

Worth the Sweat:
Six Boutique Gyms

BY SHELLEY LEVITT

The Zankou Murders:
One Family, Torn Apart

BY MARK ARAX

Los Angeles

LA'S 75 BEST RESTAURANTS

Who Will Rank ★★★★★?
Find Out on Page 106



HEALTHY APPETITE:

The roasted beet, carrot, and feta salad at Lucques

\$4.95
APRIL 2008



THE 32
GREATEST
THINGS
ABOUT LA

WOODY
HARRELSON
IN THE RAW

LA HOME:
DRAMATIC
GARDENS



SIDE DISH

BRAD METZGER

CEO, Brad Metzger Restaurant Solutions

➔ SOMETIMES IT REALLY is about who you know. Brad Metzger went to high school with Caroline Styne of Lucques and A.O.C. He was a waiter at Granita when Mélisse's Josiah Citrin was a line cook. He worked at Grace with Neal Fraser. "I know these people," he says, "so I know the kind of people that would work well with them." Which is important, since Metzger's company, Brad Metzger Restaurant Solutions, provides staffing services to places like Joe's, Wilshire, Crustacean, and Craft, filling slots from assistant manager to executive chef. "When people enjoy their jobs, like what they're doing, and are growing within the company—that's the most satisfying thing," he says. For our part, we like it when a chef like David LeFevre finds a home at Water Grill. You can thank Metzger for that.



51

Sushi Katsu-ya

STUDIO CITY

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO the spin-offs in Hollywood and Brentwood, the original in Studio City is the best. A compact storefront adjoining a pet shop, Katsu-ya represents the everyday brilliance of Valley sushi. Without fail, there's a line outside. Inside, connoisseurs cluster at an elbow-burnished counter. This is where Katsuya Uechi began accentuating the fish's clean simplicity with contrasting textures, temperatures, and spices. Eating the fiery Cajun halibut cheeks and the nuggets of spicy tuna on crispy rice, you've found your way to the source. ➔ 11680 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, 818-985-6976 or sushikatsu-ya.com. ★

52

La Botte Ristorante

SANTA MONICA

THE WALLS AND FLOORS of the dimly lit dining room are made from the remnants of barrels, or *bottes*. The pasta preparations at the heart of the menu have survived the departure of founding chef Antonio Muré (now at Il Carpaccio, see #61). Luigi Fineo, formerly of Drago, is now behind the rich beet *tagliolini* with quail sausage and Parmesan fondue and the

house favorite, *pappardelle* with boar *ragù*. His meatless options include a fig risotto perked up with chives and balsamic vinegar; the daily fish specials are remarkable. ➔ 620 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, 310-576-3072 or labottesantamonica.com. ★

53

The Hump

SANTA MONICA

THIS IS THE KEVIN BACON OF sushi outfits: Pretty much every L.A. sushi chef comes within six degrees of separation. Above Typhoon, owner Brian Vidor's other restaurant at the Santa Monica Airport, a trio of white-clad chefs work in silent unison behind the bar, one drying bundles of *shiso*, another slicing a shimmering piece of *toro*, another placing Santa Barbara *uni* atop a lozenge of rice. Art is the watchword here, evident again in a dessert of pear slices interspersed with cantaloupe, kiwi, and raspberries. ➔ Santa Monica Airport, 3221 Donald Douglas Loop, Santa Monica, 310-313-0977 or thehump.biz. ★

54

Sushi Dokoro Ki Ra La

BEVERLY HILLS

BEING A NEWCOMER ISN'T easy in a city with so many sushi restaurants that it's a wonder

anything's left swimming in the sea. But this bright, simple room, with a smattering of tables and a sushi bar, offers gracious service and superior fish. We're partial to the blue crab hand roll: shreds of sweet meat wrapped in crispy *nori*. ➔ 9777 S. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-275-9003. ★

55

Tanzore

LOS ANGELES

WITH THE AIA AWARD-winning makeover of the old Gaylord and a menu mirroring the new India moderne decor, Tanzore dismisses the raj and trumpets the contemporary subcontinent. Toasted cumin, cardamom, and fennel seeds lend traditional flavors to tandooris and curries, but there's a lightness to much of the food and a California streak in the basil-laced naan and the seared yellowfin with avocado *raita*. An impressive selection of wines that go well with spicy food fills a floor-to-ceiling cabinet, and the lounge serves snappy cocktails. ➔ 50 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-652-3894 or tanzore.com. ★

56

The Buffalo Club

SANTA MONICA

IT LOOKS LIKE LOU'S BAR FROM the street and feels like '21' when you walk in. Dark paneled walls, framed mirrors, and nonsense service combine with a booming rock soundtrack. The combination has made this off-the-grid hangout popular among music industry people who prefer a good chicken potpie with biscuit crust to scene and hype. Oyster shooters are tinged with