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» New This Month: Osteria Mozza

Nancy Silverton and Mario Batali's latest, next to their pizzeria, has an urban elegance—high ceilings, black chandeliers—and a marble-topped cheese bar where Silverton turns out those exquisite concoctions she perfected during "Mozzarella Mondays" at Jar: *burrata* with bacon, marinated escarole, and caramelized shallots; and *stracciatella* with celery and herbs. Batali and exec chef Matt Molina take credit for the rest of an Italian menu that ranges from pigs' trotters (made into a crispy cake) to beautiful pastas (love that giant raviolo with ricotta and a raw egg) to a plain but tasty *orata* (sea bass) baked in a fig leaf. A wan slice of roasted pork is a less successful entrée. Can't beat the house-made gelati for dessert. » 6602 Melrose Ave., Hollywood (323-297-0100 or mozza-la.com). D nightly. Full bar. Italian \$\$\$

too. The offbeat '60s decor may be part of the charm for locals who've made the place a mainstay. » Palos Verdes Inn, 1716 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Redondo Beach (310-540-1222 or chezmelange.com). L-D Mon.-Sat.; brunch Sat.-Sun. Full bar. Eclectic \$\$\$

THE DEPOT

In a restored train station, imposing, avuncular Michael Shafer's restless palate reveals itself in a constantly evolving menu. » 1250 Cabrillo Ave., Torrance (310-787-7501 or depotrestaurant.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar and extensive wine list. California \$\$\$

PETROS

This place is up-to-the-minute modern and beachside hip. Owner Petros Benekos brought his mother and sis-

ter from Athens to get things started. Warm pita comes with delectable dips, and salads include lamb, braised dandelion, and Epirus (extra special) feta. Lobster spaghetti, moussaka, and Greek sea bass have garlic galore, and there's an interesting selection of Greek wines. » 451 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach (310-545-4100 or petrosrestaurant.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Greek \$\$\$

RESTAURANT CHRISTINE

Stepping into these quirky, stylish rooms is like entering the home of a friend. The Pac Rim-accented food—sesame-glazed salmon with sticky rice, lobster ravioli, warm mushroom salad with Gorgonzola—is as elegant as the service. » 24530 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance (310-373-1952 or restaurantchristine.com). L Mon.-Fri.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Mediterranean/Pacific Rim \$\$\$

ZAZOU

The name means "stylishly hip" in French, which translates here to cuisine from Tuscany and Provence as well as Morocco and Southern California. Roasted vegetables come with spicy couscous, and the carrot gnocchi and fish dishes are hard to beat. » 1810 S. Catalina Ave., Redondo Beach (310-540-4884). L Tue.-Sat.; D Mon.-Sat. Full bar. French/Mediterranean \$\$\$

» SMALL BITE

"Savor the Season," an evening of food and wine, will be held October 7 at Exposition Park and feature a lineup of top area chefs. Go to savortheseason.org or call 310-424-2805 for info.