

New on the Menu

CARLSBAD'S CULINARY SCENE IS EVEN
MORE DELICIOUS WITH THESE JUST-
OPENED RESTAURANTS.

Written by Megan Woolsey



Lilo's Gougere Waffle (photo by Elodie Bost).

As Carlsbad locals, we've mastered the art of finding the perfect spots for a mouth-watering carne asada burrito or a perfectly crispy fish taco. We also have an impressive lineup of wonderful Italian eateries, ranging from cozy trattorias to elegant fine dining, at our disposal. This delicious fare is the heart and soul of the laid-back coastal vibe we've cherished for years.

But hold onto your taste buds! Our beloved culinary scene is evolving like never before. Say hello to the first-ever Peruvian restaurant, tantalizing late-night bites and fine dining establishments that are pushing culinary boundaries and igniting our imaginations.

This past year has also ushered in a wave of "all-day gathering spaces" replacing the traditional grab-and-go taco stands. Imagine vibrant outdoor patios, a welcoming neighborhood atmosphere and a stay-and-play attitude that captures the charm of European bistros—perfect for lingering over a glass of wine or indulging in a leisurely brunch with friends.

Here are some of the hottest new dining destinations that are sure to elevate your culinary experience and keep your palate dancing.



photo by Kimberly Motos



photo by Elodie Bost

LILLO

The Vibe

The name Lilo is inspired by rekindled friendship (a relationship that has been “lying low”) and the room is set up like dinner at your most stylish friend’s house. What was once the Morey Boogie Board factory is now a fine dining restaurant from the team behind Campfire and Jeune et Jolie. Guests—only 22 per evening—begin their intimate experience in the garden shaded by an Australian Bottle Tree. Inside the building is an earth-toned room, where the countertop dining space and two chef’s tables are surrounded by textured walls meant to mimic cliffside strata. The ceiling’s undulating white oak rods look like ocean waves, reminding diners how close they are to Carlsbad’s beautiful beaches. The curated music is played via a vintage reel tape machine and record player displayed in the dining room. At press time, Lilo had just been awarded a Michelin star.

Describe

The 12-course tasting menu is “rooted in seasonality

and conscientious sourcing,” according to Lilo’s owners, garnering inspiration from coastlines around the world fused with house fermentations and dry-aged elements. Lilo’s menu will change with the earth’s rotation, using produce from the season.

The dining experience starts with a variety of small bites, such as the chilled littleneck clams that come with green strawberries, kinome leaf, Buddha’s hand and tomatillo granite. Enough said. You will just have to go to find out what the other 11 courses will be.

Imbibe

The Lilo wine menu focuses on lesser-known California regions such as Mendocino and Santa Cruz, with an emphasis on single-vineyard Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Cocktails include the Ouold Fashioned with Reposado tequila, umeboshi caramel and bitters.

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2571 Roosevelt St. • 442.303.8245
restaurantlilo.com • Instagram: @restaurantlilo



photos courtesy of Manka

MANKA

The Vibe

As Pollos Maria bid farewell, the big question on everyone’s mind was: what deliciousness would fill that void? Enter Manka, Carlsbad’s first and only Peruvian restaurant, breathing new life into the space with a vibrant twist.

Transforming a humble taco shack into an eye-catching cevichería, Manka boasts striking black exteriors that beckon diners inside to discover a chic indoor/outdoor dining experience. General Manager Kevin Yong shares the vision behind Manka, which opened its doors on June 6: to create a haven where traditional Peruvian ingredients and cooking techniques meet modern presentations that dazzle the eye and tantalize the palate.

Describe

In Quechua, the most widely spoken indigenous language of Peru, “manka” means “vessel.” That perfectly embodies the restaurant’s mission to serve as a vessel

for Peruvian cuisine that transcends mere plating and elevates the dining experience.

Almost all the Manka staff hails from Peru, passionately honoring their culinary heritage by sourcing authentic Peruvian grains, peppers and corn. These traditional ingredients are expertly blended with locally sourced produce to craft magical dishes, like the vibrant ceviche, made with zesty Peruvian peppers, fresh lime juice and the finest local fish.

Imbibe

Manka offers wine-based cocktails, with a slight focus on South American wines such as Albariños from Uruguay.

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3055 Harding St. • 442.500.2015
Instagram: @mankaperuviancuisine



photos by Gage Forster

WILDLAND

The Vibe

The new 190-seat Wildland restaurant in the Village strikes a perfect balance: casual yet sophisticated, trendy yet down-to-earth, energetic yet relaxing. Located on the same property as its sister restaurant, Lilo, Wildland is an all-day restaurant, bar and bakery that invites guests to come with their laptops, books or friends and enjoy a full day of dining.

The large outdoor patio welcomes you with two majestic live oak trees and tables inspired by Southern California's natural landscape. Inside, the restaurant makes a bold statement with floor-to-ceiling windows and high ceilings adorned with exposed pipes. At the heart of it all is a stand-up bar exuding retro charm.

Describe

The wait staff is very friendly and welcoming, ideal for a restaurant that encourages guests to hang out for a while rather than eat and run. Order wood-fired pizzas, house-

made pastas, rotisserie meat, crispy salads, fresh breads, viennoiserie, pastries and cakes at the counter during the day. On the menu for dinner is a scrumptious rotisserie chicken dinner with smoked bacon, potato, roasted dates, lacinato kale (also known as Tuscan kale) and Urfa Bibir.

Imbibe

At Wildland, Beverage Director Andrew "Coco" Cordero uses preparation techniques such as milkwashing (using milk with cocktail ingredients for a smoother texture), fatwashing (mixing oils with cocktails for a savory flavor) and pre-batching to create light, refreshing drinks. Try the Blood Orange Spritz, which is made from vermouth with flowery hibiscus and aromatic peppercorn.

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2598 State St. • 442.339.4812
wildlandallday.com



photos by Kimberly Motos

LITTLE VICTORY WINE BAR

The Vibe

Little Victory Wine Bar is a new addition to Carlsbad Village that sets the tone for an all-day gathering space in your neighborhood. The vibe is reminiscent of caves à mangers (which translates to "cave to eat") in Paris and Copenhagen with a relaxed coastal California spin. The husband-and-wife owners describe it as "Nordic minimalism fused with Parisian conviviality" to create "a warm, design-forward space where seasonal cooking, natural/low-intervention wine, and a strong sense of place meet."

Describe

Chefs Kelly and Elliott Townsend are passionate about using local produce based purely on ingredient seasonal-

ity to create a quaint menu of offerings like local Bluefin Crudo, Romanesco, Thompson Heritage Ranch pork chop and Basque cheesecake.

Imbibe

Little Victory offers a range of new natural/low-intervention wines, which refers to a style of winemaking that uses organic farming and hand harvesting practices. The wine list includes bottles from California, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Australia and Spain.

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505 Oak Ave. Suite B • 442.333.9134
littlevictorywine.com • Instagram: @littlevictorywinebar



photos by Tanya Perez

BAR GONZO!

The Vibe

Think late-night snacks and innovative cocktails in what its owners call the first-and-only rock 'n' roll ramen restaurant in the world. Open until midnight, Bar GONZO! offers live music and swanky Japanese tunes that give you authentic Japanese hospitality vibes.

Describe

The Pork Gyoza Potstickers dressed in ponzu sauce are served upside down and styled to look like a pinwheel, not only tasty but food art. The Skillet Fried Rice is mixed

right in front of customers. Next-level French fries are drenched in a tasty curry sauce.

Imbibe

From interactive sake bombs to cosmopolitans with a Japanese flair, the adult beverages do not disappoint.

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