



















It's no secret that La Jolla is home to fine dining — a destination where people from all over gather to celebrate special occasions. But there are many other eateries that are favorites with the hometown crowd as well.

Here are the results of our 2009 Best Restaurants Readers Choice Awards. Many are repeat winners, meaning friendly service and good value are timeless, while others are new restaurants that have sparkled from the get-go.

Along with the places that serve breakfast, lunch and dinner you'll find noted family restaurants, Sunday brunch spots and establishments with special wine and beer selections. Like to people-watch as you sip or sup? We have it covered. There are also listings for sports bars as well as cafes that cater to your best friend Fido.

Ballots were printed in La Jolla Village News and also distributed online at our website. www.sdnews.com. Although our poll is not scientific, we think it presents a pretty good picture of the restaurants that give La Jolla its ster-



ling reputation. We hope these awards will delight those who aspire to excellence every day and inspire new businesses to go the extra mile — with a smile — in these tough economic times.

La Jolla Village News would like to thank all the readers who took the time to single out the restaurants that give the Jewel its shine. And to the winners — we salute you!

> Congratulations! Editor, La Jolla Village News

The 2009 Readers Choice Award winners were selected by La Jolla Village News readers

#### Overall Restaurant:

#### Nine-Ten

Nine-Ten is the place to go to stimulate your taste buds and expand your appreciation of the culinary art. Voters recognized the restaurant again and again for its service, wine selection, happy hour and even nominated its burger as one of the best in the village. Plus, its executive chef Jason Knibb took chef of the year. The restaurant is not just about fine dining by night. Nine-Ten also serves breakfast and lunch, and patrons are welcome to stop by for a casual bar-side panini. Breakfast can get gourmet fast, if you opt for the Short Rib Hash in a red wine sauce served with poached eggs and roasted onions.

Nine-Ten 910 Prospect St. 964-5400 www.nine-ten.com

#### Mustangs and Burros

Difans looking to relax with on a warm, festive patio should skip the hubbub of Old Town and head to Mustangs and Burros, a California ranch bar and lounge at Estancia La Jolla Hotel on Torrey Pines Road. The rustic bar with its Spanish décor serves up a mouthwatering array of comfort food. The line-up includes duck carnitas with roasted Jalapeno and grilled onions and Mustangs Calamari with cilantro lime crème fraiche, plus micro beers on tap. Set in the ranch ambiance with its brick fireplace and red rocking chairs, you'll soon start to feel like you're in the backyard of a good friend.

**Mustangs and Burros** 9700 N. Torrey Pines Road 550-1000 www.estancialajolla.com

Restaurant Service:

#### Nine-Ten

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

#### Osteria Romantica

Osteria Romantica has brought the charming, rustic ambiance of an Italian Osteria - a tavern of sorts where Italians traditionally gather to drink wine — to the only village square in the Shores: Avenida de la Playa. Patrons sit in wooden chairs and tuck themselves into a checked tablecloth to dig into a steaming platter of homemade pasta followed by succulent breaded veal, chicken or fish. The two Italian men who own the restaurant explain that the Osteria was traditionally a place for the rich and poor to sit closely over wine and a deck of cards. Minus the cards, Osteria Romantica is a friendly place to socialize over good food and wine.

Osteria Romantica 2151 Avenida de la Playa

www.osteriaromantica.com

#### New Restaurant **Prepkitchen**

Prepkitchen will make a regular out of you. This cozy, shoebox bistro offers gourmet food to take home or back to the office, as well as a patio café to lounge outside with a glass of micro brew beer and a platter of in-house cured meats and French cheeses. A spin-off of Whisknladle, the small kitchen is geared toward whipping up creative meals out of produce from local farms. People get stuck on their favorite dishes at Prepkitchen and so tend to revisit time and time again to rotate through the menu to savor more of the dishes. And, at times, it may be apt to just pop in for a side of sautéed greens in garlic oil or to relish a side of the shrimp salad.

Prepkitchen 7556 Fay Ave. 875-7737 www.prepkitchen.com

#### **Best Chef:**

#### Jason Knibb Nine-Ten

Jason Knibb has traveled the world as a chef and landed at La Jolla's Nine-Ten Restaurant and Bar in 2003. He stands by a farm-to-table culinary philosophy, using local, fresh ingredients to prepare simple, extraordinarily delicious dishes. Before Nine-Ten, Knibb had a gig as the executive chef for Robert Redford's Sundance Village. Raised in Southern California, Knibb began his career at Wolfgang Puck at L.A.'s Eureka restaurant. His next stop was the island of Maui to help open Roy's Kahana Bar & Grill. He headed back to Southern California to cook at Rockenwagner's in Santa Monica and Rox restaurant in Beverly Hills. Knibb made his California mark on Warsaw, Poland to oversee the opening of Malibu. La Jollans are now recognizing this acclaimed chef for his work.

#### **Bernard Guillas** Marine Room

If you hope to replicate chef Bernard Guillas' masterpieces at home, check out his latest book, "Flying Pans: Two Chefs, One World," that features recipes from around the world. Redwood Hill Goat Cheese Brulee sounds mouth-watering enough to try. Executive chef of the Marine Room, La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club and La Jolla Shores Hotel, Guillas sees himself as a sorcerer who creates happiness on a plate. Originally from Brittany, France, Guillas feels happy by the ocean in La Jolla. Guillas trained at La Bretagne in Questembert, France. He worked at Maison Blanche under chef Pierre Chambrin, former White House executive chef. He also spent five years at the Grant Grill at the U.S. Grant Hotel downtown.

#### Brookfact

#### Harry's Coffee Shop

Restaurants come and go, but Harry's has become an institution in La Jolla since it opened 50 years ago. The old-fashioned diner has not slapped on layer upon layer of modernity to keep pace with the decade. Instead, the breakfast joint steadfastly has served up good American fare of eggs, bacon and pancakes in the morning and club sandwiches and charbroiled burgers in the afternoon, and has kept the customers coming back. Open at 6 in the morning, closed by 3 in the afternoon, Harry's remains a familiar, friendly place near and dear to La Jollans' hearts.

Harry's Coffee Shop 7545 Girard Ave. 454-7381 www.harryscoffeeshop.com

#### The Cottage

The Cottage is a quintessential La Jolla destination beloved by locals, tourists, young, old, regulars and newcomers alike. Set in the historic "Columbine" cottage built in the early 1900s (recently renovated to become more accessible to the handicapped), The Cottage serves up exceptional breakfast and lunch on a sun-drenched patio behind a white picket fence. Its gourmet omelets, stuffed French toast, health-crazed muffins and trademark granola are memorable and worth the weekend wait, which is sweetened by the coffee and cake samples offered to those milling on the sidewalk waiting for a table. In the summer, the restaurant stays opens for dinner. The Cottage also is available for rent for parties and receptions year-round.

The Cottage 7702 Fay Ave. 454-8409 www.cottagelajolla.com

#### Lunch:

#### **Girard Gourmet**

For the past two decades, La Jolla residents, office workers and tourists have refreshed themselves at the midday hour by indulging in the made-from-scratch sandwiches, soups and hot platters at Girard Gourmet. The line wraps around the bistro but moves swiftly since the mom-and-pop store has perfected the art of sandwich making. The sandwich begins with the homemade bread (grain or baguette). Our recommendation is the chicken curry salad with chutney or the salmon lox with cream cheese and capers. The lamb stew, lasagna and spinach and cheese quiche are also delicious. The small store is a feast for the eyes with its array of specially designed cookies and Belgian-style cakes.

Girard Gourmet 7837 Girard Ave. 454-3321 www.girardgourmet.com

#### Whisknladle

Whisknladle has created a buzz among foodies in San Diego for its dedication to selecting top-notch ingredients from local farms and then working diligently to create its own delectable dishes. The cooks passionately tend to every detail and the result is homemade breads, inhouse cured meats, complex sauces and ice cream churned by the cooks. Whisknladle is ratcheting up the culinary bar across the city. It's about time! For lunch, patrons are invited to dine on specialty dishes like duck confit salad or a platter of crispy sweetbreads. Whisknladle is not for the undiscerning eater looking to wolf down a sandwich and rush back to the office. Time is taken to prepare each component of the meal at hand, and complete attention, even if brief, is required to appreciate the subtleties of the fare.

Whisknladle 1044 Wall St. 551-7575 www.whisknladle.com

#### Dinner:

#### Mustangs and Burros

(See entry under Overall Restaurant) **Nine-Ten** 

#### Nine-ien

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

# Take-out: **Prepkitchen**

(See entry under New Restaurant)

#### **Girard Gourmet**

(See entry under Lunch)

#### Local Winery:

#### **Ponte Winery**

The Ponte Winery spent 25 years growing and tending its vineyards before it was ready to release its wine to the public in 2003. Now, the winery is on the move once again with the construction of its new vineyard patio, to be completed just in time for summer weddings. The winery is particularly proud of its Super T blend and smooth "Beverino" wine. After an afternoon of sampling wines, stop by the Smokehouse Restaurant for a hearty steak and live music on Friday and Saturday nights.

Ponte Winery 35053 Rancho California Rd., Temecula (951) 694-8855 www.pontewinery.com

# Orfila Vineyards & Winery

Too tired to trek to Temecula for a tipsy day spent in the tranquility of a vine-yard? Orfila winery is only 30 minutes north of La Jolla in the state's smallest American Viticulture Area. The 70-acre vineyard grows Rhone-style wines and has already garnered 1,300 medals for its wine since opening in 1994. Orfila Winery should also not be overlooked when entertaining guests, hosting parties and corporate events and for weddings.

Orfila Vineyards & Winery 13455 San Pasqual Rd., Escondido www.orfila.com

#### Sunday Brunch:

#### La Valencia Hotel

For all the La Jolla residents not fortunate enough to live somewhere else in order to spend a night at the historic La Valencia Hotel, the three unique restaurants within the hotel extend the favor. The Mediterranean Room serves dishes from its namesake region from the recently renovated dining room or open-air patio overlooking the sweeping blue Pacific Ocean for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the evening, the mahogany Whaling Bar grills steaks in an old-world seaside atmosphere complete with harpoons, lanterns, pewter candleholders and antique wooden shutters. Then there's the exclusive Sky Room on the tenth floor that may offer the most stunning, panoramic view of the ocean in La Jolla. A small kitchen, literally a holein-the-wall, prepares dinner for the 11 tables in the intimate dining room.

La Valencia Hotel 1132 Prospect St. 454-0771 www.lavalencia.com

#### The Cottage

(See entry under Breakfast)

#### Family Restaurant:

#### Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

Families with discerning taste should count on Sammy's pizza for their family night out. Patrons clearly support Sammy's mission to mix flavor with freshness in its pizza since Sammy's now operates 18 stores in the San Diego area and Nevada. Forget cheese and pepperoni of old-Sammy's redefines the genre with pies such as artichoke and homemade sauce, five cheeses or a salad pizza comprising of organic arugula, pear and prosciutto. Sammy's offers a more simplified menu for the kids. The Ladeki Restaurant Group also owns Roppongi Restaurant and Sushi Bar on Prospect Street, another beloved eatery in the village.

Sammy's Woodfired Pizza 702 Pearl St. 456-5222 www.sammyspizza.com

#### Pasquale on Prospect

Pasquale's isn't exactly an underground club, but it sometimes feels like it with the number of Hollywood stars that show up for dinner at this Italian bistro seemingly hidden down a staircase off Prospect Street. Patrons are chummy enough with each other to give the impression they come here often. NBA player Dennis Rodman captures its ambiance poignantly: "I wish my crib was like your hang," he told the owners. The Rome-raised chef Enzo Mauri must have something to do with the restau-

rant's success. Patrons rave about the ravioli, and the chicken cordon bleu is delicious. A flamenco guitarist performs on Thursday and Friday nights, and a rock-and-roll band takes the stage on Saturday nights from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m.

Pasquale on Prospect 1250 Prospect St., B10 456-7227

www.s156022313.onlinehome.us

# Restaurant Wine Selection **Burgundy Grill & Wine**

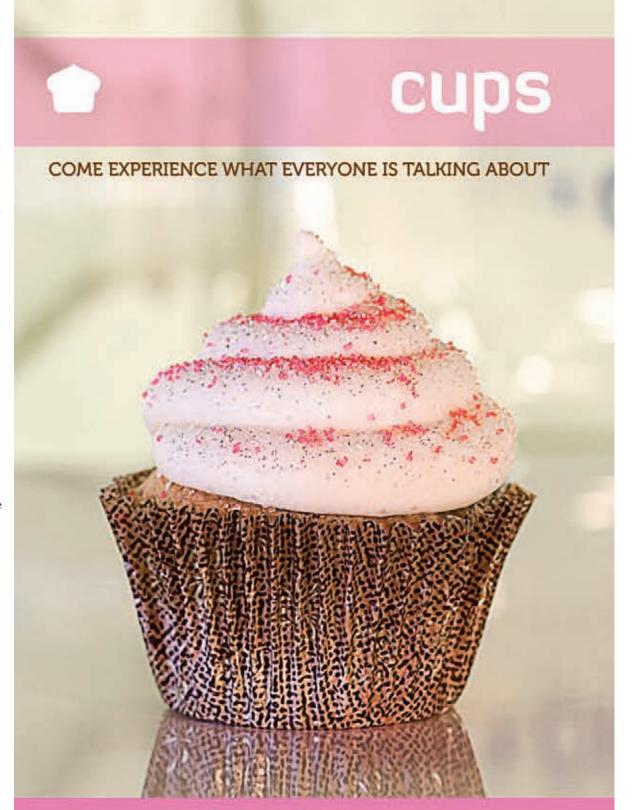
The next best place to sample wines from the Burgundy region of France — apart from flying across the world — is to head to Burgundy Grill & Wine. This quaint cottage restaurant has selected five reds and five whites for sampling. Patrons can also set themselves the happy goal of sampling all of the five flights: Red Burgundy Flight, White Burgundy Flight, California Flight, International Flight and Karl Strauss Beer Flight. Happy hour runs from 3 to 7 p.m. The menu features seasonal and organic foods, and plenty of the French cuisine that has made the country so deliciously famous.

Burgundy Grill & Wine 830 Kline St. 729-9905 www.burgundywinegrill.com

#### Beer Selection:

#### Karl Strauss Brewery & Restaurant

San Diego's very own microbrewery, Karl Strauss brews and bottles its beer in a converted greenhouse just east of Pacific Beach. La Jollans concerned with becoming oenophiles should not miss out on the freshness and flavor Karl Strauss has to offer. Two college graduates mixed their passion for handcrafted, old-world beer with technical finesse to build a strong reputation. Karl Strauss now brews 30 beers each year with seasonal offerings, and sends it to 2,500



# THANKS FOR VOTING US NUMBER 1! JOIN US FOR OUR GRAND OPENING PARTY SATURDAY JANUARY 30, 2010 6:30-9:30 AT CUPS LOUNGE

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bars, restaurants, liquor stores and grocery stores throughout Southern California. Sipping a cold brew at the La Jolla restaurant is of cultural importance! Karl Strauss Brewery & Restaurant 1044 Wall St. 551-2739

www.karlstrauss.com

#### La Jolla Brewhouse

Adults need a place to kick back and relax, too. The La Jolla Brewhouse is a favorite hangout in the village with its dozens of flat-screen TVs, delicious American food, tall wooden tables and pool table in the back. And let's not forget about the dozens of beers the Brewhouse offers on tap: delicious! The stress of the week melts away quickly at the Brew-

La Jolla Brewhouse 7536 Fay Ave. 456-6279 www.lajollabrewhouse.com

#### Wine Shop:

#### BevMo

It's not difficult to understand why this warehouse of alcohol has grown popular: It sells every brand and region of alcohol desired. There are thousands of bottles of wine, beer and spirits on these shelves. "What to choose?" is the only problem. Browsing the company website may help out the wandering shopper. Rating agencies give their top picks for the beer, wine and spirits. Kegs are also sold for parties.

BevMo 844 Pearl St. 729-0775 www.bevmo.com

#### Sports Bar:

#### The Spot **Restaurant and Tavern**

This eatery opened its doors in 1978 in the oldest La Jolla building in continuous use as a restaurant. It's become a favorite for its fresh fish, steaks, burgers, salads, pasta, sandwiches and Chicago-style pizza — in other words, it offers just about anything a late-night diner could want. There's a full-service bar and a large selection of fine wines, too. The warm fire burning in the middle of the

room seals the cozy ambiance of this late-night spot.

The Spot Restaurant and Tavern 1005 Prospect St. 459-0800 www.thespotonline.com

#### La Jolla Brewhouse

(See entry under Beer Selection.)

#### Place to People Watch:

#### George's at the Cove

George's at the Cove has been in La Jolla since 1984, but there's not a solitary sign that it seeks to rest on its laurels. The exceptional dining experiences are no accident — this restaurant has a whopping three on-site restaurants dedicated to providing guests with the best food and service possible. Guests can either opt for California modern or a more casual, bistro dining experience at George's Bar, complete with an outdoor patio. For a spectacular view of the ocean, head upstairs to the ocean terrace.

George's at the Cove 1250 Prospect St. 454-4244 www. georges at the cove. com

#### Living Room Cafe

The Living Room has truly lived up to its name in La Jolla. The café has drawn young and old alike to sip tea, coffee and deluxe smoothies in a homey ambiance furnished with antique, ornate coaches and wooden tables. Patrons find the communal atmosphere inspiring and relaxing; you'll find groups of friends smoking the hookah on the patio and others pouring over books in the back. At the far end of the café is a quaint view overlooking rooftops and glimpses of the ocean. Scrumptious desserts are available, along with wine, beer and hookah tobacco.

Living Room Cafe 1010 Prospect St. 459-1187 www.livingroomcafe.com

#### Pet Friendly:

#### Come On In

What started as a La Jolla bakery has turned into a pet-friendly gourmet restaurant sensation spreading throughout San Diego's north coast. The current owners kept the flavorful selection of pastries and desserts and added fresh, Euro-California cuisine, having converted Come On In Café, established in 1993, to a Euro-bistro in 1999. Come On In maintained its focus by providing fresh, delicious food that won't ruin your diet, though you'd hardly know it by the taste.

Come On In 1030-B Torrey Pines Road 551-1063 www.comeonincafe.com

# **Bull and Bear**

Bar & Grill All agree this has been a Bear year for the market, and this bar is just the right place to drown financial woes in a draft beer and some steak medallions. (For those of you not familiar with the lingo, a Bear market refers to a decline in the stock market and a Bull market shows investor confidence.) The grill serves up a mix of American, Italian and Mexican dishes served indoors or on the patio. So whether you're feeling bearish or bullish, this is a welcome place to relax.

**Bull and Bear Grill** 1271 Prospect St.

www.bullandbearbarandgrill.com

#### Restaurant with Live Music:

#### Beaumont's Eatery

Beaumont's has become the focal point — the only point — for nightlife in Bird Rock. Live bands play on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and neighbors like to throw back drinks and get a little rowdy (think Bird Rock rowdy, not PB!). The food is exceptional and unique, and offers a range of entrées, from a juicy burger to Spanish seafood paella and French country-style meatloaf. The chef focuses on local produce and is concerned with the flavor of ingredients. Count on Beaumont's for a delectable meal and a chance to meet your neighbor!

5662 La Jolla Blvd. 459-0474 www.beaumontseatery.com

#### Mustangs and Burros

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

#### Comfort Food:

#### The Cottage

(See entry under Breakfast)

#### Cody's La Jolla

Cody's presents exceptional food that is refreshingly uncomplicated and uniquely American, like the eggs and bacon and crab cakes that make your mouth water. This lovely seaside cottage is La Jolla's prime spot for relaxed ocean-view dining, serving breakfast and lunch daily. And if you can hold on until the end of May, you can enjoy it all alongside some

cool piano and acoustic guitar through the summer.

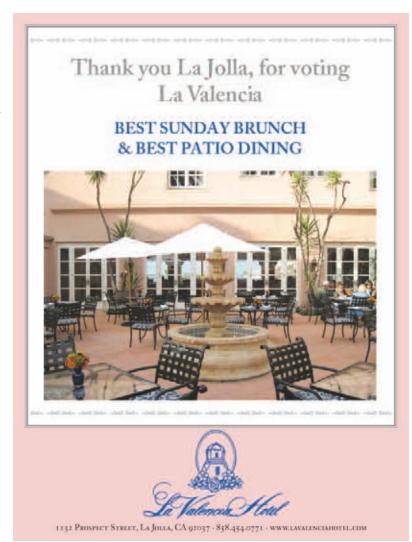
Cody's La Jolla 8030 Girard Ave. 459-0040

## Happy Hour:

www.codyslajolla.com

#### Clay's La Jolla

Clay's La Jolla is different from many local eateries with happy hours. Let's start with the name — Clay Bordan is a real guy, and he got the idea to open a local eatery amid his passion for food, art and happy-hour success. He offers a blend of food styles gar-



# Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!



Best Asian Fusion · Best Appetizer 875 Prospect Street 858.551.5252 www.roppongiusa.com



Best Pizza • Best Family Restaurant Best Place for a Birthday Party 702 Pearl Street 858.456.5222 www.sammyspizza.com



Best Catering Contact Rod Coon at 858.456.8018 ext. 111 www.mosaic-catering.com

nered from several kitchens across the country (he has kitchens in Santa Fe and Florida, too). Check out the Website for the lineup of live music, and happy hour runs 4 to 7 p.m.

Clay's La Jolla 7955 La Jolla Shores Dr. 551-3620 www.clayslajolla.com

#### Nine-Ten

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

Late Night Eatery:

The Spot

(See entry under Sports Bar)

#### Jose's Court Room

Jose's has been delighting locals and visitors since 1978 with its colorful, casual, friendly ambiance. Specializing in carne asada, pollo asado and carnitas, along with many other delicious, authentic Mexican specialties, this is a great place to enjoy a fabulous meal with family, friends and co-workers. Whether you come alone or with a group, you're sure to enjoy unsurpassed quality food and friendly, conscientious service.

Jose's Court Room 1037 Prospect St. 454-7655 www.joses.com

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#### Place to go on a Budget:

#### Wahoo's Fish Tacos

Wahoo's has become a La Jolla tradition for young and old. Ask any kid who grew up in La Jolla — they remember hanging out after school at Wahoo's. Walls, tables, windows and even bathrooms are laden with signed memorabilia and stickers, like a giant skateboard. Starters include tasty Maui onion rings and spicy chicken tortilla soup, but it's the fish tacos that draw the crowds. Kids continue to love the place because of the free stickers!

Wahoo's Fish Tacos 639 Pearl St. 459-0027 www.wahoos.com

#### Jeff's Burgers

After a morning of surfing and a mouth tasting of salt water, Jeff's Burgers is an ideal place to refuel with a burger and a soda. A burger with cheese, avocado and bacon will definitely do the trick. And the thick milkshakes are delicious. Hearty, salty foods always taste delicious at the beach. Forget the cooler, Jeff's Burgers is the place to go.

Jeff's Burgers 2152 Avenida De La Playa 454-8038

#### Place for Birthday Party:

#### Prospect Bar & Lounge

The party is usually audible from down the street. Across the hall from Sushi on the Rock, Prospect Bar & Lounge is a swanky hangout with music every night of the week. Dancers and novices pack the lounge on Monday evenings for a free salsa class and dancing until late. Acoustic musicians take the stage on Thursday nights and the deejay is spinning the party on Fridays and Saturdays. On a more mellow note, relax with friends on the outdoor patio warmed by fire pits and enjoy the bar's California cuisine.

Prospect Bar & Lounge 1025 Prospect St. 454-8092 www.prospectbar.com

#### Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

(See entry under Family Restaurant)

#### Most Romantic:

#### The Marine Room

When The Marine Room opened at its current location, Franklin Roosevelt had just been elected to his third term as president. That pretty much makes The Marine Room the oldest San Diego restaurant still owned and operated by its founders in its original location. Executive chef Bernard Guillas uses all that history to his best advantage — he's got a lot to draw from as he travels the world in search of the finest cuisine for The Marine Room's legion of customers.

The Marine Room 2000 Spindrift Drive 459-7222 www.marineroom.com

#### George's at the Cove

(See entry under Place to People Watch)

#### Ocean View:

#### George's at the Cove

(See entry under Place to People Watch)

#### The Steakhouse at Azul

Tucked among La Jolla's boutiques, Azul invites patrons into a world-class environment where prime steak is served on white linen and the view is the calming blue ocean. For a private dinner party, guests are invited to enjoy their meal in the glass-surrounded wine room. In the evening, stars twinkle overhead on the lush patio warmed by a fire.

The Steakhouse at Azul 1250 Prospect St. 454-9616 www.azul-lajolla.com

#### Appetizer:

# Roppongi Restaurant and Sushi Bar

Roppongi offers the rare opportunity to sample new Asian cuisine and choose from a variety of sushi rolls in a chic atmosphere where professionals are known to cluster. Chef Stephen Window offers meals far beyond the standard fare, like the miso-glazed Japanese eggplant and crispy buttermilk onion rings with wasabi garlic aioli sauce. Popular for its generous happy hour portions, Roppongi is the very definition of umami. Roppongi Restaurant and Sushi Bar

875 Prospect St. 551-5252

www.roppongiusa.com

#### Crab Catcher

Perched atop an oceanside La Jolla bluff, the Crab Catcher offers a spectacular view. The elevated dining room overlooks waves crashing onto La Jolla Cove and an elegant coastal backdrop. Chef Jon Burwell's extensive menu fetes the ocean's bounty with dishes such as king crab-stuffed Hawaiian ono with chili-garlic puree and dill-infused buerre blanc, montrachet goat cheese and roasted shallot Pinot Noir reduction. It's not for nothing that the Crab Catcher is celebrating its 30th year of success.

Crab Catcher 1298 Prospect St. 454-9587 www.crabcatcher.com

#### Burrito:

#### La Jolla Rancherita

This rancherita is festive, and even more so after a few margaritas and a hearty platter of Mexican food. The adobe walls are painted burnt orange, and murals of the traditional working life in Mexico adorn the walls. This Mexican restaurant is an ideal place for people eating alone (the bar is cozy and the staff friendly) or for a spontaneously large group that needs to pull tables together. Patrons rave about the House Special Cheese Crisp — a sort of Mexican pizza with a tortilla crust.

La Jolla Rancherita 7404 La Jolla Blvd. 459-5877

#### Mr. Taco Mexican Food

Here's where you'll find the quality of a better restaurant and the quantity that seems to mark the better fast-food eateries. Everybody says to try the cheese enchilada. If you do, please take comfort in the fact that its ingredients — along with everything else here — are made fresh daily. Then take a short walk across Prospect and enjoy your meal at Scripps Park.

Mr. Taco Mexican Food 7918 Ivanhoe Ave. 729-0501

#### Burger

#### Burger Lounge

In many ways, Burger Lounge is the antithesis of a fast-food joint. It is about a passion to create something great. Starting with all-natural grass-fed Tallgrass beef delivered directly from the rancher, hand-cut french fries, fresh-made onion rings and home-baked buns, Burger Lounge has created a food experience it hopes you will want to have again and again. Burger Lounge also serves cool, crisp salads, a turkey burger with fresh basil and its own vegetarian burger made from organic quinoa.

Burger Lounge 1101 Wall St. 456-0196

#### Nine-Ten

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

#### Fish Taco:

#### Wahoo's

(See entry under Place to go on a Budget)

#### Mr. Taco Mexican Food

(See entry under Burrito)

#### Desserts:

#### Cups

Cups pastry chefs have taken the ubiquitous cupcake dessert and turned it into a culinary masterpiece. Each cupcake flavor is the unique handiwork of a pastry chef and worthy of critique — far and above the shot-of-sugar cupcakes sold in supermarkets. The chefs blend a fantastic array of organic ingredients. For example, the pumpkin cardamom spiced cupcake is topped with cardamom-spiced chocolate frosting and pepita brittle. The lounge also serves organic milk on-tap to accompany the richness of the cup-



# Celebrate a Month of Romance

Indulge in a romantic culinary celebration throughout February at La Jolla's most romantic restaurant. Celebrate love all month long with our special three-course "Month of Romance" menu featuring seasonal dishes with a romantic twist. Or, join us for Valentine's Day weekend and savor a delicious four-course menu in front of spectacular oceanfront views.

Month of Romance Menu Nightly during February\* \$50 per person

#### First Glance

Tangerine Zaatar Dusted Ahi Tuna and Prawn Mayan Vanilla Buttercup Squash Nectar Blue Heron Farm Bouquet of Greens

#### Rendezvous

Passion Fruit Macadamia Crusted Divers Scallops Piri Piri Spiced Angus Filet Mignon Almond Milk Poached Pompano

> Bisous World Chocolate

\*Excluding February 13 & 14



Valentine's Day Menu February 13 & 14 \$125 per person

#### Appetizer

Almond Panch Phoran Coated Wild Prawns Vanilla Blue Crab Timbale Fiji Macadamia Spiced Diver Scallops White Sage Braised Brandt Beef Cheeks Warm Wild Mushroom Torte

#### First Course

Blue Heron Farm Organic Leaves Caribbean Laughing Bird Shrimp Bisque

#### Main Course

Olive Oil Poached Tasmanian Steelhead Salmon Vermont Cabot Butter Basted Lobster Tail Midwestern Black Angus Filet Mignon Fleur de Sel Thyme Rubbed Free Range Veal Broken Arrow Ranch Antelope Loin

> Dessert Study On Flavor

Mignardises

Green Fairy Chocolate Truffles

Thank you to the readers of the La Jolla Village News for voting the Marine Room "Most Romantic" and "Best Chef, Bernard Guillas" for the second year in a row!



(858) 459.7222

MarineRoom.com

7857 Girard Ave. (858) 459-2877 www.cupslj.com

#### Michele Coulon Dessertier

Michele Coulon, former ballerina and member of the legendary Coulon culinary family, worked as a chef in her family's restaurant after years of living in Paris. Serving French wine, a light lunch menu and sinful sweets, Coulon's pas de deux are her svelte wedding cakes and elegant tortes. Enjoy the lemon Bavarian cream, orange and Myers dark rum cake and milk chocolate caramel torte, just to mention a few, as well as the best chocolate marbled cheesecake this side of New York City.

Michele Coulon Dessertier 7556 Fay Ave., Suite D 456-5098 www.dessertier.com

#### Margarita:

#### Jose's Court Room

(See entry under Late Night Eatery)

#### Alfonso's of La Jolla

Alfonso's of La Jolla has been a community mainstay for more than three decades. The family has handed down recipes from generation to generation to shape its menu, which includes specials like Puerto Nuevo Style Lobster. Locals and visitors alike enjoy sipping margaritas on the outdoor patio with the smell of sea breeze in the air. Alfonso's burritos, in part, have kept customers returning for so many years.

Alfonso's of La Jolla 1251 Prospect St. 454-2232

#### Pizza:

#### Sammy's **Woodfired Pizza**

(See entry under Family Restaurant)

#### Pizza on Pearl

Pizza on Pearl has transplanted the best of New York-style thin crust pizza to La Jolla. The dough is tossed and sauces are prepared in-house. Calzones, salads and the three desserts you'd expect to find in a New York pizzeria are also on the menu: cheesecake, tiramisu and chocolate bundt cake. After success in Solana Beach, Dave Mittleman decided to bring his pizzeria to La Jolla. The caféambiance of the pizzeria with its tasteful  $% \left\{ 1,2,...,n\right\}$ wicker furniture and warm yellow walls enhances the experience.

Pizza On Pearl 617 Pearl St. 729-0717 www.pizzaonpearl.com

#### Salad Bar:

### Whole Foods

Regulars to Whole Foods are already hip to the store's reputation for cleanliness and convenience. Everything is carefully labeled "organic" or "no preservatives" if the label fits; the displays are colorful and arranged for aesthetic appeal. Don't forget that all that goes for the salad bar as well -- it features healthful touches, such as extra-virgin olive oil and exactly 1 million selections that you can alter at your discretion. And if you're so inclined, you can eat it in comfort on the spot. As always, Whole Foods has thought of everything.

Whole Foods 8825 Villa La Jolla Drive 642-6700 www.wholefoodsmarket.com

#### Sandwich: The Sandwich Club

Located in the Merrill Lynch building, this sandwich shop caters to those who prefer a more exclusive sandwich. Fancy a steak sandwich with mushrooms and onions on a French roll, complete with provolone cheese, lettuce and tomatoes? In addition to its hot sandwiches, the café also sells wraps, six varieties of salads and breakfast. The Sandwich Club is the epitome of a power lunch.

The Sandwich Club 7825 Fav Ave. 456-7548 www.thesandwichclublj.com

#### **Girard Gourmet**

(See entry under Lunch)

#### Steak:

#### Donovan's of La Jolla

They may look good enough to eat, but the paintings and sculptures at Donovan's of La Jolla are strictly off limits - so you'll have to content yourself with the USDA Prime beef, the eatery's star attraction. If steak isn't in the plan, pork and veal chops and succulent seafood will satisfy the most discriminating of palates. And at Donovan's, fresh seasonal vegetables and your choice of potato are always included with each entrée.

Donovan's of La Jolla 4340 La Jolla Village Dr. 450-6666 www.donovanssteakhouse.com

#### Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar

Fleming's has perfected the art of preparing a steak: corn-fed, aged up to four weeks for flavor and texture, broiled at 1600 degrees to seal in all the juices and flavor, and seasoned with salt and black pepper with a touch of butter and parsley. The steakhouse didn't stop there: It also became an expert in wine pairings to help you echo the flavors and textures in your meal or juxtapose them. Fleming's is an experience to savor.

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar 8970 University Center Lane 535-0078

www.flemingssteakhouse.com

#### Sushi:

#### Zenbu Sushi Bar & Restaurant

In an era of disappearing fish, Zenbu attempts to take a sustainable approach to offering the bounty of the sea. Founder/owner Matt Rimel developed his own seafood company to exert better control over his product. Zenbu also serves locally raised grass-fed beef. Zenbu means "all" in Japanese so whether the word refers to a complete culinary experience or that all are welcome, both are certainly true no matter the definition. Each platter of sushi is artistically presented in a très chic lounge almost as alluring as the sushi.

Zenbu Sushi Bar & Restaurant 7660 Fay Ave. 454-4540 www.rimels restaurants.com

#### Sushi on the Rock

The buzz on this 10-year-old staple says the chefs are "crazy." We're assured, however, that there's no truth to that in the literal sense — it only means they're creative and innovative. They have a lot to work with, too. Sushi on the Rock

serves just about every kind of raw fish you can imagine, especially the spicy and Southwestern combos, and that means those "crazy" chefs have lots more material for their concoctions. Even now, the place is introducing several new specialty rolls, and there's a house sake to wash it all down with.

Sushi On the Rock 1025 Prospect St. 459-3208

www.sushiontherock.com

#### Seafood: El Pescador

Every La Jollan should know about El Pescador, one of those places that will make your life happier and easier. El Pescador sells only the highest quality fresh fish for ambitious home cooks to broil, steam or slice into sushi. For fish connoisseurs who want to enjoy fresh fish in a hurry, El Pescador serves a variety of char-grilled fish and seafood sandwiches, as well as homemade chowders. Lunch or dinner doesn't get better than a local sea bass in olive oil and garlic

if desired. Interestingly, a 19-year-old surfer first launched El Pescador with a refrigerator, display case and plenty of ambition in Del Mar in 1974. El Pescador 627 Pearl St. 456-2526

www.elpescadorfishmarket.com

#### Crab Catcher

(See entry under Appetizer)

#### Asian/Fusion

Roppongi (See entry under Appetizer)

### Café Japengo

At last count, San Diego had exactly 3,711,623 sushi places — the only venue not included in the tally is Japengo, as it's not exactly your standard sushi stop. Since 1990, this place has been blazing new trails of culinary excellence, garnering a slew of prestigious accolades, and it continues to invent flavorful, visionary creations, from sashimi to moo shu-style duckling. Sushi's been around for centuries — thanks to Café Japengo, you don't have to wait that long to savor the best.

Café Japengo 8960 University Center Lane 450-3355 www.cafejapengo.com

#### American:

#### Nine-Ten

#### The Cottage

(See entry under Breakfast)

#### Spice & Rice Thai Kitchen

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This establishment offers a tantalizing menu and a clean-air approach to dining. Be warned: Many of the dishes are on the spicy side, like those in many Thai restaurants. The kitchen is accommodating and will moderate the seasoning to suit your taste. Most dishes can be made as a vegetarian version. Prices are quite appealing, and the Thai salads are excellent. Enjoy a little spice and rice in your life.

Spice & Rice Thai Kitchen 7734-C Girard Ave. 456-0466

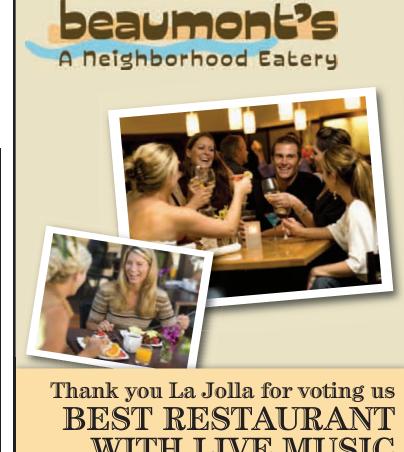
www.spiceandricethaikitchen.com

#### La Basil Thai Cuisine

You know what an eggplant looks like - kind of like an overgrown light bulb that somebody painted purple as a prank. Well, eggplant, and everything else, is no joke at this place. The freshest ingredients are always on tap, and the staff has forgotten more about Thai







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cuisine than you'll ever know. Don't be shy about asking your way around the fare; the staff can season your meal to taste - even the eggplant, which suddenly becomes the very center of the ingredient universe.

La Basil Thai Cuisine 5525 La Jolla Blvd. 456-7889

#### Italian:

#### **Piatti Ristorante**

The open kitchens and stone pizza hearths of the Piatti restaurants reflect the warm charm and welcoming atmosphere of a traditional Italian trattoria. While every Piatti has its own character and ambiance suited to its locale, all are characterized by simple, unpretentious designs, rustic yet flavorful cuisine and family-friendly service. Piatti restaurants are gathering places where friends, family and neighbors eat, drink and socialize while enjoying the sense of community found in Italy's most popular tratto-

Piatti Ristorante 2182 Avenida de la Playa 454-1589 www.piatti.com

#### Vigilucci's Seafood, Steak and Chop House

Raised in the kitchen in his hometown of Milano, Roberto Vigilucci now runs nine kitchens in Southern California. The La Jolla restaurant. which opened in late 2007, boasts a casually upscale atmosphere — the lunch and dinner menu features the finest steaks, freshest seafood and pasta. Menu items are prepared with an Italian flair, which sets this restaurant apart from other steakhouses in the area. Best of all, there's a lively happy hour with live music Thursdays and during Sunday Brunch.

Vigilucci's Seafood, Steak and Chop House 909 Prospect St., Ste. 209 454-9664 www.vigiluccis.com

#### Best French

#### **Tapenade** Restaurant and Fine Catering

Tapenade owner Jean-Michel Diot says his suppliers understand his

tastes in French cuisine - and after 10 years' existence, he and they likely have their demographics down to a science. Tapenade offers the finest in French cuisine and even has a Fine Wine Club, wherein Diot offers premium wines at a discount.

Tanenade Restaurant and Fine Catering 7612 Fay Ave. 551-7500

#### www.TapenadeRestaurant.com

Indian:

India Palace

India Palace is a culinary experience fit for a prince or princess. This Indian restaurant pays homage to delectable Indian cuisine with its flavorful spices, rich sauces and succulent meats. If you have a craving for Indian food - or haven't eaten it for a while - make India Palace your next night out.

India Palace 7514 Girard Ave., Suite 10 551-5133

#### Chinese:

#### China Chef

Dinner at China Chef is almost a steal. The restaurant offers a dinner combination of a main dish, egg roll, cup of soup and rice for only \$9.95. Oh, and the lunch combo costs \$6.25. It sounds like a radio commercial but it's true. The menu is extensive, ranging from chop suey, egg foo young and noodle dishes to vegetable, chicken, beef and pork platters. The food is good enough that the chef guarantees no MSG is involved.

China Chef 623 Pearl St. 454-7597 www.lajollachinachef.com

#### Mediterranean: Trattoria Acqua

Trattoria Acqua has modified its menu over the past 15 years to accommodate the change in dietary trends, but has kept its roots in serving genuine Italian food that emphasizes the quality of ingredients and simplicity of flavors. On the menu these days are comfort foods Italian-style, like the mac and cheese

crafted from Gruyere, cheddar, provolone and mozzarella cheeses, white truffle essence and toasted bread crumbs. To keep in step with the struggling economy, the restaurant has crafted an affordable menu with the majority of its entrees priced below \$20. Escaping the humdrum of daily life for this seaside café is a true delight.

1298 Prospect St. (858) 454-0709 www.trattoriaacqua.com

#### Marketplace Grille

This hole-in-the-wall restaurant with mostly outdoor patio seating has focused all its energies on its grill with admirable results. The cooks serve up Persian food paired with a Southwestern mesquite flavor. Meats, seafood and vegetables are marinated and simmered over mesquite coals and served on skewers or over basmati rice with lavash bread and a green salad. The Baba Ghanosh, taboulee, hummus and Greek salad are all worth a mention Finish the meal with a thimble-size cup of Turkish coffee.

Marketplace Grille 1030 Torrey Pines Road 456-9576 www.marketplacegrille.com

Mexican:

#### Jose's Court Room

(See entry under Late Night Eatery)

#### Alfonso's

(See entry under Margarita)

#### Bakery:

#### **Girard Gourmet**

(See entry under Lunch)

Bar:

#### Nine-Ten

(See entry under Overall Restaurant)

#### Jose's Court Room

(See entry under Late Night Eatery)

#### **Brick & Bell Cafe**

Tucked away on Silverado Street, not all La Jollans may be familiar with this café but regulars swear by it. Early risers rave about the scones and muffins, and the soups make a big splash at lunchtime, particularly the chicken enchilada soup. Chipotle sauce adds a nice zest to the veggie sandwich, and ciabatta bread works well for the BLT. The standard turkey and roast beef sandwiches are dressed up with avocado and prepared nicely. Ring the bell for this cozy café.

Brick & Bell Cafe 928 Silverado St. 551-0928

#### Pannikin Coffee & Tea

The Pannikin operates out of an 81year-old house, which is one element of its charm. In fact, the regulars who've been coming there for something like 20 years — take a certain pride of ownership in the place, regarding it almost like a community center. The creaky wooden floors and gigantic chessboard in the back corner add a whimsical touch. Regulars like to sit on the porch on high stools and watch life go by on Girard Avenue. Better yet, the coffee shop is located right next to the treasure trove that is D.G. Wills Books

Pannikin Coffee & Tea 7467 Girard Ave. 454-5453 www.pannikincoffeeandtea.com

#### Catering:

#### **Giuseppe Restaurants** & Fine Catering

Planning a wedding, celebration or corporate event? Stop by the Museum Café at the Modern Art Museum on Prospect Street to sample Giuseppe Ciuffa's Europeaninspired bistro cuisine coupled with a California flair. It just may help you decide whether to cater your event with Ciuffa, who also runs the catering business. For weddings, Ciuffa offers three options for dinning: chef-attended food stations, a seated meal or a cocktail reception, as well as bar service. For the Italian

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Mosaic Catering

456-8018 www.mosaic-catering.com

Coffee Shop:

#### Harry's Coffee Shop

(See entry under Breakfast)

#### Living Room

(See entry under Place to People Watch)

#### Deli:

#### **Cheese Shop**

The venerable Cheese Shop has been a fixture of La Jolla Shores since John and Dorothy Schutz opened the store in 1972. The Schutzes began as purveyors of imported cheeses and fine foods from all over the world, and have expanded that tradition to offer handmade sandwiches and cookies for the hungry beachgoers. The turkey jack avocado sandwich is a favorite. On a chilly day, opt for the warm Reuben or pastrami. Retro candies and soda in glass bottles will send you on a trip down memory lane.

Cheese Shop 2165 Avenida De La Playa 459-3921

www.cheeseshoplajolla.com

#### The Sandwich Club

(See entry under Sandwich)

#### Ice Cream/Yogurt

# Cold Stone Creamery Cold Stone Creamery has garner

Cold Stone Creamery has garnered a name for itself for its inventive way of dishing up — or should we say "dicing up" — ice cream. The staff willingly mixes and matches whatever flavors and toppings your heart desires on a frozen granite slab for a custom-made dessert. If you're undecided, go for a signature sundae like the banana caramel crunch. The store also sells cakes, shakes and smoothies.

Cold Stone Creamery 909 Prospect St. 454-2300 www.Coldstonecreamery.com

#### Froglander's

The yogurt is creamy, flavorful, inexpensive and even fairly good for you. Froglander's is not a substitute for ice cream: its yogurt stands on its own, with flavors such as dark chocolate, blueberry, raspberry and peach. On a warm, sunny day, it doesn't get much better than Froglander's, which has served the village for years.

Froglander's 915 Pearl St. 459-3764

#### Best BBQ

#### Bubba's Smoke House BBQ

After a career in the Navy serving on the USS Coronado together, Jeff and Bruce realized a longtime dream: open the perfect restaurant. The friends put their heads together to define perfection: food good enough to collect regulars in a joint friendly enough to become a neighborhood tradition. Thus, Bubba's BBQ was born in La Jolla on April 21, 2009. Members of the military and La Jolla residents receive a 10 percent discount. As for the food, let's just say it's finger-licking good.

Bubba's Smoke House BBQ 888 Prospect St. 551-4227

www.bubbassmokehousebbq.com

#### Vegetarian

#### Lean & Green

For the health-conscious, there is finally a place in La Jolla to rejuvenate in a hurry. Customers can rest assured that each ingredient offers the optimal health. For breakfast, fuel yourself with an organic fruit bowl (steel cut oatmeal, strawberries and almonds, sweetened with agave nectar) or a warm platter of roasted corn, steamed eggs topped with feta cheese and salsa. Lunch-goers can build their own salad or wrap. For a snack, smoothies range from Peach Passion to Amazing Acai, and a shot of wheatgrass is always a kick in the pants.

Lean & Green 7825 Fay Ave. 459-5326 www.leanandgreen.com

#### Spice and Rice Thai Kitchen

(See entry under Thai)

#### Patio Dining

#### George's at the Cove

(See entry under Place to People Watch)

#### La Valencia

(See entry under Sunday Brunch)







# VILLAGE NEWS READERS CHOICE AWARDS BEST RESTAURANTS 2 0 0 9

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