

Los Angeles

STRONG,
SMART,
AND INSPIRING...

THE
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Chicken liver crostino with black plum mostarda at Alimento

NEW RESTAURANTS

Booting Up

ZACH POLLACK TOYS WITH ITALIAN IN SILVER LAKE, PLUS THREE MORE DEBUTS

ALIMENTO

SILVER LAKE

◆ You may recognize Zach Pollack from his other role as the man throwing speckled Neapolitan pies into the oven at Sotto. You'll now know him as the chef who brought *bagna cauda* and rye tagliatelle to Silver Lake. Unlike Sotto, the glass-and-plywood-lined cubby isn't rooted in one region of Italy. Here Pollack pairs rosy chicken liver *crostone* with black plum *mostarda* and his marvelous bread. Handmade *tortellini en brodo* are plump pockets of prosciutto and broth. The "Pigs in a Blanket" is a naughty little sandwich that sets braised *mortadella* between buttery spelt pastry. Grüner Veltliner on draft, too? Oh, behave. » 1710 Silver Lake Blvd., 323-928-2888 or alimento.com.

MALIBU PIER RESTAURANT

MALIBU

◆ Often the closer you get to the ocean, the less likely you are to find a great place to eat. So the graceful sea bass *crudo* with puffed rice and Espelette pepper served smack on the Malibu Pier had us flabbergasted. Chef Jason Fulliove (Patina Restaurant Group) does the tricky job of catering to finicky tourists without compromising ambition. Fresh watercress forms a base for raw Chioggia beets, locally grown tangerines, and Humboldt Fog cheese. Any lobster roll, like this one on brioche, tastes better when eaten near the water. The glass of *vermentino* refreshes, regardless of its proximity to the sea. » 23000 Pacific Coast Hwy., 310-456-8820 or malibupierrestaurant.com.

BARTON G.

WEST HOLLYWOOD

◆ There is a four-foot fork stuck in our steak—or rather, stuck in the cutting board on which our \$65 filet sits. Triton accident? Cutlery fetish? No, this is Barton G., a Miami import famous for over-the-top presentations that's trying its luck on L.A.'s restaurant row. Lobster mingles with Gruyère in a phyllo "pop tart," which is presented in a real live toaster. Cotton candy is molded into a wig for a Marie Antoinette-style bust bedecked with mini cakes. Depending on how much you like waiters taking your picture with dining props, the operation generally succeeds in providing dinner and a show. Liquid nitrogen cocktails succeed in providing a hangover. » 861 N. La Cienega Blvd., 310-388-1888 or bartongtherestaurantla.com.

KUSH SAKE BAR

ECHO PARK

◆ Despite all signs to the contrary, Kush is not a marijuana dispensary. There is smoke wafting through the kitchen here, but it comes from the dry, hot sear of *kushiyaki*—or "things grilled on sticks." Chicken bits, pork belly, bacon-wrapped scallops, and Japanese pumpkin arrive blistered on small wood skewers. All are fine, but we miss some of the traditional poultry parts like heart and liver. Opalescent slices of chilled octopus drape a *sunomono* salad. A single meatball appears on a mound of mashed potatoes with a poached egg. A drop more attention to the sake will cement Kush as a solid spot to work out those munchies. » 1356 Allison Ave., 213-265-7609. ◆ LESLEY BARGAR SUTER

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FEATURING

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9 Other Game
ngers Who Make
City a Better Place