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LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT NEWS



FOIE GRAS ALERT:
Are These Councilmen Crazy?
Richard Daley, the sometimes controversial and unruly Chicago Mayor, reacted strongly to the City Council approving a ban on the sale of [foie gras](#): "We have children getting killed by gang leaders and dope dealers. We have real issues here... And we're dealing with foie gras?" he complained to the Chicago

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Sun-Times.

We want to hear what you have to say. To share your thoughts on the foie gras controversy, click [here](#).

**■ Openings**

Alain Giraud, the Provence-born chef who opened [Bastide](#) to four star reviews, is partnering on an as yet **unnamed brasserie with Mike Garrett and Tommy**

Stoilkovich, owners of [Falcon](#) and [Pearl Dragon](#). The restaurant, situated on Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade, should open in late summer and will offer French cuisine utilizing ingredients sourced from the famed Santa Monica Farmers Market.

The Village Idiot, a British-style gastropub, has opened in the old Chianti space. Chef Lindsay Kennedy, previously of San Francisco's [One Market](#), is cooking dishes like rock shrimp and scallion fritters with Meyer lemon relish and crème fraîche; cornmeal-crust catfish with black-eyed peas, mustard greens and andouille sausage; fish and chips with malt vinegar dipping sauce; and, for dessert, warm gingerbread cake with pear compote. Open daily, 11:30 a.m. until at least 11 p.m. The Village Idiot, 7383 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, 323-655-3331.

Tokyo Table, a casual Japanese restaurant, is the latest addition to La Cienega's Restaurant Row. The eclectic menu features rock shrimp with wasabi aioli; teriyaki chicken pizza; fried noodle omelet with pork; seared beef tataki sushi with balsamic; and, for dessert, honey toast with toppings like red beans and chocolate. Open daily, 11:30 a.m.-1 a.m. Tokyo Table, 50 N. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-657-9500.



Raaga, Harjinder Vij's Indian restaurant taking its name from the word for melodic modes in Indian classical music, has opened in the former Mother India space in Chatsworth. Chefs Nachattar Toor and Jose Gutierrez are preparing dishes like lamb samosas; chicken, lamb and sea bass tandoori; chicken with green chili, mint and yogurt sauce; and naan stuffed with cashews, pistachios, raisins, and cherries. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Raaga, 10110 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Chatsworth, 818-407-6340.

Beverly Hills welcomes **Gonpachi**, a new Japanese restaurant, on March 31. The venue will be the latest addition to the Global Dining Inc. empire which has 65 restaurants throughout Japan and the United States including [La Bohème](#) in West Hollywood.

Chef David Myers of Los Angeles' [Sona](#) and Boule Patisserie will debut his second restaurant, **Comme Ça**, this spring. The modern brasserie will open in West Hollywood and serve traditional French fare with a spin. Expect to see onion tarte tatin with tapenade and arugula; crispy beef marrow and oxtail jam with toast and fleur de sel; and steak frites and Cassoulet on the menu. Seasonal cocktails will also be a feature. Comme Ça, 8479 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood.

The recently-opened 270-room [Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village](#), owned by billionaire David H. Murdock, features fine-dining restaurant **Hampton's**. Chef Sandro Gamba, previously at [NOMI](#) in Chicago, crafts contemporary California cuisine. Think Santa Barbara spiny lobster meat with sweet corn ragout and tarragon bisque; Colorado lamb medallions with baby carrots, chorizo and a sweet potato cake; beet and chestnut soup with apple cider and cinnamon; and Maine scallops with spinach lasagna. Open daily for breakfast and for dinner

Mon.-Sat. Hampton's, 2 Dole Dr., Westlake Village, 818-575-3000.

Manhattan chef Laurent Tourondel is planning to import his [BLT Steak](#) concept to Los Angeles, in the former Le Dome space. BLT Steak, 8720 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood.

Mikayel Israyelyan, owner of [Republic](#) and [Prana Café](#), is opening **Romanov Restaurant + Lounge** in Studio City in late February. Mark Murillo, formerly of [Saddle Peak Lodge](#), is the executive chef, with Manuel Medina, formerly of [BlackSteel](#), as executive sous chef. Classical Russian cuisine will include pelmeni trio (Russian dumplings); Ossetrina pod Syrom (baked sturgeon topped with breadcrumbs, savory cream and melted cheese); and whole roast duck stuffed with apples and calvados demi-glace. The space also features a gold-plated chandelier; a large stage which will showcase a grand pianist on weekdays and Russian gypsies on the weekend; and a winter garden. Romanov Restaurant + Lounge, 12229 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, 818-760-3177.



After ten years of success with [Lasher's](#) in Long Beach, Raymond and Lynn Lasher have opened **Lasher's American Steakhouse** in downtown Burbank. Chef James Rico Grey, a CIA graduate and former executive chef at Lincoln Steakhouse, has imported certain dishes from Long Beach, including meatloaf with cranberry glaze and fried green tomatoes

topped with Andouille sausage. There are bone-in rib eyes and Porterhouses, plus Dutch Valley veal chops and Grey's creations like grilled squab with blackberry demi-glace. Expect nightly piano music. Open Mon.-Fri. for lunch and nightly for dinner. Lasher's American Steakhouse, 250 E. Olive Ave., Burbank, 818-843-8800.

■ Chef Shuffle

[Bastide](#) owner Joe Pytka has hired **Walter Manzke**, previously at [Patina](#) in Los Angeles and [Bouchée](#) in Carmel, as executive chef. The restaurant's long-awaited re-opening is slated for April 15, 2007. Bastide, 8475 Melrose Pl., West Hollywood.

David Haskell has hired **Michael Bryant** as the new executive chef of [BIN 8945](#). Bryant, the final chef at Norman's, has incorporated Asian, Latin American and European influences to the revamped menu, which is set to debut on Valentine's Day. Expect wine-friendly dishes like cured Tasmanian sea trout with a jasmine rice tuile and pickled fennel salad, venison consommé with porcini and lobster, and house-cured duck ham with hazelnut spätzle and Marsala jus. BIN 8945, 8945 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-550-8945.

Joseph Gillard, previously of Pinot at the Chronicle and [Nick & Stef's](#), has replaced Anne Conness as executive chef of [Napa Valley Grille](#). His revamped menu includes a Duroc Heritage pork duo with bacon-flecked faro and applesauce; grilled Baja day boat scallops with artichoke hummus; and a grilled cheese and lobster "knuckle" sandwich with sweet pea salad. Napa Valley Grille, 1100 Glendon Ave., Los Angeles, 310-824-3322.

■ News Bytes

Campanile Caters

[Campanile](#) restaurant, famous for their classic grilled cheese menu, now caters. Their staff will arrive at your home or event with all of the ingredients necessary to make these sandwiches, plus appetizers, salads, entrées and desserts. For more information, call Caroline Allain at 323-938-1447 or visit www.campanilerestaurant.com. Campanile, 624 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles.

Wine and Dine

A "**Wednesday Wine Tasting**" is now available in the [Enoteca Drago](#)

bar area after 5 p.m. For \$25, plus tax and tip, the tasting includes complimentary appetizers like thin crust pizzas, bruschetta, salumi and imported cheeses. A different vineyard is featured each week. Wines will be from Rapitala, Sicily on January 24; Marchesi di Barolo, Piedmont on February 28; and Merryvale, Napa on April 11. Enoteca Drago, 410 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-8236.

■ Closings

Chef Jason Harley's sleek Hollywood restaurant, **BlackSteel**, has closed. No word yet on where Chef J will next take his signature pans and knives, which were forged from BlackSteel.

After an almost thirty-year love affair with the City of Angels, Gérard and Virgine Ferry have decided to enjoy their California life even more by stepping down from **L'Orangerie**. Their American dream started on February 3, 1978, when they opened what became a bastion of French "haute cuisine" in the southland, after building it stone by stone on a vacant parking lot. At the time, the airy and open architecture was a first. Only eight different chefs (some still in Los Angeles) have cooked at the stoves of the prestigious kitchen. Ronald and Nancy Reagan were regulars as well as international movie stars who always knew that they could dine in total privacy and never be bothered by paparazzi. We will not forget the latest chef, Christophe Bellanca, and his team for the beautiful meals they imagined and prepared. We are sad to announce that the key has been handed over to the Nobu group. Of course, expect a totally new restaurant to inhabit the space.



CULINARY EVENTS

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(Updated: 02/12/07 LB)