

# Wine & Dine / Lobster

## Succulent Seafood

LOBSTER GOES HAND IN HAND WITH LUXURY, BUT MANY LAGUNA EATERIES HAVE ALSO FOUND MORE CASUAL WAYS TO INCORPORATE THIS CRUSTACEAN.

By ASHLEY RYAN



Surf N Turf  
at The Cliff

**S**ummertime is for fresh fare—and when you're close to the coast, that definitely means seafood.

While tuna, salmon, scallops, halibut and shrimp all have a place on local menus, lobster remains the most luxurious option of all. And not without good reason: Boasting a uniquely sweet taste and vast number of health benefits, this particular variety of shellfish is always in high demand.

"When you think of coastal dining, this is what comes to mind," says James Brice, chef at The Cliff restaurant. "The slightly sweet, briny, rich flavor is perfect for waterside dining. What can beat lobster and the best view in Laguna Beach?"

Read on to discover more lobster dishes found around town.

### THE CLIFF

For a classic lobster dish, you can't beat the traditional Surf N Turf platter—and what better way to enjoy this delectable duo than with panoramic views of the sparkling blue ocean? Brice pairs an 8-ounce Double R Ranch filet mignon with a cold-water lobster tail, served with drawn butter and lemon alongside sauteed asparagus and a loaded baked potato. "The filet is seasoned with sea salt and black pepper, grilled to perfection [then] served with a ... lobster tail that is glazed in clarified butter," he explains. "The simplicity of the dish allows for the classic lobster flavor to be savored." This coastal delicacy is the perfect end to a hot summer day. (949-494-1956; thecliffrestaurant.com)



Above: The lobster roll trio at Finney's Crafthouse includes a blend of two types: butter-based and mayo-based lobster rolls.

### FINNEY'S CRAFTHOUSE

If the luxurious surf and turf isn't for you, a lobster roll is another classic way to enjoy this type of shellfish. At Finney's Crafthouse, each order comes with three miniature hand-helds. "It's a blend of the two different kinds of traditional lobster rolls—butter-based and mayo-based," says Corporate Executive Chef Eric Bosrau. The lobster salad features both claw and knuckle meat mixed with mayo, lemon, butter, garlic, shallots, celery, chives, salt, pepper and Tabasco sauce. Bosrau then slices open King's Hawaiian rolls and toasts them before adding a layer of citrus crema, a large helping of lobster salad, fried capers and a pinch of parsley. "It's served cold, while the rolls are slightly warm," he adds. "The citrus makes the dish light and refreshing." (949-484-8140; finneyscrafthouse.com)

LEFT: ANDREW TURULLA, RIGHT: ERIC BOSRAU



From left: lobster Caesar salad at Tango Laguna; lobster macadamia sushi roll at Starfish

### TANGO LAGUNA

Seafood salads abound along the coast, but it's rare to find them topped with lobster. At Tango Laguna, a unique variation combines a traditional Caesar salad with the sweet and briny taste of fresh lobster. A crisp bed of full romaine hearts is drizzled with creamy roasted garlic Caesar dressing and topped with steamed lobster meat to create a flavorful yet healthy dish. The salad is finished with toasted herb croutons for added texture. As one of the lighter options on a menu offering both small plates and main entrees, the lobster Caesar salad will perfectly satisfy your appetite on a warm summer day but can also be ideal for sharing with the table as an appetizer. (949-988-2727; tangolaguna.com)

### STARFISH LAGUNA

Savor a unique take: Try the lobster macadamia sushi roll from Starfish, which is light and fresh with a bit of a kick. "Everyone loves fresh seafood during the summer months—especially while at the beach," says Jennifer Polley, the brand's marketing director. Warm water Caribbean lobster tail is poached in a house mix of Thai herbs and spices, then the meat

is removed from the shell, chopped and mixed with fresh avocado, cucumber, mango and cilantro. In addition, Starfish roasts macadamia nuts, which are added to the mixture before it's hand-rolled in sesame soy paper and finished with Sriracha aioli. "Everything is prepared in house," Polley adds. "... [It] is the perfect complement to a refreshing summer cocktail like our cantaloupe martini." (949-715-9200; starfishcalifornia.com)

### ALESSA BY CHEF PIROZZI

A true highlight of the menu at Alessa by Chef Pirozzi is the lobster ravioli. Tender Maine lobster meat and roasted fennel are folded into small pockets of pasta, creating a melt-in-your-mouth flavor that blends the freshness of the seafood with the pillowy ravioli. The pasta is coated in a creamy pink sauce with a ragu base. "One of the first sauces I learned from my grandmother was ragu, a traditional Napoli tomato base," says owner Alessandro Pirozzi. "... [This] creamy, velvety reduction sauce and lobster makes the dish irresistible." With flambeed shallots, fresh garlic, chile flakes and organic vodka, the flavors of the dish really shine. (949-497-8222; alessalaguna.com) ■



Lobster ravioli  
at Alessa by  
Chef Pirozzi