

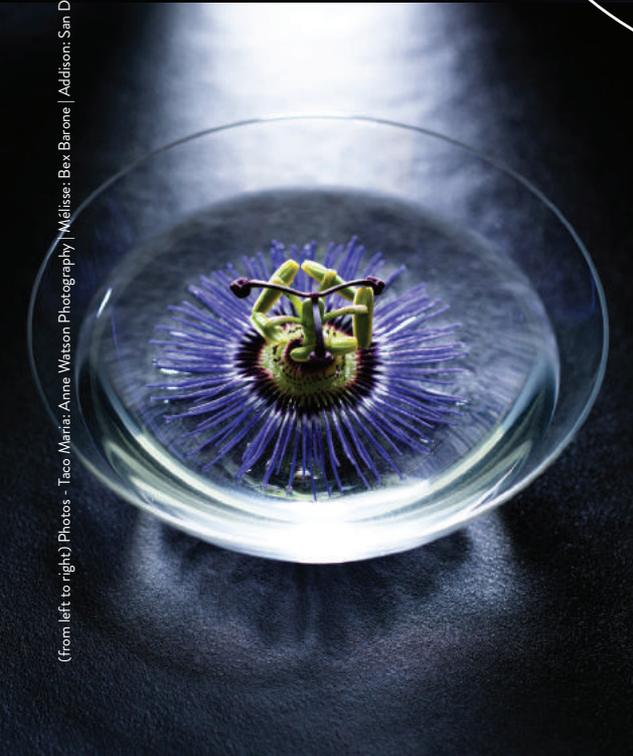


foodie /// feature

Michelin-Starred Restaurants

# SEEING STARS

ENJOY A SPLURGE-WORTHY MEAL AT THESE **MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANTS** IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



(from left to right) Photos - Taco Maria: Anne Watson Photography | Melissa: Bex Barone | Addison: San Diego Tourism Authority | Infants: Jeff Elstone | Knife Pleat: Emi Rose Krawaki

Written By: **Jordan Nishkian**



Originally a modest, red guidebook put out by the French tire company to encourage motorists to get out and explore the open road, the Michelin Guide has since transformed into a prestigious ranking system for hotels and restaurants across the globe. Fortunately, there's no need to book a flight for a truly remarkable meal—here are nine Michelin-starred restaurants that continue to elevate SoCal's culinary scene.



**ORANGE COUNTY**  
Michelin-Starred  
Restaurants



Ranking



## Taco María

→ With Chef Carlos Salgado's vision and goal to honor his heritage, Taco María marries Mexican and American cultures into what can only be described as Alta California cuisine. The menu is made up of a careful selection of Mexican-inspired dishes, such as aguachile, mole de pato, arrachera, piloncillo and, of course, the restaurant's signature housemade blue corn tortillas. Chef Salgado sources heirloom varieties of corn from small Mexican farms, then nixtamalizes and processes the masa in-house to create tortillas you won't soon forget.

**Costa Mesa**  
[www.tacomaria.com](http://www.tacomaria.com)



Ranking



## Hana Re

→ Featuring dishes that allow the freshness of their ingredients to take center stage and shine, Hana Re offers a quiet and maybe unexpected oasis inside of the bustling LAB Anti-Mall. While it may be a hidden gem, Chef Atsushi Yokoyama works with ingredients that are anything but semi-precious. Pull up a seat at the omakase bar to watch Chef Yokoyama work his magic by creating artistic dishes out of luxurious ingredients like kegani, A5 Tajima Wagyu, conch and sea urchin. And don't forget to ask the staff for sake pairings!

**Costa Mesa**  
[www.hanaresushi.com](http://www.hanaresushi.com)

## Knife Pleat

→ Quite possibly one of the crown jewels of South Coast Plaza, the glamour of Knife Pleat fits right in with the likes of neighboring boutiques like Oscar de la Renta, Canali and Chanel. Created by Chef Tony Esnault and restaurateur Yassmin Sarmadi, this eatery has all the elegance and modernity to keep up with its chic French cuisine but is presented in an approachable, SoCal-friendly manner. Patrons can choose among special tasting menus, prix-fixe dinners, lunch, afternoon tea and a fun cocktail menu named after some familiar designer labels.

**Costa Mesa**  
[www.knifeplead.com](http://www.knifeplead.com)

Ranking



Photos - Taco Maria: Anne Watson Photography | Knife Pleat: Emi Rose Krawacki | Hana Re: Hana Re



**SAN DIEGO**  
Michelin-Starred  
Restaurants



## Addison

➔ As the first restaurant in San Diego to be given the honor of two Michelin Stars, Addison—led by Chef William Bradley—pushes the envelope of San Diego’s gastronomy scene. Addison features a revolving nine-course tasting menu that changes with the seasons in order to celebrate regional ingredients at their peaks. With each dish, the staff will suggest a wine pairing to enhance the dining experience, and you can certainly trust that recommendation—Addison has upheld the standards of the Wine Spectator Grand Award for 12 years in a row.

**Del Mar**  
[www.addisondelmar.com](http://www.addisondelmar.com)

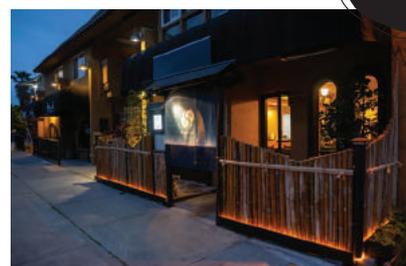


Photos - Addison: Michael Guo & Luis Garcia | Soichi: Mark Lagrasta

## Soichi

➔ Take your omakase experience to the next level at Soichi, where Chef Soichi Kadoya will personally select and delight you with a special eight-course meal packed with freshness, flavor and excitement. Soichi is deeply rooted in the Japanese philosophy of omotenashi: the practice of wholeheartedly taking after guests. The restaurant certainly proves that with balanced meals, intriguing ingredients and its loyal regulars. Chef Kadoya sharpened his skills at fellow Michelin-starred restaurant Sushi Tadokoro, so patrons can expect that same attention to detail, precision and overall excellence.

**University Heights**  
[www.soichisushi.com](http://www.soichisushi.com)



**Award-Winning  
Editor’s Picks  
in San Diego**

**Dija Mara**  
Cuisine: Indonesian,  
Thai and Vietnamese  
Oceanside  
[www.dijamara.com](http://www.dijamara.com)

**Campfire**  
Cuisine: Contemporary  
American  
Carlsbad  
[www.thisiscampfire.com](http://www.thisiscampfire.com)

**Cesarina**  
Cuisine: Italian  
Point Loma  
[cesarinarestaurant.com](http://cesarinarestaurant.com)

**Morning Glory**  
Cuisine: American  
Little Italy  
[morningglorybreakfast.com](http://morningglorybreakfast.com)

**Callie**  
Cuisine: Mediterranean,  
Middle Eastern  
East Village  
[www.calliesd.com](http://www.calliesd.com)



## Sushi Tadokoro

➔ Come for traditional edomae-style sushi, and stay for omakase and homemade sauces by owner and Chef Takeaki Tadokoro and Chef Tatsuro Tsuchiya. Sushi Tadokoro is located a bit off the beaten path in an unassuming strip mall, but don’t judge this book by its cover. Each ingredient is carefully selected for freshness and flavor, and you can taste the years of experience and technique in every bite. Chefs Tadokoro and Tsuchiya showcase immense amounts of skill, ensuring that each dish and experience will keep patrons coming back for more.

**Old Town San Diego**  
[www.sushitadokoro.com](http://www.sushitadokoro.com)



**LOS ANGELES**  
Michelin-Starred  
Restaurants



Ranking



## Mélisse

→ Known for its notable wine list and intimate setting, Mélisse is a luxurious 14-seat restaurant (yes, you read that right) tucked inside Citrin. With Chef de Cuisine Ian Scaramuzza and Chef and owner Josiah Citrin at the helm, guests can expect unique, exclusive ingredients sourced from California farms in San Diego, Napa Valley and everywhere in between. Don't think of this as your typical dinner out; when you book a table at Mélisse, be ready to experience a fabulous seven-course, 2.5-hour tasting menu featuring canapés, mignardises, amuse-bouches and tantalizing global flavors.

**Santa Monica**  
[www.citrinandmelisse.com](http://www.citrinandmelisse.com)



Ranking



## n/naka

→ A modern take on kaiseki, a traditional multi-course Japanese dinner, n/naka takes a holistic approach to dining; guests can expect that all the intricate, ingenious parts of the 13-course meal will harmonize and create a beautiful overall experience. Born in Los Angeles, Chef Niki Nakayama is no stranger to the demands of LA's fiercest foodies and has built truly remarkable dishes that celebrate the flavors and techniques of Japanese cuisine as well as the seasonality and balance of the ingredients. Come see for yourself why n/naka has garnered a cult-like following. ■

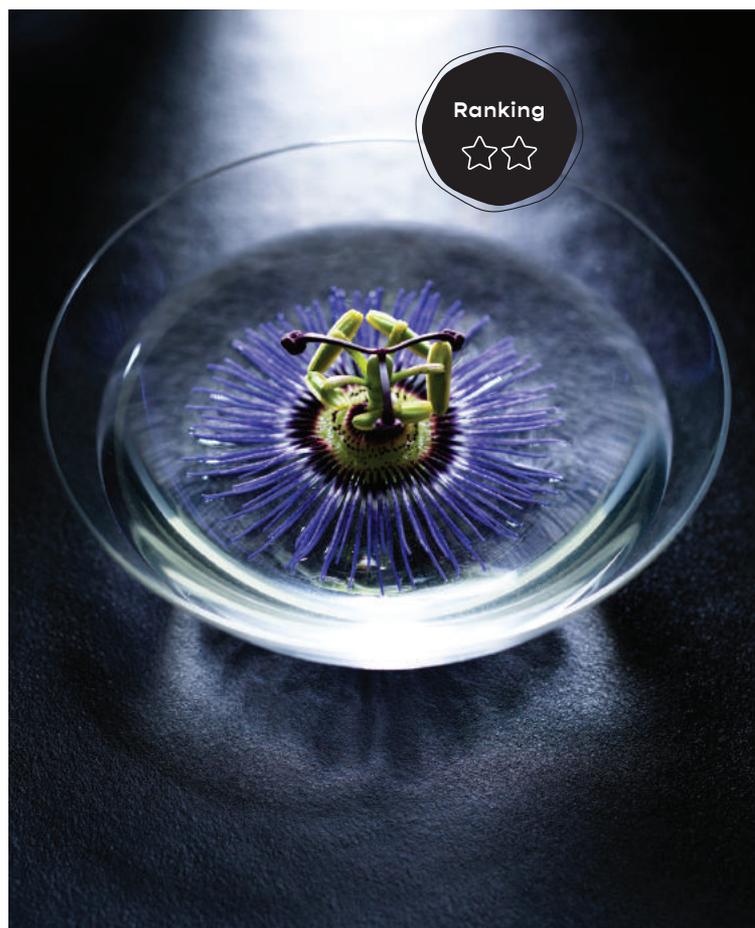
**Los Angeles**  
[www.n-naka.com](http://www.n-naka.com)



## Vespertine

→ Contemporary, avant-garde and undoubtedly unique, Vespertine is more than a restaurant—it's an experimental gastronomical experience. Chef Jordan Kahn shares his vision with diners not only through unforgettable dishes but through other sensory outlets like sound, scent and texture. It's otherworldly, a bit strange and will absolutely get you out of your comfort zone. Vespertine is currently offering themed At-Home Experiences that encapsulate all the senses along with incredible food and drink that allows you to transform your kitchen table into a fabulous sanctuary.

**Culver City**  
[www.vespertine.la](http://www.vespertine.la)



Ranking



**Prestigious  
Three-Star  
Restaurants  
in California**

**Manresa**  
Cuisine: Contemporary,  
Californian  
Los Gatos  
[www.manresarestaurant.com](http://www.manresarestaurant.com)

**Benu**  
Cuisine: Asian  
San Francisco  
[www.benusf.com](http://www.benusf.com)

**Quince**  
Cuisine: Contemporary,  
Californian  
San Francisco  
[www.quincerestaurant.com](http://www.quincerestaurant.com)

**Atelier Crenn**  
Cuisine: French  
San Francisco  
[www.ateliercrenn.com](http://www.ateliercrenn.com)

**The French Laundry**  
Cuisine: French  
Yountville  
[www.thomaskeller.com/tfl](http://www.thomaskeller.com/tfl)

**SingleThread**  
Cuisine: Contemporary,  
Californian  
Healdsburg  
[www.singlethreadfarms.com/restaurant](http://www.singlethreadfarms.com/restaurant)