

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN

LIFESTYLES

FALL INTERIOR DESIGN REPORT



A convivial home in North County
Transforming a Del Mar landscape

CATCHES AND MATCHES



Dan Sobek, chef at The Corner Drafthouse, puts the finishing touch of cilantro on a ceviche tostada.

Cuisine wings us around the world, which is how Kansas City native Dan Sobek, who has cooked at mighty temples like The Dorchester in London and New York City's Waldorf-Astoria, came to master ceviche. His own place, **The Corner Drafthouse**, has replaced Hexagone at the heavily restauranted intersection of Fifth and Laurel streets. Wearing a ball cap turned backwards, Chef Dan raves about the ceviche and ahi tuna poke he created to accompany the 70-plus local brews on tap at the bar. He helped build the bar, too, along with the rest of the interior. Try his ceviche tostadas, especially if the "fresh catch" is a mix of Baja shrimp and hamachi. Dressed with avocado, mango salsa, cilantro, radish and citrus juices, the tostadas truly are killer. "We cook fun food that we like to eat," he says. "This is the kind of place we'd like to hang out at on our day off." There's lots of variety on the menu, from clever salads to an ultra-meaty short-rib grinder, big burgers, fish and chips with truffled tartar sauce, and cheesecake topped with candied cornflakes.

JUST ACROSS THE STREET in the Fifth Avenue Financial Center, a lease has been signed for a ground-floor, 6,000-square-foot deli-restaurant that will largely wipe out the indoor parking for **Mister A's**, still the city's best-known eatery. Mister A's proprietor Bertrand Hug has a while to deal with this before the deli commences slinging hash next year.

BEER WITH BREAKFAST remains a San Diegan practice, thanks to daylight-dining impresario Johan Engman. He recently opened a **Breakfast Republic** in Liberty Station to complement his weirdly fun original in North Park. Brewskis, inventive morning cocktails and jokey silverware wrappers are part of the scheme, along with

frankly delicious food typified by “flights” of variously flavored pancakes, all sorts of egg dishes and much more. Most likely inspired by Liberty Station’s handsome rents, the 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. “evening” menu defies the Swede’s devotion to morning fare.

SICILIAN CUISINE FUELED the restaurant empire that spread from the original Busalacchi’s in Hillcrest to multiple venues in Little Italy. Many years later, the family chain returns to its roots with the “modern Sicilian” cuisine at **Barbusa** (replacing the Busalacchi family’s Po Pazza). Pasta recipes purportedly are centuries old and handed down through the generations, which seems believable given millennia of civilization in Sicily. House-made fettuccine is served with sweet peas and caramelized onion. Eggplant pizza features pistachio pesto. Chef Nino Zizzo’s humorous reimagination of tiramisu includes bananas and Nutella.

SPEAK UP FOR SUCCOTASH, the corn and lima bean combo that Native Americans introduced to New England colonists. Open to additions like tomatoes and peppers, it occupies a place of prominence on the menu at the new **Royal Stone**. The place shares the Royal Food Mart building at First and Upas streets, which prompted owners Jackie and John Stone to concoct a regal name to escort their motto: “Seasonal. Savory. Sincere.” A server said of the inevitably farm-to-table menu, “We get new stuff every day,” adding that “the crispy chicken skin on the succotash is killer!” This sounded a tad funky, but an open mind is good company when the chef is Chase Edrington, formerly of Whisknadle. He learned to farm before taking up a toque and now grows produce for Royal Stone. His evocative and elegant appetizer of creamed corn, favas, tomato relish, roasted squash, pickled onion and bell pepper purée did



The Royal Stone’s succotash includes creamed corn, fava beans, tomato relish, squash, pickled onion, bell pepper purée and crispy chicken skin.

sport chicken skin, quickly dispatched to the side. The dish otherwise entranced, with the fava beans resembling a scattering of emeralds. More offerings include pan-seared Atlantic scallops with a lush purée of charred eggplant, gnocchi tumbled with fresh and pickled vegetables, and a tasty novelty of calamari coated in polenta batter and fried.

RECENTLY INSTALLED AS CHEF at La Mesa’s **BO-beau Kitchen + Garden**, Tyler Shipton has something in common with his boss,

restaurateur Lesley Cohn: They’re both from Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes and millions of walleyed pike fanciers. Yet another chef credited with roots on the farm, Tyler is tasked with drumming up customers for a location that has not had the best track record for the Cohn Restaurant Group. Among the lures he’s casting are mussels steamed in Belgian beer and flavored with chorizo and shallots; a seasonal vegetable stir-fry finished with peanut sauce; and buttermilk fried chicken with cornbread and, yes, succotash. ♦