

# SBLS

*Santa Barbara Life & Style Magazine*

January/February 2021



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR



# a reinvented CLASSIC

What's old is new again  
at La Paloma Café

Photographed by Silas Fallstich  
Written by Anna Constantino  
Horses Yeti and Midnight from Los Padres Outfitters  
Model Anna Constantino

Single Village Fix  
La Paloma  
Presidio G+T  
Hibiscus Margarita  
Pass The Salt coaster, [passthesalt.co](http://passthesalt.co)  
Necklace, Whiskey & Leather  
Van Palma blue hat, Whiskey & Leather  
Cavender's white hat





Santa Barbara Channel Ceviche  
Pass the Salt napkin, passthesalt.co



The pink flair of neon once again glows down upon Anacapa Street. The renowned Paradise Cafe has been reborn under Acme Hospitality's leadership as La Paloma Cafe, combining traditions of the old and new. The menu embodies cuisine of the early Californian settlers, fusing flavors of Spanish and Mexican influence with a twist. I immerse myself in the liveliness of the patio as a bowl of smokey wheat crisps and my first drink, the Hazy Horchata, appear. The creamy and spiced combination of cinnamon syrup and oat milk is the perfectly-soothing drink for a crisp winter evening.

As I sip, I spot the appetizers making their way to the table. The Roasted Squash Tamal is placed before me, zebra-striped in red chile sauce and crema, and accented with pumpkin seeds and orange flowers. It's simply love at first bite—the light and fluffy squash masa filled with truffled goat cheese delights my tastebuds. Next, I dive into the Oak Grilled Nopales, a much more unfamiliar endeavor. The brined cactus' tart and smokey flavor is unlike anything I've tried before—and I can't get enough. It is grilled to tender perfection over California oak, topped with a light slaw of vegetables, cotija, and lemon dressing. Both plates are swept away in minutes, as I cleanse my palate with a Blackberry Sage Limeade.



Roasted Squash Tamal





Our server adorns the table with the first of two stunning entrées—the Santa Barbara Mission Chicken. The chicken is a statement piece: it is decadently presented with a rose petal and pink peppercorn apple purée (not to mention, Chef Jeremy Tummel’s recipe won first-place in a Texan barbeque contest). Just one bite confirms that this dish is a winner. The chicken is flavorful and succulent, and is complemented wonderfully by the sweet and subtle spice of the apple purée. The Oak Grilled Flat Iron Steak, marinated with white sage and mezcal, arrives next. The tender steak melts in my mouth, and the delicate garnish of avocado epazote chimichurri adds a bright burst of flavor. The crispy potatoes accompanying the dish make for an excellent textural juxtaposition to the buttery steak.

As if my meal could become any more satisfying, dessert is placed before me. The Capirotada (Mexican Bread Pudding) is served with a whipped vanilla bean cream and drizzled in spiced date syrup. The bread pudding is fluffy and moist, layered with

golden raisins, almonds, and the ‘secret ingredient’—jack cheese. Before I know it, the only thing left on the plate is speckles of syrup.

“The chicken is *a statement piece*: it is decadently presented with a rose petal and pink peppercorn apple purée...”

The traditional cuisine and techniques of the Californios paired with eccentric dishes makes for an unforgettable meal. As I depart the patio, I take in the original murals, antique brick, and painted tiles that embellish the space. Reflecting on my thoughtfully-crafted dining experience, there is no doubt in my mind that I will be back for more of the unique flavor pairings and vibrant ambiance. \*

Santa Barbara Mission Chicken  
La Paloma  
Cavender’s hat

