



230 FOREST AVENUE
EXECUTIVE CHEF
MARC COHEN

THE BIG CATCH DOWNTOWN

230 Forest Avenue delivers magnificent seafood in the heart of downtown Laguna.

By Jason Sanford | Photos by Jody Tiongco

WHEN EXECUTIVE CHEF MARC COHEN FIRST SET OUT TO create a place where quality ingredients are delivered at fair prices and come with great service, he must have envisioned (with a couple dashes of restaurateur optimism) something along the lines of 230 Forest Avenue, but he could not have possibly imagined its resounding longevity and enduring success in the rapidly changing Laguna foodie scene.

“The consistency, the presentation, the insistence that it’s served fresh or it’s not served at all—it’s a winner and has been for quite a while now,” Marc says.

230 Forest Avenue has accomplished quite a bit over its 17 year existence in town, and it continues to pack ‘em in with consistently delicious food, a lively downtown atmosphere and one of Laguna Beach’s most prominent chefs.

“One of the most important things is consistency, but we also strive to be new and innovative, and we maintain a guest-first mentality,” Marc says. “The quality of products, the seasonality of products and the sustainability of seafood—they keep our customers coming back.”

Marc is a Baltimore native and has brought his love of local seafood from the Chesapeake to Laguna, insisting on a seafood-first modern American menu that artfully delivers what’s in

season, pleasing the eye and the palate simultaneously; art on the plate will always be a hit in this town.

And while it is a menu heavy on the ocean’s fresh bounty, it also offers a fair amount of meat from the land as well—a little lamb here, a little prime rib there, likely delicious as well, but they are supporting actors on a stage built for acclaimed seafood and seasonal accompaniments.

But really, why would anyone come to Laguna Beach, a city perched on cliffs and overlooking the Pacific, with their mind set on top sirloin? No less a crime than going to a Memphis barbecue joint with swordfish on the brain—so naturally, the fresh seafood is the unapologetic star of 230 Forest Avenue’s menu.

The day boat scallops are lightly pan seared and presented nicely on a bed of butternut squash risotto, then drizzled with white truffle oil. The use of the potent oil is done right, as here it selflessly accents a very tasty dish instead of stealing its thunder. The quality of the scallops themselves is terrific, just the right amount of time over a flame makes these stand out immediately, and the risotto that comes with them brings both great savory and sweet flavor components to the table and adds some real body to the dish. Don’t worry, there will be no lingering turf over surf regret here—the seafood is as advertised, and then some. LBM

230 FOREST AVENUE
949-494-2545;
230forestavenue.com

HOURS: Monday –
Thursday and Sunday,
11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.;
Friday – Saturday,
11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

PRICE: \$6 to \$34

TIP: Arrive a bit early
and try one of their
famous martinis
before ordering.