



SAM GANGWER, FILE PHOTO

DRIFTWOOD KITCHEN Chef Rainer Schwarz prepares halibut with corn fricassee and fava beans.

370 Common

13 Chef Ryan Adams has a way of turning the mundane into the extraordinary. A grilled cheese sandwich becomes an unlikely star, served one bite at a time. Poutine becomes not merely a heap of fries smothered in a glop of short-rib chili but a strangely refined culinary masterpiece. Meatloaf encased in a crisp layer of bacon awakens as an individual work of art. And the fried chicken? It's so insanely good, they offer it only once a month.

• 370 GLENNEYRE ST., LAGUNA BEACH
949-494-8686, 370COMMON.COM



PAUL RODRIGUEZ, FILE PHOTO

370 Common's bucket of fried chicken comes with an array of sides, including garlic mashed potatoes and gravy.



SAM GANGWER, FILE PHOTO

Herb butter melts over the top of a grilled ribeye from EnoSteak, inside the Ritz-Carlton.

EnoSteak

14 EnoSteak is one of the best-kept secrets in Orange County, but reservations are still difficult because the place is so tiny. With fewer than 40 seats, tucked into what used to be the wine cellar at the Ritz-Carlton, Eno defies the classic steakhouse stereotype. The experience is intimate and romantic. Nobody comes here to see and be seen but for precisely the opposite. Most importantly, the beef and the wine are consistently superb.

• 1 RITZ-CARLTON DRIVE
DANA POINT, 949-240-2000
ENOWINEROOMS.COM

Driftwood Kitchen

15 The cocktails. The view. The wine. And the modern American cuisine. Driftwood Kitchen is the total package: a great, chef-driven restaurant with an open-air dining room that dangles over the beach and doesn't cost a fortune for the experience. Chef Rainer Schwarz makes it look easy, turning out baked-to-order Parker House rolls and beautiful charcuterie boards. The buttermilk-fried soft-shell crabs are as good as you'll find on the West Coast. And the halibut is stunning, served atop a fricassee of corn and fava beans. Rising-star pastry chef Rene Baez seals the deal with sticky-toffee cake and a tongue-in-cheek riff on carrot cake.

• 619 SLEEPY HOLLOW LANE
LAGUNA BEACH, 949-715-7700
DRIFTWOODKITCHEN.COM

Juliette Kitchen + Bar

16 Three things to keep in mind about Juliette, a charming American bistro with an adjacent wine boutique. One: The burger rocks. Two: If it's on the menu at dinner, you seriously must order the braised pork shank. Three: The wines are very modestly priced, making it essential to order a bottle. Beyond that, save plenty of room for dessert. Pastry chef Erica Choi always serves something in a jar, and this is the one you will want to zero in on. It might be a citrus coup, filled with blood orange sorbet, orange segments and whipped mascarpone, like a Creamsicle on steroids.

• 1000 BRISTOL ST., SUITE 11
NEWPORT BEACH, 949-752-5854
JULIETTENB.COM



LEONARD ORTIZ, FILE PHOTO

The roasted Colorado lamb loin includes celery root, fiddlehead ferns, trumpet mushrooms, lamb belly and red wine.