



Chef Marc Cohen also helms the kitchen at Watermarc.



Linguine carbonara with smoked bacon and cipollini onions



Day boat scallops served atop a bed of butternut squash risotto and white truffle oil

## QUINTESSENTIAL CALIFORNIA

The cuisine at 230 Forest Avenue dazzles with flavors of the Pacific Rim.

By Alli Tong | Photos by Jody Tiongco

WALK PAST THE ENTRANCE OF 230 FOREST AVENUE ON ANY given evening and you'll forget you're even in Laguna Beach. The trendy indoor-outdoor feel of the space is evocative of restaurants you'd see on the streets of New York City during a warm summer night. Step inside, though, and the cuisine, abundant with fresh seafood, is reminiscent of coastal California.

Yet, there is a little inspiration derived from the East Coast in the menu. A Maryland native, co-owner and Executive Chef Marc Cohen—who also helms the kitchen at Laguna's Watermarc—brings his knowledge and love of seafood to 230 Forest.

To start, try one of the restaurant's signature cocktails—the Rosemary Ginger Lemon Drop is the perfect balance of sweet and tangy. Made with Pearl Vodka, hand-pressed lemon and house-made rosemary ginger syrup, and garnished with a sprig of rosemary, the drink is a fitting complement to any dish.

In terms of appetizers, start with the palate cleanser of the oysters on the half shell. The chef puts a twist on this classic by enhancing the oyster with a vodka pomegranate granita that plays with different textures and temperatures.

Meat lovers also won't want to miss the wagyu beef carpaccio appetizer, served thinly sliced with crispy cipollini onions

and mustard aioli. The burrata mozzarella, served with a roll of baked bread, almonds and clover honey, melts in the mouth.

Moving on to entrees, the day boat scallops are mouthwatering. The perfectly seared scallops are plated on a bed of butternut squash risotto and drizzled with white truffle oil. "I [chose butternut squash because] I don't want to overpower the scallop. ... It complements it," Marc says.

Also not to be overlooked, the linguine carbonara is definitely for pasta admirers. Made with smoked bacon, cipollini onions, sweet peas, rainbow chard and a poached egg on top, it's not only a hearty dish but also chock-full of flavor. Marc adds that it's easily customizable, depending on whether guests prefer it sans bacon or with shrimp added.

No meal would be complete without dessert, and chef Marc is more than willing to serve up whimsical treats. A decadent take on a dessert with the most plebeian of origins, the dark chocolate croissant bread pudding will have even the most prim of guests licking their plates—and their fingers.

Whether you're looking for the perfect spot for a business meeting or dinner with friends, the music, ambience and, of course, cuisine at 230 Forest Avenue won't disappoint. **LBM**

### 230 FOREST AVENUE

230 Forest Ave.;  
949-494-2545;  
230forestavenue.com

### HOURS:

Sunday-Thursday,  
11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.;  
Friday-Saturday  
11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

**TIP:** Be sure to check out the restaurant's evolving displays of local art, presented in partnership with Laguna's JoAnne Artman Gallery.