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Fire Up the Stoves

NEW LUCIA RESTAURANT & BAR DEBUTS SUMMER MENU, CRAFT COCKTAIL PROGRAM

& SEASONAL CULINARY EVENT LINE UP UNDER CHEF CAL STAMENOV

CARMEL VALLEY, CALIF., 2015 – Poised on 28 fragrant acres of lavender, olive orchards and vineyards with sweeping Santa Lucia Range views, Lucia Restaurant & Bar caps the long-awaited debut of Forbes Four Star Bernardus Lodge & Spa following a four-month, multi-million dollar transformation. Showcasing a dramatic shift in style and interior design, Lucia Restaurant is set to deliver on expectation given chef Cal Stamenov's tenure as one of the top toques in his field. www.bernarduslodge.com.

Named after the majestic Santa Lucia Mountains which provide the dramatic backdrop to the new 2,300 sq., ft., alfresco heated dining terrace, the contemporary dining room is set in rich white Italian leather paired with rustic treatments crafted in marble, oxidized copper, teak and reclaimed wood. French wooden floors, chandeliers and stunning exterior fireplaces grace the mixed-use table layout with a focal point fireplace styled from Bagattini Oregon stone marking the main entrance.



Equal parts earthy and ethereal, the room's rustic-chic estate aesthetic conceived by Los Angeles-based ARYA Group, Inc., pairs well with Stamenov's style of cuisine. Walls have been replaced with invigorating vineyard views; new organic gardens and orchards have taken root with a host of esoteric herbs and 30+ vegetables. Fresh and expansive, the summer menu reflects Stamenov's light



touch and artisanal integrity with a focus on the authentic relationship between food and terroir.

TOAST TO TERROIR

Classically trained with an eye to sustainability, Stamenov wields an impressive resume working under the watchful eye of such culinary greats as Alain Ducasse, Pierre Gagnaire, Jean-Louis Palladin and the legendary Masa Kobayashi. Since 1999, he has driven the stoves at Bernardus Lodge with an award-winning team at his side. His California country cuisine plays off locally-sourced with the essence of the dish taking center stage. Subtle reductions and thoughtful flavor marriages are his signature; vegetables picked at their zenith, his mantra.

A back pocket of local farmers, foragers and fisherman keep Lucia's kitchen at a steady simmer. Stamenov also culls from his private home garden, a two-acre organic playground flush with 150+ fruit trees, heirloom vegetables, three bee boxes housing swarms of domestic and wild Italian honey bees and a cache of Plymouth, Barred Rock, Rhode Island, Speckled Sussex and Ameraucana chickens.

Starters on the seasonal menu include Roasted Nectarine Salad paired with tangy arugula, prosciutto and shaved Parmiggiano-Reggiano or local Octopus Salad served with King Salmon belly, butter beans, Mangalista jamón and a tangy preserved lemon relish. The Heirloom Tomato and Burrata salad takes a turn with compressed watermelon and creamy avocado dressed in an earthy citrus vinaigrette. Entrees include Stamenov's signature brick-oven pizzas which rotate on a whim. Top picks include the sinful Butter Braised Maine Lobster composed with sweet corn puree, tarragon and finished with a black truffle vinaigrette.

Foie gras lovers will light up with the Hudson Valley delicacy served four ways: the traditional sear with braised heirloom peaches, towering atop a Sonoma Liberty duck burger dressed with black truffle mustard and a classic chilled torchon with toasted brioche and savory chicory salad side. A new twist, the Day Boat Scallop Wellington, is seduction on a plate. Pursued in a thin pastry veil with a medley of chanterelle mushrooms and melt-in-your-mouth foie gras, the entrée is served with a rich red wine truffle sauce.

The menu also spotlights a host of vegetable-driven dishes served at their peak including a creamy house-made sweet potato pasta with roasted fennel and herbs. Monterey Bay Abalone makes a showing with applewood smoked bacon finished with a rich saffron chardonnay sauce as does an elegant oak-grilled rabbit plated with English peas, carrots, smashed potatoes and a perfect reduction of apricot-mustard *jus*. Provence comes to plate in the form of local Blackberry Marinated Squab dusted in earthy cumin with bacon *lardon*, melted leeks and a soulful blackberry *gastrique*.

Prized Wagyu beef and prime rib as well as a daily fresh fish selection round out the menu. A four-course tasting menu is also available nightly with wine pairing. Summer samplers include Stamenov's signature Monterey Salad pairing local California red abalone with seaweed and shaved artichoke in a wild fennel broth followed by Seared Foie Gras capped with Cal's chicken egg and a light fig vinaigrette. The entrée, Local Big Eye Tuna, shares space with a creamy leek fondant and chanterelles in a bright *beurre rouge*. A fragrant Zucchini Flower Beignet stuffed with tangy *fromage blanc*, plated with house-made boysenberry sorbet and garden-fresh lemon verbena completes the repast. (\$105.00/\$75.00 wine pairing; exclusive).

A variety of coveted private dining venues from the casual new Cooper's Den to the expanded 10-seat Wine Cellar, exclusive four-seat Chef's Table and 12-seat Magnum Room offer extensive tasting menus backed by an extensive 15,000-bottle wine cellar. Light dining is also available poolside. Menu starters: \$12.00 - \$21.00; entrees: \$19.00 - \$65.00. Menus: <http://www.bernarduslodge.com/wine-cuisine/menus/>.

SHAKEN & STIRRED – NEW CRAFT COCKTAIL PROGRAM

In addition, Lucia Bar offers casual fare and a craft cocktail program focused on seasonal, artisanal drinks with signature collections culled from small batch producers. Slip



into a sinful and savory Up Beet served in a classic Coupe martini glass or a Blinker, crafted with High West Double Rye, fresh squeezed grapefruit and house-made grenadine. Summer means Quinceanera -- a bold blend of Mi Casa Tequila Repoasdo, Amontillado Sherry, squeeze of lime and chocolate bitters strained in the forgotten Nic and Nora glass. Also on tap, a refreshing Green Tea Collins with Charbay Green Tea vodka, fresh lemon and slap of soda or the Jungle Bird, melding Goslings Black Seal Rum, Campari, fresh pineapple and a float of lime.

A house-created local favorite -- Summer in Jalisco – combining pressed watermelon, muddled cucumber, fresh lime, spike of jalapeno agave and Corralejo Silver Tequila finish, is served shaken on the rocks. The bar also boasts a solid round of mocktails and an eclectic wine list spotlighting coveted regional gems and international, sustainable producers.

ANNUAL EVENTS CALENDAR/2015

Fourth of July Celebration/July 4, 2015

- Live music, craft cocktails and peak of summer menu; market price.

Lavender Harvest Festival/July 11, 2015

- More than 1,000 lavender plants hit full bloom for this annual celebration; grab a glass of Bernardus rose', stroll the gardens with chef Stamenov and horticulturist Mark Marino and dine on a lavish lavender- inspired buffet with ingredients culled from the on-site organic gardens. 11 am – 2 pm, \$95.00/person inclusive.

Heirloom Tomato Lunch/September 5, 2015

- Championing the relationship between food and terroir, chef Stamenov delivers a true farm-to-table experience with a rousing line-up of heirloom offerings. Sip a Bloody Mary while shucking oysters alongside Neil Maloney from Morro Bay Oyster Company. Local farmers Dick and Bonnie Swank of Swank Farms will guide guests through a selection of coveted organic heirloom tomatoes. Following the alfresco reception, step into Lucia Restaurant for a garden inspired buffet lunch featuring Tomato Ratatouille, Carmel Valley Gazpacho, Roasted Free Range Sonoma Chicken and Natural Prime Beef. 11 am – 2 pm; \$115.00/person inclusive.

Exhibition Kitchen Dinner: Garden to Table/October 8, 2015

- Pull up a chair in the elaborate Harvest Exhibition Kitchen by Sub-Zero and Wolf as chef Stamenov drives the stoves, be it eggs from his cache of hens or the first heirloom pears of the season. The demonstration will celebrate Lucia Restaurant's rich sense of place and palate set in the heart of bountiful Carmel Valley. A family style meal with sustainable, organic wines rounds out the experience. 6: 30 p.m. \$150.00/person, exclusive.

BACKSTORY

Perennially recognized by discerning readers of *Travel and Leisure's* "World's Best Hotels" and *Conde Nast Traveler's* "Top Hotels" and as well as a *Wine Spectator* Grand Award recipient (2001-2014), this Forbes Travel Guide Four Star property has long set the gold standard for wine country vacationing. Opened in 1999, Bernardus Lodge and Spa is set on 28 pristine Carmel Valley acres awash with vineyards and lavender and boasts 57 luxurious guestrooms, the signature Spa at Bernardus Lodge, Lucia Restaurant & Bar, two swimming pools, an alfresco croquet and bocce court and 4,300 sq. ft. of meeting space. Woodside Hotels (www.woodsidehotels.com), an operator of a portfolio of distinguished independent luxury properties throughout Northern California, is the new management company for the property, which is located on the Monterey Peninsula, 120 mi./193 km, south of San Francisco and 330 mi./531 km., north of Los Angeles. For information, contact Bernardus Lodge at 831-658-3400 or visit www.bernarduslodge.com.

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VISUALS: [insert box link](#)

Credit: Bernardus Lodge