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Los Angeles



BEST OF LA



COOL JAZZ

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CHEAP LINGERIE

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GREEN DECOR

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**REMEMBERING
COACH JOHN WOODEN**

BY KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

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THYME CAFE & MARKET

Restaurant Soundtrack

AT TERRY BREWER AND Parker Martin's new venture, **First & Hope**, the aural ambience seems as carefully chosen as the oversize ice cubes in the Pimm's Cup or the stargazer lilies that scent the air. Hold up your iPhone and Shazam it: PINK MARTINI, EDITH PIAF, LENA HORNE, LOUIS ARMSTRONG, GOTAN PROJECT. Retro and modern mix harmoniously, much like our hostess's style: a silk dress and tats. // 710 W. 1st St., downtown, 213-617-8555 or firstandhope.com.

Café in a Bookstore

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A bookshop that also serves victuals cooked on a stove, **Stories** is your only option in L.A. The food itself, fortunately, is terrific. Vegetarian chili is tomato-y, hearty, and unspicy, served with toasted baguette slices drizzled with olive oil. A

mini tomato and goat cheese frittata is almost too cute to eat. The setting—four tables around a kitchen in back, another handful up front, and a patio lined on one side with potted plants—feels as quirky as the bound inventory, some of which is categorized under the heading "Drugs, Prisons, and Economics." // 1716 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213-413-3733 or storiesla.com.

New Hotel Restaurant

THE STAID, THICKLY upholstered hotel restaurant is becoming a relic now that a string of classic spots have undergone flashy redos (good-bye, Gardens at the Four Seasons; hello, Culina), and some brand-new hotels have debuted swanky destination restaurants (WP24 at the Ritz-Carlton). **Delphine** at the W Hollywood is neither here nor there, which is probably why we like it. Despite the lobby's 1960s glitz, Delphine channels the French

Riviera with its cool palette of blues and its Francophile celebration of the sea: elaborate raw *fruits de mer plateaus*, pots of bouillabaisse, and whole grilled fish. // 6250 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-798-1355 or restaurant.delphine.com.

Salt

WHETHER YOU'RE roasting a bird or concocting a butterscotch pudding, a pinch of good sodium chloride can make all the difference.

Monsieur Marcel Gourmet Market stocks the artisanal varieties—from pink Himalayan to red or black Hawaiian to *fleur de sel*—that you'll spot at Whole Foods or (in bulk) at the restaurant supplier Surfas. But Monsieur Marcel adds specialty blends to the mix, including wasabi, ginger-green tree, and caviar-lime *fresco*. Feeling wild? Pick up Saltistry's Exotic Sampler, which features coconut-black salt, preserved lemon salt, green tea-and-brown rice salt, fennel-pollen salt, and lavender salt. // *Farmers Market*, 6333 W. 3rd St., L.A., 323-932-6854 or mrmrmarcel.com.

Larder

MORE THAN GOURMET shops and not quite restaurants, larders supply all that's necessary for a semi-home-cooked meal (minus Sandra Lee's tablescapes).

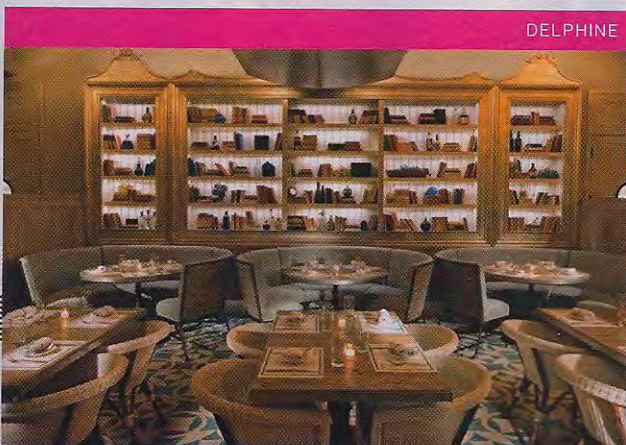
The Curious Palate earns points for its heavily local provisions. Our best loved, though, is **Thyme Cafe & Market**, where the freezer holds everything from chicken potpies to tubs of Julia Child-worthy beef bourguignonne. The counter displays pastries, and shelves hold fancy teas, spices, and chocolates. // 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, 310-399-8800 or thymecafeandmarket.com.

Small-Neighborhood Farmers' Market

THE LOCATION AMID beautiful design showrooms makes the **Melrose Place Farmers' Market** feel like a stroll in Florence. It also attracts enough quality organic producers (greens from Oxnard, strawberries from Santa Paula) that you're not settling for Central Valley leftovers. The prices are comparable to those at Santa Monica's produce bazaars, with none of the crowd crush. Baba Foods offers seven items for \$20 from a selection that includes top-notch hummus, tabbouleh, and other Middle Eastern specialties. Eufloria Flowers sells roses for \$8 a dozen or \$20 for 24. Well over a week later, the flowers still look fresh. // *Melrose Pl. and Croft Ave.*, West Hollywood.

Savory Cocktails

TODAY MOST FOLKS don't want sweet martinis in radioactive hues. They want their drink to refresh or make them wince, but some of us desire even more savory libations (think: needs steak sauce). At the Roosevelt Hotel's **Library Bar**, Matt Biancan-



DELPHINE