

### Josie ★★★

2424 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica (310-581-9888 or josie restaurant.com). D Tue.-Sun. Full bar. New American \$\$\$  
 ♦ Civilized and refined, Josie exists outside trends. Its two dining rooms invite conversation without being hushed. Chef Josie Le Balch is as comfortable using a copper *sau-teuse* as she is working the wood-burning grill. She can do frog legs amandine and not make it seem like an ironic statement. The skewered *seppia* with lentils and the *tagine* of beef short ribs go out along the razor's edge of inspiration. Jonna Jensen's desserts—the hazelnut-pear frangipane is stellar—match Le Balch's meticulous style.

### Kiriko Sushi ★★

11301 W. Olympic Blvd., Ste. 102, West L.A. (310-478-7769 or kirikosushi.com). L Tue.-Fri.; D Tue.-Sun. Beer, wine, and sake. Sushi \$\$\$  
 ♦ Diminutive Kiriko looks like one more sushi spot, but it is among the best. The chefs set themselves apart with their command of bigger flavors. Miso soup with a meaty fish collar achieves a kind of absolute; the ramekin of sun-dried daikon sounds an ancestral note. The salmon is smoked at such a low temperature that the texture remains yielding and the applewood charcoal permeates the flesh with flavor.

### Maison Giraud ★

1032 Swarthmore Ave., Pacific Palisades (310-459-7561 or maison-giraud.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sat.-Sun. Beer and wine. French \$\$\$  
 ♦ He did Cal-French at Citrus and operatic French at Lavande, but now Alain Giraud is delivering a wisp of nostalgia in a minimalist dining room in Pacific Palisades. Here he focuses on a rustic ideal embodied in the steam that rises from a gleaming basil-laced *pistou* soup. *Le steak* comes as it must, with charred shallots and *frites*. The roasted chicken is plated with a lemon-brightened *jus* and a bouquet of *haricots verts* that evoke the simplicity of classic French cooking.

### Mélisse ★★★★★

1104 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica (310-395-0881 or melisse.com). D Tue.-Sat. Full bar. French-American \$\$\$  
 ♦ The Michelin-starred restaurant from Josiah Citrin has a *grande maison* quality. Citrin's cooking is delightfully frank—this is not a place where the essence of an essence will be spooned with a ceremonial hush. Crisped Parmesan croquettes bob in an earthy artichoke soup. Beef three ways highlights the gradations between cuts of meat, anchored by a sauce in which mustard is folded into a celery puree. A passion fruit soufflé caps off a lyrical meal.

### Mercado ★★

1416 4th St., Santa Monica (310-526-7121 or mercadosantamonica.com). D nightly. Full bar. Mexican \$\$  
 ♦ With communal tables and white subway tiles sheathing the walls, Mercado reads like a gastropub, but this is because Jesse Gomez and chef Jose Acevedo are toying with notions of authenticity. Shouldn't corn this good—charred and sprinkled with *chile piquin* and *queso cotija*—come from a sidewalk stand? Acevedo breaks form with the *carnitas*, serving them as a great hunk of braised pork, the florets of vinegar-tinged cauliflower (pickled in-house, of course) cutting the richness.

### Michael's ★★

1147 3rd St., Santa Monica (310-451-0843 or michaels santamonica.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. California \$\$\$  
 ♦ When Michael McCarty opened his restaurant in 1979, he was intent on introducing the farm-to-table aesthetic that came to be called California cuisine. Some of the country's finest chefs have cooked here: Ken Frank, Jonathan Waxman, Mark Peel, Nancy Silverton. Their spirit lives on in today's menu, which abounds with local ingredients: beet salad with hazelnut-crusted chèvre and wild arugula, wild striped bass with melted leeks and potato-chorizo hash.

### Milo and Olive ★

2723 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica (310-453-6776 or miloandolive.com). B-L-D daily. Beer and wine. California \$\$  
 ♦ The food is homey at the newest spot from the team behind Rustic Canyon and Huckleberry. Crackling duck leg rests atop a jumble of apples, chestnuts, and charred brussels sprouts; like much of the rustic cooking, the dish

## MEDICAL SPOTLIGHT

R. Sonia Batra, MD, MSc, MPH

## BATRA MEDICAL, SURGICAL, AND COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY

1301 20th Street, Suite 465  
 Santa Monica  
 (310) 829-9099  
 batraskincare.com



**batra**  
 medical, surgical, and  
 cosmetic dermatology

Dr. Batra received her A.B., M.P.H., and M.D. degrees from Harvard University, where she graduated magna cum laude and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. A Rhodes scholar, she earned a master's degree at Oxford. She completed her residency training in dermatology at Stanford University, followed by advanced fellowship training in Mohs micrographic surgery and laser and cosmetic dermatology. She and her associates are well versed in the latest advances and use state-of-the-art technology, but never forget that friendly, personalized, ethical care for patients is the top priority.

Batra Dermatology specializes in cutting-edge treatments to maintain the health of your skin. We are delighted to introduce CoolSculpting Fat Reduction. We also offer comprehensive skin care including skin cancer treatments and surgical and nonsurgical procedures such as TriPollar Radio-frequency tightening, Fractional CO2 Laser Skin Resurfacing, and VBeam Perfecta Laser treatment.

**NATALEE  
THAI  
CUISINE**

[www.nataleethai.com](http://www.nataleethai.com)

10101 Venice Blvd., Culver City (310) 202-7003  
 998 S. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills (310) 855-9380

**FICTION CITY**

NEW WORKS BY: **GUY DOHERTY** ELLIS

SHOW RUNS THRU 3.16.13  
 CLOSING RECEPTION: SATURDAY MAR. 16TH  
 7PM - 1AM | DJ: LA JAE | [DCYPHERART.COM](http://DCYPHERART.COM)

**PORTRAYALS**

NEW WORKS BY:  
**SAMIREVOLARGHANDWALL**

OPENING RECEPTION SAT MAR. 23RD  
 CLOSING RECEPTION SAT APRIL 13TH  
 8PM - 1AM | DJ: LA JAE | [SAMIRRAHIMI.COM](http://SAMIRRAHIMI.COM)

**PETRA GALLERY** | [WWW.PETRAGALLERY.COM](http://WWW.PETRAGALLERY.COM)  
 1151 S. ROBERTSON BLVD.  
 L.A. CA 90035 | 310-247-0252