



San Diego

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Westways

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BonAppétit: Flavors of the Sea

Refined cuisine on San Diego's North County coast



SoCal
holiday
roundup

Cars of the
(near) future

2012 London
Summer Olympics

2011 DayTrip Contest Winner:
Balboa Peninsula



(Clockwise from left) Flavor Del Mar may have one of the best views in San Diego's North County coast, but diners come for the food, which includes roasted Wagyu bone marrow, day boat scallop ceviche, and the Chocolate Bar with caramel and peanuts.

Flavor Del Mar

Del Mar Plaza

1555 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar

(858) 755-3663; flavordelmar.com

SETTING:

It's beautiful, but expect noise when crowds show up

SERVICE:

Pleasant, efficient, thoughtful, and enjoyable

BEST DISHES:

Day boat scallop ceviche; roasted bone marrow; Jidori chicken breast

DINNER PRICES:

Starters, \$9-\$16
entrées, \$21-\$37
desserts, \$7-\$18

Flavor Del Mar emphasizes food first and foremost, despite a view envied by coastal cities everywhere. Upscale and elegant, Del Mar Plaza has long been a locus of fine cuisine on San Diego's North County coast, and Flavor shares the venue's top deck with Pacifica Del Mar and Il Fornaio, two favorites of recent decades. At Flavor Del Mar, chef Jason Maitland writes strong daily menus to back up a setting of deep banquettes and wood-topped tables, edged by bushes planted along glass walls that display an ever-charming vista.

Steakhouse menus almost universally reflect the American way with red meat, but Maitland's menu very much reflects his take on contemporary cuisine. Listings like summer's Local Heirloom Tomato-Fennel Soup emphasize that he's a locavore whenever possible, and items marked "No Animals Involved"

express a desire to give vegetarians more than perfunctory service. In fact, the flavors tumbled into freshly cut pappardelle pasta with roasted forest mushrooms, San Joaquin Gold cheese, and white truffle oil rivaled those of the deep, dark, delicious Zinfandel-braised short ribs with musky Maytag blue cheese.

The menu opens with a Greek-style ceviche of tiger prawns, heirloom cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, capers, red onion, and spicy lemon-ginger dressing. A corn tortilla crisp figures in the Hawaiian ahi tostada, moistened with tasty chili vinaigrette. The roasted Wagyu bone marrow isn't for everybody, but should delight those who savor rich, essential flavors. Bedded on cautiously cooked Brussels sprouts, Jidori chicken breast boasts a porcini-chicken sausage stuffing and sublimely introduces an entrée list highlighted by seared local halibut with charred heirloom tomatoes and *kurobuta* pork ribs cooked *sous-vide* for 36 hours. Small but big on flavor, the Chocolate Bar dessert mingles caramel, honey-roasted peanuts, and candied ginger to sensational effect.

—David W. Nelson