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DOWNTOWN DESIGN: HOUSE OF
BLU DAZZLES

NIGHTLIFE MASTER MATT SPENCER
SHAKES UP LITTLE ITALY

TOAST OF THE TOWN: NEW S.D.
WINE COUNTRY LUMINARIES

LA JOLLA'S LATEST TRUE GEM

OH, BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU? Shaun Gethin, left, of Bijou French Bistro, is a William Bradley disciple in both appearance and cuisine. Brother Jason Gethin, right, was famed for his game dishes at Union Kitchen & Tap in Encinitas before opening Table No. 10 in the East Village, where the kitchen features a custom-built smoker.



Shell Shock

1,563. That's the number of Ironside Select oysters shucked and sold within the first six hours they were on the menu at Little Italy's **Ironside Fish & Oyster** (ironsidefishandoyster.com). Add another feather to the cap of chef and co-owner Jason McLeod: With this past October's launch of the signature oyster (grown exclusively for the resto in Puget Sound by the Minterbrook Oyster Company), the Michelin-starred chef has put an oceanic twist on farm-to-table. What a pearl.

RAW DEAL
According to chef Jason McLeod, Ironside Select oysters (\$3 each) feature a mild, sweet flavor profile with a hint of brine.



Table for Two "Divergent" wasn't just the name of a hit movie in 2014. It was also the best word to describe the culinary paths of the Gethin brothers, S.D. chefs who each opened a hit resto in the last year. For **Shaun Gethin**, the younger of the two St. Louis-born siblings, it was La Jolla's **Bijou French Bistro** (bijoufrenchbistro.com), boasting the type of swank but homey atmosphere you'd find in, say, Paris's tony 7th Arrondissement, and a menu of simple bistro classics (oeufs mayonnaise, coq au vin, cassoulet) interpreted with the finesse you'd expect from chef William Bradley's longtime Addison sous (Bijou, like Addison, is also owned by Doug Manchester). Meanwhile, in the East Village, **Jason Gethin's Table No. 10** (tablenumber10.com) wouldn't look out of place on the Lower East Side. But its starkly minimalist interior belies the complexity of Jason's top-notch cooking, a carnivore's dream with dishes on the chef and co-owner's menu like lazy ravioli with braised suckling pig, or octopus with Portuguese sausage and sorrel chimichurri. Sibling rivalry? Heck no. Both eateries are our favorites.

READERS' CHOICE: FAVORITE RESTAURANT

You came; you ate; you loved; and then we asked: What's your favorite San Diego dining destination?



NEXT MEX
Gambas al ajillo at Romesco Mediterranean Bistro in Bonita

- 1. ROMESCO MEDITERRANEAN BISTRO** Javier Piscoñaca (see our Top Five) has said that his goal is "to show the world that Baja cuisine doesn't only consist of street tacos, rice and beans." At this Bonita fave, look for dishes like paella, succulent octopus and *chile en nogada*. 4346 Bonita Road, 619.475.8627, romescomexmed.com
- 2. THE PATIO ON GOLDFINCH** Cheese and... tequila? Not a common pairing, but then, there's nothing common about this new Mission Hills offering, which features stunning indoor-outdoor design and California comfort food, plus a glass cheese cave and an agave-focused spirits program. 4020 Goldfinch St., 696.501.5090, thepatioongoldfinch.com
- 3. CAFE 21** Look for a line heading out the door and down Fifth Avenue and you've found chef Leyla Javadov's hit eatery, serving dishes like apricot-braised lamb shanks and kababs influenced by her Azerbaijani roots. 802 Fifth Ave., 619.795.0721, cafe21.com
- 4. PUESTO** In 2014, the original La Jolla street-taco joint spawned a high-design outpost downtown at The Headquarters. It's a hotter scene than Cabo on a summer Saturday night, with en fuego cocktails and, yes, ridiculously good tacos, plus dishes like mole and barbacoa. 789 W. Harbor Drive, 619.233.8880, eatpuesto.com
- 5. SEARSUCKER** We're almost nostalgic for the original Gaslamp offering, now a rapidly expanding brand with outlets in Las Vegas and Austin, Texas. Searsucker Del Mar is also a hit, thanks to the New American menu and, of course, the celebrated Peter Rabbit cocktail. 611 Fifth Ave., 619.233.7327; 12995 El Camino Real, 858.369.5700, searsucker.com

ICE, ICE BABY

The artisan ice cream trend hit San Diego hard in 2014. We love newcomers **Hammond's** (hammondsgourmet.com) in North Park—scooping flavors by Hawaii's Tropical Dreams, like azuki bean or peanut butter and guava jelly—and **Moosie's** (moosies.com) in Kensington, where we get a salted caramel cone courtesy of old-school L.A. purveyor Fosselman's. But **Calexico Creamery** (calexicocreamery.com) is a San Diego original, right down to Mex-influenced flavors like cafe con leche, mole, flan and cajeta. Add in fruity paletas and the company's adorably restored vintage trailer, which cruises the farmers markets and special events like monthly art happening Ray at Night, and we're sold. El Scoopo, make it a double.



SCOOPWORTHY
Hammond's serves up exotic ice cream flavors in North Park.



BOTTLE ROCKET
"They were gone almost instantly," says Modern Times founder Jacob McKean of the first bottled sours his company released online.

Gone Sour

San Diego may be famous for its craft IPAs, but look for 2015 to be the year of the **sour beer**. The puckery style—the result of a specialized form of fermentation utilizing wild yeast and sometimes even fresh fruit—is an intriguing brew, no doubt why fans quickly become fanatics. Case in point: When Point Loma's **Modern Times** (moderntimesbeer.com) released its first line of red-wine-barrel-aged sours (from \$25) in December, the peach, nectarine- and cabernet grape-flavored brews (available exclusively online for the time being) sold out within seconds. Order another round!



AHEAD OF THE PACK
James Holtzlag (left) and Trey Nichols (right) are longtime friends and co-owners of Heart & Trotter, a whole-animal butchery in North Park. In 2015, the shop will start offering prepared food and local craft beer.

Meat Market

Don't get **Heart & Trotter** (theheartandtrotter.com) butchers and co-owners **Trey Nichols** and **James Holtzlag** started about the evils of filet. Or, for that matter, the joys of obtaining construction permits, a process that hung up the opening of their long-awaited North Park whole-animal butchery until just recently. While Nichols, who grew up hunting in Virginia, and Holtzlag, who honed his craft at L.A.'s Lindy & Grundy Meats, waited (and waited) for the dust to settle, they launched a popular bimonthly Friday night market in the shop's parking lot on the corner of El Cajon Boulevard and Utah Street. It's just another example of the "waste not, want not" philosophy that drives the nose-to-tail butchery, which sources humanely raised animals from within a 250-mile radius, offering traditional cuts in the butcher's case and preparing housemade charcuterie from the nontraditional bits. And though you'll find filet in the shop as a matter of physiology (every animal has two), Holtzlag promises, "One taste of coulotte, flap or hanger steak and you'll be cured of the filet fetish forever."

JUNIPER & IVY PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREA BRICCO.
HEART & TROTTER PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN DOLE.

TOP FIVE: HOTLY ANTICIPATED OPENINGS OF 2015

1

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

This spring, one of the hottest Baja-Med chefs, **Javier Plascencia** (**Misión 19**, mision19.com) crosses the border to open **Bracero: Cocina Mexicana de Raiz** in Little Italy. If we could make reservations now, we would.

2

ITALIAN JOB

A two-week, 1,400-mile trek through Italy supplied the vision for **Catania**, opening in March in the La Plaza building on Girard and Wall Street in La Jolla. The lucky travelers? **Whisknadle Hospitality** (wnlhosp.com) owner Arturo Kassel and chef/partner Ryan Johnston. Get ready to ciao.

3

FOR SHORE

Love **Trey Foshee's** iconic fish taco at **George's California Modern** (georgesatthecove.com)? Then brace yourself for **Galaxy Taco**, opening late spring 2015 in the La Jolla Shores neighborhood, where Foshee will explore his longtime passion for Mexican cuisine. Oh, and tequila.

4

BLAIS OF GLORY

The 2014 opening of **Richard Blais'** Little Italy restaurant, **Juniper & Ivy** (juniperandivy.com), was so hot, the celebrity chef quickly announced plans to convert another building on the same property into a second eatery, expected to open later this year.

5

NIGHT MAGIC

So long, Stingaree. **Omnia San Diego**—a coastal incarnation of the recently opened Caesar's Palace nightclub—will open in that Gaslamp space this spring. Expect "bespoke elements of intrigue," according to its operators, the global hospitality company **Hakkasan Group** (hakkasangroup.com).



RARE TREAT
Fans of chef Richard Blais' left coast cookery at Juniper & Ivy will delight in his upcoming second act.

BEST OF THE CITY

FOOD & DRINK