

805 LIVING

MAY 2010



CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY
SEE THE AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA
LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF SURVIVORS

& WRAP
YOURSELF
IN MAY



DIALED IN

News from the local dining scene.

KANDA SUSHI OPENS

The former Joannafina's space in Thousand Oaks' Paseo Marketplace has been transformed into a serene, beautiful Japanese restaurant: **Kanda Sushi** (kandasushito.com). Designers Mardee Stack and Debbie Driscoll at DeMar Interiors blended an Asian aesthetic with luxe touches to give Kanda its distinctive look. "We wanted to make it traditional Japanese, but hip and pretty, too," Stack says. She and her partner chose the white leather chairs and sushi bar stools for their comfort as well as their sleek look and soft feel. Pendant lights over the wood tables in back look like copper balloons, giving the whole place a "date-night" feel, as Stack puts it.

Chef Mitsu continues the slightly formal tone by creating mostly traditional Japanese dishes, like pristine sushi (\$5–\$18), delicate tempura (\$5–\$12), and chewy *kushiyaki* skewers (\$4–\$6) at both lunch and dinner. He allows a few American influences, like marrying cream cheese with *matcha* green tea powder for his green-tea cheesecake (\$6.50), but "I don't want any crazy rolls" he insists. When asked what inspired him to help open Kanda Sushi after selling his Oak Park restaurant, Sushi Tei, in 2007, he says: "Two years ago I was semiretired. Keith [Musante] was my customer for over 10 years. 'Oh Mitsu,' he says, 'why don't you make with me one more restaurant?'" So Kanda Sushi was born.

Mitsu prefers that his customers use proper sushi etiquette, so the menu suggests habits to avoid, like mixing the wasabi with the soy sauce or using too much of the latter. Of course, patrons can avoid this pressure altogether by sitting at one of the tables in the main dining room (out of eyeshot of the sushi bar chef) and ordering the wonderful small-plate cooked specialties, like the pitch-perfect soft-shell crab appetizer stuffed with fish cake (\$15), the savory beef short-rib skewers with green onions (\$6), or the silky black cod with miso (\$10).

SusieCakes Contest

In honor of Mother's Day, **SusieCakes Bakery** (susiecakesla.com) invites locals to submit their favorite recipes inherited from or inspired by their mothers or grandmothers. The bakery is accepting submissions via email (baked@susiecakesla.com) or in person. Entrants can provide a picture of their mom or grandma with an explanation or a memory of what makes the recipe so special. The contest ends May 3 and the winner will be announced on May 8. The winning recipe will be baked and sold at every SusieCakes location (Calabasas, Brentwood, Manhattan Beach, Newport Beach) throughout the rest of this month. Inspiration for the contest comes from the fact that SusieCakes owner Susan Sarich grew up baking with her grandmothers.

Amgen Fun Brewing

Ladyface Alehouse & Brasserie (ladyfaceale.com) is right on the route for the Amgen Tour of California, and Stage 8 of the bicycle race passes the brasserie four times. Ladyface owner Cyrena Nouzille promises: "Our patio is a prime viewing area." She'll also be sure to have the televisions on the patio tuned to race coverage from May 16 to 23. Brewer David Griffiths has created a special French Bière-de-Garde-style ale this month in honor of the French teams that will be racing. As another homage to the race, Ladyface bartenders will be pouring a beer-lemonade cocktail called a *radler* in German, which means "cyclist" in English.

HAVE A TIP FOR OUR RESTAURANT NEWS PAGES? E-mail our dining editor at angela@805living.com.

New Chef at El Paseo

Santa Barbara's oldest restaurant, **El Paseo**, (built in 1922; elpaseosb.com) has brought in chef Alex Castillo. "I want to make it special," Castillo says of the classic Mexican menu that patrons have gotten used to over the years. He's taking things to the next level by using filet mignon in the enchiladas, which he serves with black-bean risotto; grinding and making his own chorizo that he swirls into mashed potatoes; and mixing up his own mole sauces. He's also ordering whole fish and breaking them down himself for the seafood dishes. "I want to do things no one else has done," he explains when telling me about his chocolate flan inspired by the flavored crême brûlées he's made at other restaurants. Since he's "cooked every kind of cuisine" at places like Wine Cask, Lucky's, and Piatti, Castillo features multiethnic dishes at the brunch buffets to "surprise and delight" his regular customers. ■