

Taste^{of the} Town

By Angela Pettera

DIALED IN

News from the local dining scene.

NEW CHEF STIRS THINGS UP

Mediterraneo in the Westlake Village Inn has a new chef. Moorpark resident Alberto Vazquez last cooked at Shutters on the Beach hotel in Santa Monica, and he's also spent time in the kitchens of Tuscany il Ristorante and Sherwood Country Club. He dresses like a rock star in his black chef's coat, neck kerchief, dark-rimmed rectangular glasses, gelled hair and soul patch—and has the energy of one, too. He's working closely with sommelier and general manager Dan Margolis (from Patina) who told us, "Our goal is to bring West Side dining out here." Margolis offers three specials on wines by the glass every week to encourage exploration of the wine list. (Torrontis from Argentina, anyone?) Vazquez has fancied up Mediterraneo's menu with seasonal dishes that sing with originality. His calamari salad is unusual and delicious with crispy-fried tentacles and grilled rings. The base is warm potato dressed in mustard vinaigrette. His crispy crab cakes sit on a toss of tender bean ragout with tomatoes. A Cornish game hen entrée is deboned and flattened with a brick before being grilled and served with crunchy fresh vegetables. His daughter's favorite dish might well be his best seller: *orecchiette* pasta (in the shape of little pig's ears) tossed with crumbled Italian sausage and Swiss chard, and topped with crunchy toasted breadcrumbs. He cooks a wide range of fish and meats as well as a short list of pastas. Dinner served nightly; lunch Monday through Saturday; Sunday brunch. *Mediterraneo* is located in the Westlake Village Inn at 32037 Agoura Road in Westlake Village. Call 818-889-9105 for reservations or visit www.med-rest.com for more information.



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