



A LEGACY OF GLAMOUR

CECCONI'S ARRIVES IN WEST HOLLYWOOD

Enzo Cecconi, the youngest general manager in Cipriani history, was instrumental in the famed Venice restaurant's success. In 1978, he was intent on replicating Cipriani's glamour and founded an eponymous restaurant in London. In 2004, he passed the torch to the SoHo House Group. The London-based hospitality group had been hosting vaunted pre-Oscar parties in Hollywood for years, and in February 2009, they sprouted LA roots by opening a Cecconi's on trendy Melrose Avenue.

Designer Martin Brudnizki channeled the London original's kelly green, black and white color scheme, but adapted the look toward LA sensibilities. On the plant-lined patio, are cushioned banquettes and a retractable roof that draws the sun. Doors remain open, creating an airy flow that brings the outdoors inside. The dining room features black-and-white striped marble flooring, blue velvet banquettes, ornate chandeliers and gilded mirrors. A curved marble bar with sumptuous blue stools has clear views of the bartenders and hanging salumi. A private dining room is visible through a honeycomb divider, hosting a brilliant orange heart flecked with butterflies.

Executive Chef Mirko Paderno, previously with nearby All' Angelo and Dolce Enoteca, is focused on market-driven Italian cuisine. He changes the menu every two months to capitalize on peak seasonality. At breakfast, expect options like wood-baked frittata with pancetta and fluffy ricotta hotcakes with preserved blueberries.

Lunch brings salads mixed tableside and homemade pasta, highlighted by pappardelle with zucchini and morel mushrooms.

Paderno didn't want a carbon copy of the food in London. "We prepare our dishes to cater to Southern California customers," he says. "We have lighter dishes in our Los Angeles restaurant, like salads, and we cook more on the grill." Paderno makes full use of Cecconi's charcoal grill, searing Santa Barbara prawns, salmon and farmer's market vegetables, to name just three options.

Paderno utilizes the wood-burning oven to prepare options like whole branzino with cherry tomatoes or Sonoma Valley rack of lamb with Taggiasca olives. A summery selection of "Carpaccio and Tartare" features Alaskan salmon tartare with capers and Meyer lemon and sea bass carpaccio with fava beans. Anyone looking for something heartier should turn to thin-crust pizzas or calzones with zucchini, chard and ricotta.

For those who prefer a quick bite, Paderno has constructed a list of cicchetti — Italy's answer to tapas. Think fava bean crostini with mint and pecorino, or scallops with pancetta and rosemary.

The wine list changes every two months, timed with the debut of each menu. The 200-wine list focuses on boutique Italian producers, mixed with varietals from California, Australia and France.

Paderno and corporate chef Andrea Cavaliere take a similarly seasonal approach to the dessert menu, changing the sweets every month and utilizing daily deliveries from a local fruit farmer. However, they plan to always feature a lemon tart and tiramisu. After all, this might be LA, but some concepts are classic.

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