

Meals to Remember

Much of Santa Barbara's dining scene pays homage to the county's agricultural roots. Chefs incorporate local, seasonal produce into their bill of fare, while the county's wines highlight many a menu. From gourmet dining to grab-and-go grub, choices run the gamut.

NEAR THE BEACH

Shoreline Beach Café

Dip your toes in the sand as you dine on fish tacos or a basic burger. The Shoreline is a favorite of locals who stroll down for cheap eats right on the beach. 801 Shoreline Drive, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-568-0064

Fresco at the Beach

This restaurant puts its spin on European comfort cuisine, with a spotlight on dishes from Spain, Italy, France, and Portugal. 901 East Cabrillo Boulevard, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-963-0111; santabarbarainn.com/dining

The Summerland Beach Café

This local favorite features homestyle cooking and huge portions for breakfast and lunch. Ocean breezes, beach views from the outdoor patio, and friendly service add to the experience. 2294 Lillie Avenue, Summerland; Tel: 805-969-1019; summerlandbeachcafe.com

DOWNTOWN

Bouchon

Bouchon takes an "as-fresh-and-as-local-as-possible" approach, with fish from the Santa Barbara Channel, countryside produce, and meats and poultry from local microranches. 9 West Victoria Street, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-730-1160; bouchonsantabarbara.com

Sevilla

The menu and the atmosphere say Spanish with a heavy dose of eclectic contemporary casual. Entrées include free-range chicken and a variety of seafood dishes. 428 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-564-8446; restaurantsevilla.com

Square One

Chic and sleek food and décor meld with sustainably grown seasonal produce, natural meats, and wild-caught seafood. 14 East Cota Street, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-965-4565

AROUND THE COUNTY

American Flatbread

Every Friday and Saturday evening, this pizza bakery converts into a restaurant. The menu includes a proven selection of flatbread favorites. Each week, two special flatbreads feature the freshest local bounty as pizza toppings. 225 West Bell Street, Los Alamos; Tel: 805-344-4400; foodremembers.com

Los Olivos Brothers Restaurant at Mattei's Tavern

The "brothers" are also the chefs, and they want you to bring an appetite to this classic

American steak house. If you don't go for the steak, try the prime rib or lamb. Mattei's Tavern was originally opened in 1886 as a stagecoach stop. 2350 Railway Avenue, Los Olivos; Tel: 805-688-4820; matteistavern.com

Cold Spring Tavern

Don't expect dainty California cuisine at this historic stagecoach stop. Instead, be prepared to gobble down barbecue, chili, or a side of ribs. The tavern becomes a scene on Sunday, when live music serves as an added draw. 5995 Stagecoach Road, Santa Ynez Valley; Tel: 805-967-0066; coldspringtavern.com

Far Western Tavern

The 1912-era building evokes stirring thoughts of the Old West, complete with a cowhide draped around the front door, massive steer heads mounted on the walls, and a menu that satisfies the heartiest appetite. 899 Guadalupe Street, Guadalupe; Tel: 805-343-2211; farwestertavern.com

—Compiled by Laura Powell



Josh Brown, chef at Bouchon

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Glorious Getaways

Each of the Simpson House's 15 rooms can be a private retreat.



Built as a private home in 1874, The Simpson House Inn is an architectural icon of Santa Barbara, an Italianate Victorian mansion hidden by lush gardens. When it opened its doors in 1985, the 15-room bed-and-breakfast raised the bar for hotels across the state; it's received AAA's Five Diamond rating for 11 years straight.

"We're really close to everything, yet we feel like we're a million miles away," explains general manager Nick Davaz, adding that the inn is just blocks from some of Santa Barbara's best restaurants and cultural attractions. "What we're able to do is edit people's experience in Santa Barbara," Davaz explains. "If they tell us they're interested in architecture and gardens or wineries and restaurants, we're able to give them our insider's perspective." Guests tend to be couples, but the ages range from twentysomethings to octogenarians. "People really feel like they've made a big escape when they come here," says Davaz. "It's interesting how that transcends age." — *Matt Kettmann*

121 East Arellaga Street, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-963-7067; simpsonhouseinn.com

BY THE BEACH

Four Seasons Resort:

The Biltmore Santa Barbara

Call it what you will (locals still call it The Biltmore), this stunning AAA Five Diamond property has all the requisite features. Guests can make use of The Coral Casino Beach Club right across the street. 1260 Channel Drive, Montecito; Tel: 805-969-2261; fourseasons.com/santabarbara

Harbor View Inn

The oldest lodging property on Cabrillo Boulevard, the Harbor View is now a AAA Four Diamond boutique property. Its intimacy and friendliness are testament to its family-owned nature. A spa will open in mid-2008. 28 West Cabrillo Boulevard, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-963-0780; harborviewinnsb.com

DOWNTOWN

Inn of the Spanish Garden

This cozy adobe getaway is tucked away on a side street just blocks from State Street. Each room has a fireplace, a huge bathtub, and a private patio or balcony. 915 Garden Street,

Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-564-4700; spanishgardeninn.com

Upham Hotel & Country House

Offering the ambiance of a bed-and-breakfast with the amenities of a four-star hotel, the Upham features 58 guest rooms and suites. Guests can stay in the main building, garden cottages, or the Tiffany Country House. 1404 De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara; Tel: 805-962-0058; uphamhotel.com

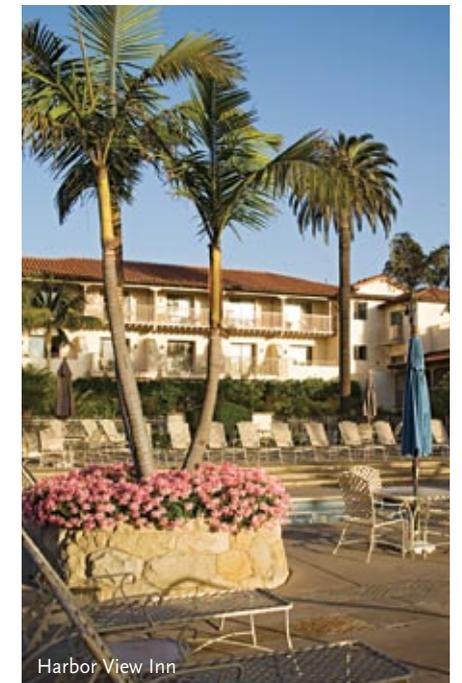
AROUND THE COUNTY

El Capitan Canyon

Located on 300-plus acres on the picturesque Pacific coast, El Capitan Canyon offers luxury camping at its finest. More than 100 cedar cabins offer front porches; king, queen, or double beds; kitchenettes; and bathrooms. 11560 Calle Real, Goleta; Tel: 805-685-3887; elcapitancanyon.com

Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort

Set on a 10,000-acre working cattle ranch, the Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort offers 73 guest cottages and suites, two 18-hole champion-



Harbor View Inn

ship golf courses, and seven tennis courts. 1054 Alisal Road, Solvang; Tel: 805-688-6411; alisal.com —Compiled by Laura Powell



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parting glance



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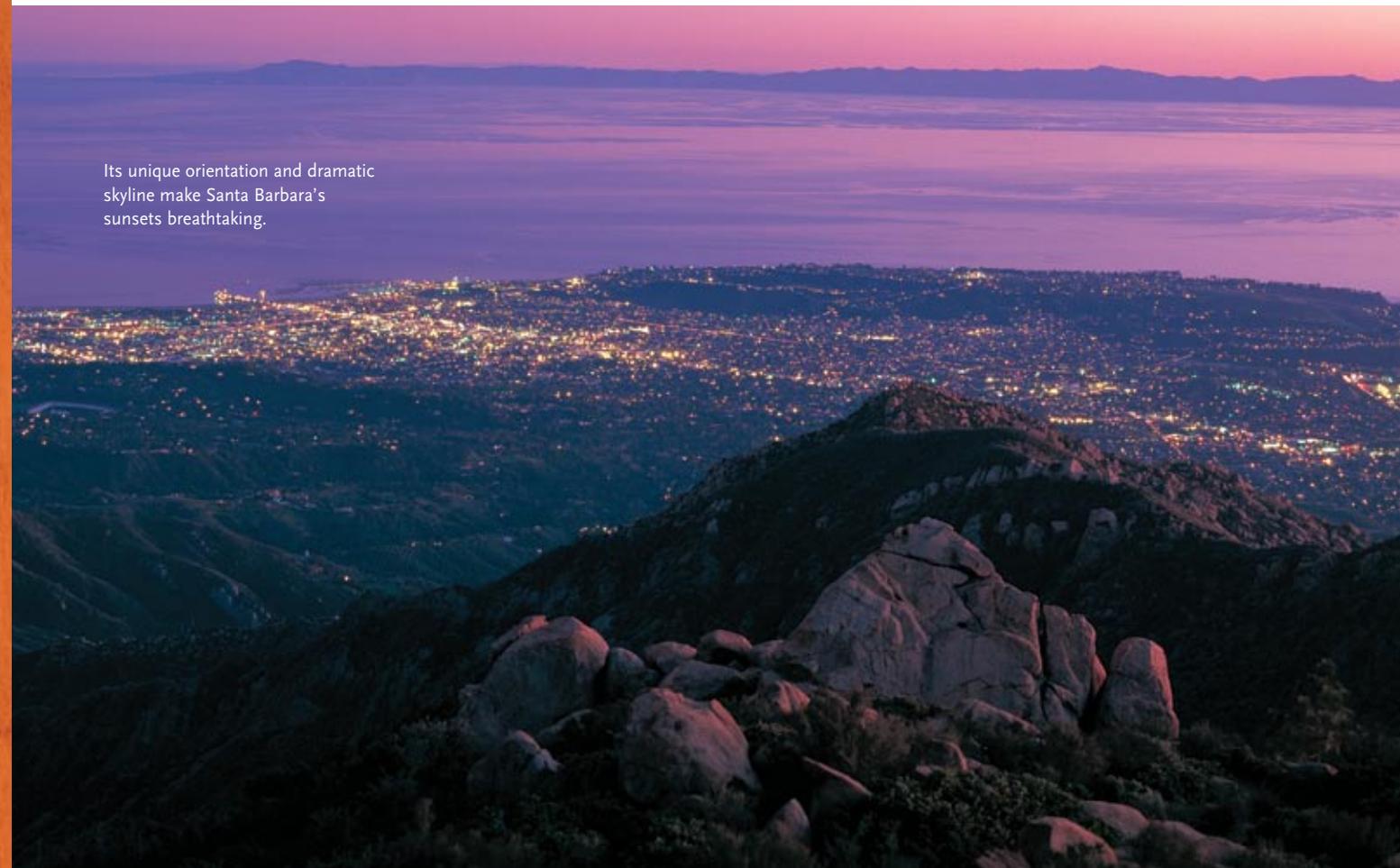
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Its unique orientation and dramatic skyline make Santa Barbara's sunsets breathtaking.



BILL ZELDIS PHOTO

Sunrise to sunset, the Santa Barbara sky surprises and delights.

You've seen pictures of it. There's probably even been an advertisement in these pages that features it: the purplish haze cast over the Santa Barbara coastline come sunset. As a former resident of the city, one who lived right on the ocean (or, as my envious friends on the East Coast readily corrected me, right across the street from the ocean), I can tell you that those images do not come courtesy of Photoshop. Though I can't explain the cause of the color, it's real. Indeed, the sky at sunset often takes on a hue that Prince would go crazy over.

After nearly a year of living on (OK, across from) the beach, it still flummoxed me when I awoke to Old Sol rising over the ocean. Yes, I'm talking a sunrise over the *Pacific* Ocean.

You see, Santa Barbara is one of those rare places on the Pacific that actually face south, not west. The look of the light is so similar to that of the south-facing French Mediterranean that Santa Barbara has been dubbed "The American Riviera."

Again, it might seem like hyperbole, but after living in the place for four years, I've got to say, there's some truth in advertising. —*Laura Powell*