

Food and Drink Blotter: Oct. 2015

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By Frank Sabatini Jr.

In celebration of National Taco Day on Oct. 4, [Puesto](#) at The Headquarters at Seaport and in La Jolla is offering visitors a taco to remember. For one day only, it will bring back its zesty chile relleno taco, which features a battered, cheese-filled jalapeno pepper wrapped in a fresh corn tortilla with spicy salsa.



The chile relleno taco returns for one day only at Puesto (Courtesy Katalyst PR)

The taco sells for \$5, and was first introduced at last year's celebration. The first 100 guests to purchase it at either location will receive a free T-shirt with the Puesto logo and a taco emoji printed on it. *789 W. Harbor Drive, and 1026 Wall St., La Jolla; 619-233-8880.*

In addition to its Downtown operation at 1023 Fourth Ave., a second San Diego location of [Yard House](#) has opened in Westfield Mission Valley Mall, next door to the AMC Theaters. Visitors can expect the same food menu, which features everything from black truffle cheeseburgers and Nashville hot chicken to a decent selection of vegetarian options such as wings and tortas using Gardein soy chicken. And also like its Downtown location, there's a huge flow of rotating draft beers available from 130 taps. *1640 Camino del Rio North, 619-574-0468.*



Top local chefs will perform their magic at the Chef Showdown (Courtesy CCS)

San Diego's mother of all culinary competitions is coming to the **Port Pavilion at Broadway Pier** on Oct. 29, as 10 local toques, divided into two teams, battle it out at the 11th annual [Center for Community Solutions' Chef Showdown](#). The event each year benefits a number of programs at CCS that support victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Among the chefs taking part are Hanis Cavin of **Carnitas Snack Shack**; Lori Sauer of **George's at the Cove**; Robert Ruiz of **The Land & Water Co.**; Rose Payron of **High Dive**; James Montejano of **La Valencia**; and others tasked with creating dishes based on secret ingredients unveiled at the start of the competition. They will be judged by a panel of celebrity chefs, including Bernard Guillas of **The Marine Room**, and television personality, Sam the Cooking Guy.

General admission is \$250, which includes tastings from food and dessert stations. For more information, call 858-272-5777, ext. 151, or visit ccsd.org. *1000 N. Harbor Island Drive.*

The new [Crazy Goose Bar & Lounge](#) is up and running in the Gaslamp Quarter in the space that formerly housed **Quality Social**. Pairing up to craft beers and an extensive selection of wine and spirits is a slate of American comfort food with 21st-century spins, such as angus beef stuffed with Velveeta cheese; maple truffle lamb chops, rosemary chicken melts, plus fresh elk, bison

and venison. Sporting events are aired over 30 flat screens and live entertainment and DJs rotate weekly. 789 Sixth Ave., 619-255-5770.



*The cheese wheel at Monello
(Courtesy Chemistry PR)*

Various risotto dishes that change weekly are receiving special treatment every Wednesday (from 5 p.m. to closing) at [Monello](#) in Little Italy, where the Italian rice is cooked tableside in a prized raspadura Parmesan wheel imported from Italy. The risotto entrees cost \$25 on average and are large enough to share among two or three people. 750 W. Fir St., 619-501-0030.

Culinary nostalgia awaits at [Brian's 24](#), which has begun serving classic blue-plate specials from 4 – 8 p.m., during the early part of the week for the coming month.

Look for beef tips with gravy over noodles on Mondays; pork loin with veggies and mashed potatoes on Tuesdays; and chicken pot pie paired with buttermilk biscuits on Wednesdays. 828 Sixth Ave., 619-263-4577.



*Pork loin was recently introduced at Brian's 24
(Courtesy Alternative Strategies)*

After a five-year run, **Toast Enoteca & Cucina** in the East Village has closed. The restaurant was operated by Chef Martin Gonzalez, who will continue operating his Tuscan-style **Acqua Al 2** establishment at 322 Fifth Ave., in the heart of the Gaslamp District.

Little Italy's **Craft and Commerce** has temporarily closed as it builds out a second concept in an adjoining single-apartment structure. Acquired recently by CH Projects, which is rooted in the Downtown scene with other establishments such as **Neighborhood**, **El Dorado Cocktail Lounge**, **Rare Form**, **Fairweather** and others, the 1,000-square-foot space will be incorporated into Craft's existing layout.

Slated to reopen as a dual operation early next year, the annex “might be a bar, might be a restaurant or maybe both,” according to a public relations rep. It will have a separate name as well. Further details will be revealed in another month or two. 675 W. Beech St., 619-269-2202.

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