvd., 310.385.3901, fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire \$\$

Bouchon

Legendary chef Thomas Keller (French Laundry in Napa, Per Se in New York) marks his long-awaited return to Los Angeles with a branch of his casual French brasserie, which includes a raw seafood bar as well as an adjoining yet separate Bar Bouchon. 235 N. Cañon Dr., 310.271.9910, bouchonbistro.com \$\$\$

Cut

Wolfgang Puck said he was going to reinvent the steakhouse, and he has. With the help of acclaimed designer/architect Richard Meier, Puck has created a bright, airy and casual steakhouse with a glorious exhibition kitchen. The steaks are hands-down the best on the West Coast, and possibly the world, but you might need to cash in a few bonds to pay for dinner. Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., 310.276.8500, wolfgangpuck.com \$\$\$\$

e.baldi

Chef Edoardo Baldi shares his take on classic Tuscan cuisine inspired by age-old family recipes of fresh and simple antipasti (polenta crostino with porcini) and pastas



CELEB SPOTTING

We spotted **Lady Gaga** at WP24. Actually, it was hard to miss her. She was wearing a sheer plastic number—some might call it a dress—over black underpants. We spotted **Bradley Cooper** and **Renee Zellweger** double-dating with **Jason Bateman** and wife **Amanda Anka** at Nobu Malibu. When we were at the Polo Lounge, we noticed the **Olsen twins** looking artfully disheveled. We spotted **Gustavo Dudamel** at First and Hope. And at Wilshire, we saw **Ben Affleck** and **Jennifer Garner** enjoying a quiet, romantic dinner on the patio.