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L.A. BY DESIGN

ICONIC ARCHITECTURE, TIMELESS STYLE

SHOWBIZ BITES



L.A.'s biggest engines for creating pop culture are still its movie and TV studios, many of which also let visitors peek behind the scenes. All that activity spells good news for diners: Studio-adjacent restaurants are plentiful and provide more than just fuel. Check out pages 78-80 to find studio tours and tapings, then read below to learn where to eat before or after exploring the backlots or becoming part of laugh tracks. You're sure to encounter creative types, and who knows? You may even spot a celebrity. Regardless, you will eat well. *by* JOSHUA LURIE

WARNER BROS. STUDIOS BURBANK UNIVERSAL STUDIOS UNIVERSAL CITY

→ A massive rooster greets you at **Coffee Commissary** in Burbank, the northernmost link in Tyler King's specialty coffee chain. The space features Instagram-friendly tiles, a pleasant patio and coffee beans from multiple roasters. Its food far exceeds standard coffeehouse fare, with house-baked pastries, breakfast burritos bursting with brisket or pork belly, and fried-chicken sandwiches. 3121 W. Olive Ave., Burbank, coffeecommissary.com

→ **The Front Yard** is the culmination of a rehabilitation project at the Garland hotel. The open-air restaurant features outdoor lounge seating, a dining room with copper chandeliers and a full bar. Chef Chris Turano steers a seasonal comfort-food menu that may include green-garbanzo hummus, flat iron steak with adobo fries and Valley fried chicken that's brined, smoked

and fried before joining buttermilk biscuits. 4222 Vineland Ave., North Hollywood, 818.255.7290, thefrontyardla.com

→ Tel Aviv native Joe Mattar does a beautiful job of channeling his Greek and Israeli heritage at **Joe's Falafel** in Universal City. His signature dish is on the sign for good reason, with each ball fried to order and paired with nutty tahini sauce. Mattar also excels with kebabs, whether chicken-thigh or ground-beef skewers called kafta. No matter what you order, add laffa: supple house-baked flatbread. 3535 Cahuenga Blvd. W., Universal City, 323.512.4447, joesfalafel.net

→ Towering two-time *Top Chef* competitor Chris "CJ" Jacobson now spends the bulk of his time in Chicago, but he still contributes mightily to **Girasol** in Toluca Lake. Whimsical floral design complements Jacobson's modern plates, which host seasonal and foraged ingredients. Stand-out items might include a smoky grilled Peads & Barnetts pork

chop or perhaps a lovely pear pie. 11334 Moorpark St., Studio City, 818.924.2323, girasolrestaurant.com

→ Hrag "Jonathan" Darakjian hails from Beirut and opened **Mantee Café** near the Ventura Boulevard bend in 2009. His menu features Lebanese and Armenian classics prepared with flair. Signature mantee involves beef dumplings blanketed in garlicky yogurt sauce. Other compelling dishes include basturma with quail egg and ground-beef kebabs topped with sour-cherry sauce. 10962 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, 818.761.6565, manteecafe.com

→ As we learned from *Lilo & Stitch*, *ohana* means family. At **Ohana BBQ** in Studio City, the Yoo family serves "Korean cuisine with a Hawaiian twist." Mounds of white rice and macaroni salad help to complete plate lunches, which could include kalbi, chicken or pork. Dessert means Hawaiian-style shaved ice in colors that resem-

ble nuclear-reactor runoff. 11269 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, 818.508.3192, ohanabbq.com

20TH CENTURY FOX STUDIOS CENTURY CITY

→ Westfield Century City is the neighborhood's epicenter, a short walk from Fox Studios. Although you can't tour the lots, you can enjoy the area's many dining options. **All About the Bread** was spun off from a popular Melrose sandwich joint. Crunchy loaves help to cradle substantial hot or cold fillings like cold cuts, pastrami or meatballs. You can also build your own sandwich and add "the works." 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., Century City, 310.772.0790, allaboutthebread.com

→ Chef Annie Miler established one of the best market cafés by opening **Clementine** on a side street across from the mall back in 1999. Her American classics are best-in-class, whether it's her grilled cheese, Cobb salad or chicken potpie. You can also raid the pastry case or grab



Chicken curry at East Borough in Culver City, near Sony Studios. Opposite, from left: Celeriac fettucini at Baroo and beet tartare at Kali, near Paramount Studios

Grilled calamari salad at Osteria La Buca; miso salmon at Hinoki & the Bird. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Beef tenderloin at Kali; chocolate crêmeux at the Wallace; sharing Korean barbecue at Hanjip



Intelligentsia coffee. 1751 Ensley Ave., Century City, 310.552.1080, clementineonline.com

→ At the base of CAA's headquarters, you'll find **Craft's** only L.A. location. New York-based chef Tom Colicchio starts by acknowledging farm suppliers on Craft's menu, which chef de cuisine Andrew Gavalla oversees. Most items are à la carte, though you will find composed plates such as lingcod with piquillo peppers and desserts like Navajo fry bread with apple butter, vanilla ice cream and spiced-cider sorbet. 10100

Constellation Blvd., Century City, 310.279.4180, craftrestaurantsinc.com

→ Opening a restaurant at the base of a condo tower isn't all that typical, but Culinary Lab makes it work with **Hinoki & the Bird**. The airy patio quickly became one of L.A.'s power-lunch spots. Chef Brandon Kida's progressive Southeast Asian menu includes hinoki (Japanese cypress) scented black cod and butter-lobster ramen. 10 W. Century Drive, Century City, 310.552.1200, hinokiandthebird.com

→ Westfield Century City also houses **Meizhou Dongpo**, a contemporary Chinese restaurant with an industrial style and splashes of red color. The menu cranks up Sichuan-style spice on dishes like duck feet in mustard sauce, mapo tofu and dan dan noodles. Build ritual into your meal by ordering signature

Meizhou roast duck with pancakes. 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., Century City, 310.788.0120, meizhourestaurants.com

→ Silvio Ursini, the Naples-born founder of **Obicà Mozzarella Bar**, first launched his restaurant in L.A. on Westfield Century City's second floor (another recently opened in Santa Monica). Mozzarella di bufala made with Campania milk is the star. Smoked and black-truffle versions are also popular, as are accompaniments like prosciutto San Daniele and pesto. Supplement with pizza, pasta and salads. 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., Century City, 310.556.2452, obica.com

PARAMOUNT PICTURES STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

→ The most exciting restaurant to open near Paramount is undoubtedly **Baroo**, a progressive Korean restaurant from

chef/owner Kwang Uh with a focus on fermentation, which it applies to vegetables, kimchi and kombucha. Uh's genre-busting kimchi fried rice incorporates atypical ingredients like pineapple-jalapeño salsa and purple potato chips. House-made pasta serves as a canvas to study celery in many forms, down to the root. 5706 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A., 323.819.4344, baroola.strikingly.com

→ Chef Kevin Meehan teamed with wine director Drew Langley on **Kali**, a new restaurant that shares a name with Meehan's popular underground supper club. They're delivering fine-dining-caliber food and wine in an unpretentious setting sans tablecloths and tasting menus. Dishes may include squab with carrots, honey and lavender, or heritage-grain risotto with black garlic and San Joaquin cheese. Market cocktails and house kombucha play support-





ing roles. 5722 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323.871.4160, kalirestaurant.com

→ Michael Bryant has settled in behind the stoves at **The Larchmont**, a former home with an olive-green awning, a wood-lined patio and an art-lined dining room. The chef casts a global net to produce dishes like steak frites, harissa-seared scallops and charred Spanish octopus. 5750 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323.464.4277, thelarchmont.com

→ **Osteria La Buca** is one of the neighborhood's culinary cornerstones. Seasoned GM Stephen Sakulsky and business partner John Moezzi took over and brought in chef Cameron Slaugh, previously sous chef at New York's acclaimed Eleven Madison Park. He centers the menu on pasta and pizza but incorporates market-fresh ingredients and makes pasta, ricotta and sausage in-house. He further elevates matters by preparing premium cuts of beef like rib-eye cap and a 70-day, dry-aged rib-eye. 5210 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323.462.1900, osterialabuca.com

→ **Spicy BBQ** is a charming strip-mall spot from Chiang Mai, Thailand-born chef Nong Sriyana and niece Kay. Skip basics like pad Thai in favor of northern Thai specialties like khao soi, a curry noodle soup with coconut milk. Other flavor bombs include fried ground-pork salad: five spicy patties topped with fried garlic and crispy mint. Spicy jackfruit and ferocious grilled

serrano dip also help the restaurant's name ring true. 5101 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A., 323.663.4211

→ Down the street, **Tlayuda L.A.** showcases Oaxacan-style cuisine. Tlayuda is the Mexican state's signature tostada, each the size of a pizza and built on a crispy house-made blue-corn tortilla. Options include chorizo, marinated and cured beef tasajo, and marinated and smoked pork cesina. They're dressed with black-bean puree, iceberg lettuce, tomato, onion, avocado and salty strands of Oaxacan cheese. 5450 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A., 213.261.4667, tlayudala.com

SONY PICTURES STUDIOS CULVER CITY

→ Chef Chloe Tran and partner John Vu Cao draw on their heritage but take Vietnamese dishes for a modern spin at **East Borough**, their artistic restaurant next to Kirk Douglas Theatre. They're particularly renowned for pho baguette: beef-brisket banh mi served with a bowl of pho broth, French-dip-style. Dinner brings more ambitious dishes such as grilled hanger steak with pungent crab-paste butter, and addictive fish-sauce wings. 9810 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 310.596.8266, east-borough.com

→ What's been called America's shortest Main Street manages to squeeze in more than one standout restaurant. Bombet Hospitality Group partners Stephane Bombet and Francois Renaud teamed with chef Chris Oh on **Hanjip Korean BBQ**, arguably L.A.'s best Korean restaurant outside Koreatown. Prime beef and Kurobuta pork is grilled on gold grates. "Bonus" items consist of luxurious takes on Korean classics, with uni and salmon roe gracing steamed egg, and bone marrow enriching corn cheese. 3829 Main St., Culver City, 323.720.8804, hanjip.com

→ **Jackson Market and Deli**, tucked on a side street, produces some of Culver City's best sandwiches. This neighborhood favorite for over eight decades features umbrellas shading tables out front and a secret garden in back. In between, you'll find stocked shelves and a deli counter. Italian subs, barbecue beef-brisket panini and Jamaican jerk turkey sandwiches are especially popular. 4065 Jackson Ave., Culver City, 310.425.8426, jacksonmarketanddeli.com

→ Chef Sang Yoon shows his culinary range at **Lukshon**, his modern Southeast Asian restaurant in the Helms Bakery complex near his hit gastropub, Father's Office. In a stylish setting with a covered patio, Lukshon gives almost every Asian country some love, whether with Yoon's lobster-roll bánh mì (Vietnam), deluxe beef and broccoli (China) or tea-leaf salad (Myanmar). Wine also holds a place of prominence. 3239 Helms Ave., Culver City, 310.202.6808, lukshon.com

→ Akasha Richmond and husband Alan Schulman opened **Sambar** less than a block from their first restaurant, Akasha, but the Indian restaurant feels worlds away. A colorful glass

chandelier and sunburst wall pattern hint at the restaurant's bright flavors. You'll find street-food classics, but Richmond and chef de cuisine Kirk Plummer really excel when imparting "new wave masala" to dishes like Chindian chicken soup and lamb burgers. 9531 Culver Blvd., Culver City, 310.558.8800, sambarcc.com



→ Chef Joel David Miller grabbed the culinary baton from **The Wallace's** opening chef, and the restaurant continues to thrive on Main Street. The place screams transparency, between its exposed wood rafters, open kitchen and seasonal farmers-market ingredients. "Jarred" items include smoked trout and duck rillettes. The remaining menu is of-the-moment and includes an array of vegetables and sustainable ingredients. 3833 Main St., Culver City, 310.202.6400, thewallacela.com

