

Mediterranean Roots

The menu at AVEO Table + Bar features imaginative dishes from the creative start to the sweet ending.

BY EILEEN KEIGHLEY



Local rockfish sandwich on the lunch menu at AVEO Table + Bar

People often say that Mediterranean fare isn't just food, it's a lifestyle. That's both the mood and the message throughout the menu at on-property restaurant AVEO Table + Bar. You can virtually feel the Mediterranean culture: the aromatic and flavorful food, the colorful fruits and vegetables, and the incredible variety of fish and meat. It's no

surprise that food is a common language across the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea, from Spain in the west to Italy and beyond in the east, as well as North Africa.

Against the resort's sweeping backdrop of the Pacific Ocean, AVEO Table + Bar offers brunch, lunch and dinner menus that take you

on a gastronomic journey around the regions that surround the Mediterranean Sea—sharing flavorful experiences while also capturing the hospitality and values of the culture.

"It's all about relationships ... with the guests and the purveyors sourcing and harvesting locally," explains Chef de Cuisine Donald Lockhart. "For me, it's about producing an experience that [makes] people want to come in, for locals as well as guests. ... We create a family experience within the hotel."

CULINARY CREATIONS

A large portion of the menu features dishes with only the highest-quality, seasonal ingredients. The flavors are bold, often driven by citrus and vinegar, while various cooking techniques are also in the mix. Cream knows its place—it's solely reserved for the gnocchi. Gluten-free and vegetarian items also abound, such as the tangerine, apple and arugula salad.

The Fisherman's Catch brings in the freshest fish, caught off the coast between Catalina and Baja California. Lockhart sources seafood from eight local boats and prepares everything from white bass and rockfish to squid, Spanish mussels and Baja jumbo prawns.

Bone marrow gives an exciting twist to one beachside favorite, the surf and turf of filet mignon and lobster tail, by adding a rich layer, while the red wine sauce is flavored with star anise, offering some floral yet spicy notes.

The spinach fettuccine can be topped with a ragù of roasted tomatoes, artichokes, peppers, onions and herbs, which is lovingly cooked the traditional Italian way: slowly, over the course of three hours, prior to being added to the freshly made noodles and finished off with feta cheese. "It's super simple: clean, no cream, no butter, but full-flavored," Lockhart explains, noting that these distinctions are why guests enjoy the dish so much.

While the Mediterranean region is, in part, famous for its rich seafood, it is also known for its succulent meats. This sentiment shines through with the melt-in-your-mouth fillet of beef carpaccio, which has a simple, yet elegant, garnish of arugula and shaved Parmesan cheese,



Pan-roasted scallops with potato risotto and sun-dried tomato oil

served with grilled ciabatta bread—perfect to mop up the locally produced Temecula balsamic and extra-virgin olive oil.

If you're looking for a dish with a truly spectacular presentation, the mixed seafood tower always delivers. Brimming with tiger prawns, king crab legs, oysters and mandarin-cured snapper ceviche, these morsels are complemented by the restaurant's signature hot sauce. For another standout seafood dish, have a taste of the shellfish paella (also available in a vegan option) that's full of Spanish spice.

DECADENT DESSERTS

Available at both lunch and dinner is the exquisite dessert menu, which is the creation of Jamon Harper, former executive pastry chef



The S'mores Aroma Experience

who won the Golden Foodie for Pastry Chef of the Year while at Monarch Beach Resort. These incredible sweets provide diners with more than just an elevated presentation, as every aspect of the supply chain was considered for each recipe.

Golden syrup is preferred over corn, and the kitchen utilizes wild honey as well as chocolate from "happy cows" in Switzerland, who are living in their own biosphere where they can freely graze on flowers and grass. The menu is also mindful of particular dietary requirements that some customers have, such as the need for gluten- and dairy-free options, so there truly is something for everyone to enjoy.

The S'mores Aroma Experience is a multi-sensory dish, presented at the table in a smoke-filled glass dome. Worked into the sweet Italian meringue is a chocolate crèmeux, all situated on top of a raspberry-marshmallow moon pie for a touch of fruit flavors. To complete the campfire experience, a small chile-infused hot chocolate is paired with the dish for a sense of nostalgia and a simultaneous taste of contemporary culinary trends.

A favorite among guests who are looking for a lighter option is the Key West Lime. At first glance, it actually looks like a Key lime, but don't be fooled: After cutting into it and taking that first bite, the flavor is a distinct and well-balanced combination of lemons and limes. Under the vibrant Lemonosa chocolate coating with lime zest is a tangy Key lime mousse filled with a compote of both citrus fruits.

Additional options include a tiramisu, an oversize Ferrero Rocher re-creation and the classic affogato with a house-made amaretti cookie and your choice of liqueur for an added shot.

Now, can you honestly say that your mouth isn't watering, even just a bit? 🍷

TOP SECRET SPECIALS

Tantalize your taste buds with these off-menu treats.

MIRAVAL COCKTAIL: This refreshing cocktail is made using The Botanist gin and an infusion of Monarch Beach Resort's unique black tea by Tealeaves, a bespoke creation that incorporates organic peppermint leaves, chamomile flowers, orange blossoms and allspice for a minty, herbal drink blended for complexity and balanced with various fragrant notes.



The secret menu at AVEO Table + Bar includes the Miraval Cocktail.

OVER-THE-TOP SUNDAY: For large parties or those with an insufferable sweet tooth, try the Over-the-Top Sundae on for size: At over 1 foot tall, this is truly the sundae of your childhood dreams. House-made white and dark chocolate gelato are layered with organic strawberries and candied almonds, which are then topped with an oversize "cherry" formed out of glazed white chocolate mousse surrounding a flavorful Amarena cherry center.

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