

PRAISE-WORTHY PERGOLAS | BLUEBIRD CANYON SPOTLIGHT | RIBS TO RAVE OVER

# LAGUNA BEACH

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Starfish Laguna Beach's Cantonese Coastal Dry Ribs

### STARFISH LAGUNA BEACH

Starfish Laguna Beach put Cantonese Coastal Dry Ribs on the menu two years ago and never looked back. "We aren't planning on taking it off the menu—ever!" says owner/partner Gretchen Andrews. The ribs have two unique things going for them: the house-made Chinese five-spice powder (which contains star anise, cinnamon, cayenne, a touch of brown sugar and a few secret spices); and the flash frying technique that, according to Andrews, "lends a thin crisp edge and a tender fall-off-the-bone" texture to the dish. The five-spice rub served as inspiration for the ribs and enhances the natural juiciness of the pork, with the brown sugar and cayenne rounding out the traditional flavors found in authentic Asian cuisine. The dish is also served with a side of the five-spice seasoning so that guests can sprinkle more on the ribs, "giving them tons of flavors in each bite," Andrews says. (949-715-9200; starfishlaguna.com)

### SPLASHES RESTAURANT AND BAR

The ribs at Splashes Restaurant and Bar at the Surf & Sand Resort are anything but rushed. In fact, the six-hour short ribs utilize all of Executive Chef Ronald Fougeray's expertise. "The technique we use to cook the short ribs is different," Fougeray says. "It is poached in a classic, traditional French way called Pot au Feu." The process includes seasoning the ribs with fresh ground black pepper and kosher salt, then submerging them in stock with traditional mirepoix plus onion cloute (an onion stuffed with fresh cloves and a bay leaf). The ribs are then covered with foil and poached at 300 degrees Fahrenheit for six hours. The flavor-packed stock is used to poach all the vegetables that accompany the short ribs, too. Fougeray also has focused on adding lighter components to the dish, such as an orange and parsley gremolata to add some citrus and brightness. (888-281-3502; surfandsandresort.com)



The six-hour short ribs at Splashes Restaurant and Bar



Selanne Steak Tavern's braised Brandt Beef short ribs

### SELANNE STEAK TAVERN

Executive Chef Joshua Severson believes ribs "are the ultimate summer comfort food," which is why at Selanne Steak Tavern, located in a historic 1934 cottage, he created a menu with braised Brandt Beef short ribs, which are marinated with cabernet sauvignon for 24 hours prior to cooking to achieve ultimate tenderness. After cooking, the ribs—which are made of hormone-free, all-natural beef—are basted with a cabernet demi-glace for one hour. Severson's recipe was inspired by the desire to keep everything organic and all-natural, which also includes the white polenta served with the ribs, which is milled from organic heirloom grains. "The dish is all about flavor. It's deliciously amazing," Severson says. As for ribs in general, Severson notes, "Ribs are so very much a nostalgic dish. Eating them conjures up feelings of shared summertime fun with family." (949-715-9881; selannesteaktavern.com) LEM