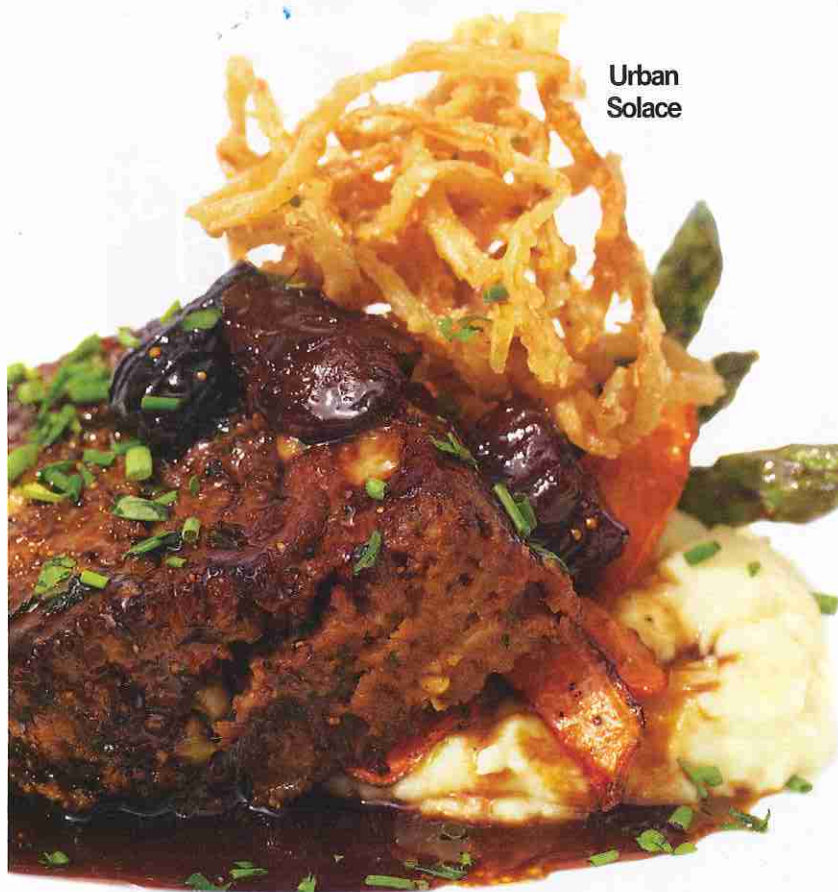




# Best Restaurants 2009

Dig in to the results of our annual readers' poll and see who does it best—from burgers to brunch. Check out our critic's and editor's picks, sample the flavors of local wine bars, and learn where to find the best values for your dollar.



Urban Solace

Photographs by **Brevin Blach**

## BEST OF THE BEST (MONEY NO OBJECT)

### **The Oceanaire Seafood Room**

Georges at the Cove (Georges California Modern)  
Bertrand at Mister A's

## BEST OF THE BEST (MODERATE)

### **Urban Solace**

Jsix  
Bleu Bohème

## BEST CHEAP EATS

### **In-N-Out**

Rubio's  
Lucha Libre Gourmet Taco Shop

## BEST NEW RESTAURANT

### **Crescent Heights Kitchen & Lounge**

Kitchen 1540  
Whisknadle

## BEST CHEF

### **Brian Malarkey (Oceanaire Seafood Room)**

Deborah Scott (Indigo Grill, Island Prime, Kemo Sabe)  
Bernard Guillas (Marine Room)

## BEST SERVICE

### **Georges at the Cove (Georges California Modern)**

Mille Fleurs  
Addison

## BEST DINING WITH A VIEW

### **Georges at the Cove (Georges California Modern)**

Bertrand at Mister A's  
Island Prime/C Level Lounge

**BEST LATE-NIGHT DINING**

**Saska's**

Bully's

Maryjane's (Hard Rock Hotel)

**MOST EXTENSIVE WINE LIST**

**Addison**

WineSellar & Brasserie

George's at the Cove (Georges California Modern)

**BEST NEIGHBORHOOD EATERY**

**Kensington Grill**

Urban Solace

Bleu Bohème

**BEST DINING WITH KIDS**

**Corvette Diner**

Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

Chuck E. Cheese

**MOST ROMANTIC**

**Marine Room**

Georges at the Cove (Georges California Modern)

Bertrand at Mister A's

**MOST DECADENT DESSERTS**

**Extraordinary Desserts**

Chua's Chocolatier

Heaven Sent Desserts

**BEST PIZZA**

**Bronx Pizza**

Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

Lefty's Chicago Pizzeria

**BEST LOCAL BURGER JOINT**

**Burger Lounge**

Hodad's

Rocky's Crown Pub

**BEST AMERICAN**

**Croce's**

Urban Solace

Sbicca

**BEST FRENCH**

**Tapenade**

Bleu Bohème

Mille Fleurs

**BEST ITALIAN**

**Arrivederci Ristorante**

Buon Appetito

Piatti



**Kensington Grill**



**Burger Lounge**



Sushi Ota



Sipz Fusion Cafe

**BEST SPANISH/TAPAS**

**Café Sevilla**

Costa Brava  
Tapas Picasso

**BEST INDIAN**

**Bombay**

Royal India  
Monsoon

**BEST CHINESE**

**P.F. Chang's**

Jasmine  
China Max

**BEST SUSHI BAR/JAPANESE**

**Sushi Ota**

Nobu  
Sushi Deli

**BEST THAI**

**Rama**

Lotus Thai  
Taste of Thai

**BEST ASIAN FUSION**

**Roppongi**

Roy's Hawaiian Fusion Cuisine  
Red Pearl Kitchen

**BEST MEXICAN**

**Ortega's, a Mexican Bistro**

Old Town Mexican Café  
Fidel's

**BEST GREEK**

**Café Athena**

Athens Market (tie)  
Daphne's (tie)

**BEST VIETNAMESE**

**Le Bambou**

Saigon  
Phuong Trang

**BEST VEGETARIAN**

**Sipz Fusion Cafe**

Spread  
Veg-N-Out

**BEST BARBECUE**

**Phil's BBQ**

Kansas City Barbecue  
Bret's BBQ

#### BEST STEAKHOUSE

**Donovan's Steak & Chop House**  
Ruth's Chris Steakhouse  
Fleming's Prime Steakhouse

#### BEST SEAFOOD

**The Oceanaire Seafood Room**  
The Fish Market  
Anthony's Fish Grotto

#### BEST BREAKFAST

**Hash House a Go Go**  
The Mission  
Broken Yolk Café

#### BEST SUNDAY BRUNCH

**Hotel del Coronado**  
Urban Solace  
La Valencia Hotel

#### BEST BUSINESS LUNCH

**Dobson's**  
Rainwater's on Kettner  
Harry's Bar & American Grill

#### BEST DELI

**D.Z. Akin's**  
Milton's  
Waters Café

#### BEST TAKEOUT

**Saffron**  
Sammy's Woodfired Pizza  
Pick Up Stix

#### BEST OUTDOOR DINING

**Georges at the Cove (Ocean Terrace)**  
Island Prime/C Level  
The Prado

#### BEST HOTEL DINING

**Nobu (Hard Rock Hotel)**  
Jsix (Hotel Solamar)  
Arterra (Marriott Del Mar)

#### BEST CATERER

**ChileCo Catering**  
Waters Fine Catering  
Festivities

# State [ By David Nelson ] of the Plate

THE SKY IS FALLING, or so I hear. Folks keep telling me, "David, restaurants are closing right and left," but when I ask for specifics—as in "Which restaurant recently closed?"—the response is "Well, I heard a lot of them are in trouble." I've heard this, too, but I can't tell you of any important closures. One local TV reporter presented a special feature on dire days in the eats biz and used a defunct East Village gelato shop as his case in point.

True, the times are ungenerous, but mankind—which includes us San Diegans—tends to take dinner seriously, and a restaurant table is a comfortable haven at the end of the day. From the consumer point of view, the current difficulties have persuaded some establishments to reduce prices or increase incentives, such as half-price wine nights. A few establishments are imitating the French by offering fixed-price dinners of two or three courses (sometimes inclusive of a glass of wine), an excellent idea that could sweep San Diego if restaurateurs made the effort. Such opportunities stretch disposable income and help eatery doors keep swinging. A foolish few have actually bumped up prices to try to compensate for the downturn in restaurant traffic. They may be among the first casualties.

It's well to remember that when a soufflé collapses, disappointment is the result. But for all the huffing and puffing we've been hearing, San Diego's brick-fronted restaurant row seems unlikely to be blown down.





# Critic's Picks

By David Nelson

**BEST OF THE BEST (MONEY NO OBJECT):** Mille Fleurs **BEST OF THE BEST (MODERATE):** Vincent's **BEST CHEAP EATS:** Operacaffe **BEST NEW RESTAURANT:** Suite & Tender **BEST CHEF:** Wade Hageman (Blanca) **BEST SERVICE:** Marine Room **BEST DINING WITH A VIEW:** Georges California Modern **BEST HOTEL DINING:** A.R. Valentien (The Lodge at Torrey Pines) **MOST EXTENSIVE WINE LIST:** Pamplemousse Grille **BEST NEIGHBORHOOD EATERY:** Urban Solace **BEST DINING WITH KIDS:** Petco Park **MOST ROMANTIC:** Addison **MOST DECADENT DESSERTS:** Karen Krasne's Extraordinary Desserts **BEST PIZZA:** La Pizzeria Arrivederci **BEST LOCAL BURGER JOINT:** Neighborhood **BEST AMERICAN:** Rainwater's on Kettner **BEST FRENCH:** Tapenade **BEST SPANISH TAPAS:** Sevilla **BEST ITALIAN:** Via Italia Trattoria **BEST INDIAN:** Monsoon **BEST CHINESE:** China Max **BEST SUSHI BAR/JAPANESE:** Hane Sushi **BEST THAI:** Lotus Thai, East Village **BEST ASIAN FUSION:** Roppongi **BEST MEXICAN:** Los Arcos **BEST GREEK:** Athens Market Taverna **BEST VIETNAMESE:** Phuong Trang **BEST VEGETARIAN:** They keep closing. **BEST BARBECUE:** Phil's BBQ **BEST STEAKHOUSE:** Cowboy Star **BEST SEAFOOD:** The Oceanaire Seafood Room **BEST BREAKFAST:** The Glass Door **BEST SUNDAY BRUNCH:** El Bizcocho **BEST BUSINESS LUNCH:** Grant Grill **BEST DELI:** D.Z. Akin's **BEST TAKEOUT:** Saffron **BEST OUTDOOR DINING:** 333 Pacific **BEST CATERER:** Hotel del Coronado

# Editor's Picks

By Tom Blair

**BEST OF THE BEST: (MONEY NO OBJECT):** Bertrand at Mister A's **BEST OF THE BEST (MODERATE):** Avenue 5 **BEST CHEAP EATS:** Sammy's Woodfired Pizza **BEST NEW RESTAURANT:** Alchemy **BEST CHEF:** Trey Foshee (Georges at the Cove) **BEST SERVICE:** Bertrand at Mister A's **BEST DINING WITH A VIEW:** Georges at the Cove Ocean Terrace **BEST LATE-NIGHT DINING:** Saska's Steak & Seafood **BEST HOTEL DINING:** A.R. Valentien (The Lodge at Torrey Pines) **MOST EXTENSIVE WINE LIST:** Blanca **BEST NEIGHBORHOOD EATERY:** Kensington Grill **BEST DINING WITH KIDS:** Corvette Diner **MOST ROMANTIC:** Marine Room **MOST DECADENT DESSERTS:** Heaven Sent Desserts **BEST PIZZA:** Luigi's **BEST LOCAL BURGER JOINT:** The Waterfront **BEST AMERICAN:** Nine-Ten **BEST FRENCH:** Tapenade **BEST SPANISH TAPAS:** Café Sevilla **BEST ITALIAN:** Buon Appetito **BEST INDIAN:** Bombay **BEST CHINESE:** Emerald Chinese Seafood **BEST SUSHI BAR/JAPANESE:** Roy's Hawaiian Fusion Cuisine **BEST THAI:** Lotus Thai **BEST ASIAN FUSION:** Roppongi **BEST MEXICAN:** Ortega's, a Mexican Bistro **BEST GREEK:** Athens Market Taverna **BEST VIETNAMESE:** Le Bambou **BEST VEGETARIAN:** Sipz Cafe **BEST BARBECUE:** Phil's BBQ **BEST STEAKHOUSE:** Morton's of Chicago **BEST SEAFOOD:** The Oceanaire Seafood Room **BEST BREAKFAST:** The Mission (North Park) **BEST SUNDAY BRUNCH:** Le Fontainebleau (Westgate Hotel) **BEST BUSINESS LUNCH:** Dobson's **BEST DELI:** City Deli **BEST TAKEOUT:** El Indio **BEST OUTDOOR DINING:** C Level Lounge **BEST CATERER:** Hyatt Regency La Jolla



C Level Lounge



Nine-Ten