



## Dive In And Enjoy “Splashes” Cuisine & Happenings- Laguna Beach

JANUARY 10, 2017 BY DEIRDRE MICHALSKI [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



This may be hard to believe, but think about it— there are only a small handful of restaurants along the pristine Orange County beach front. And very few that can boast being just steps from a “toes in the sand” experience. I recently had the pleasure to visit just such a coveted spot. At first glance, I was focused on their beachfront restaurant. However this resort offers so much more! The Surf and Sand Resort ~ Laguna Beach.

As our day unfolded, it revealed a real gem of a property— offering a plethora of venues for resort guests and locals alike. Depending on the occasion, and a guest’s mood, there are so many options to choose from! This 167 guestroom & suite hotel is nestled along busy South Coast Highway, creating a long, narrow foot print. Snuggled in along the beachfront with gentle waves as the backdrop, the resort features:

Splashes Restaurant, an intimate Private Dining Room, Splashes Bar, 15FiftyFive Lounge, a dreamy pool, primo Spa and lots of space for parties and celebrations.





I could just imagine myself up early for a morning walk and scanning for seashells, or a secluded massage with the sound of splashing waves in the distance. I can just picture crisp, white linens, gently flapping in a light breeze.



On this fine winter day, I had the pleasure to meet Executive Chef Ron Fougeray, and spend some time with he and a table full of writers at **Splashes Restaurant**. Chef Ron is charming with an affable smile and you can just tell he loves living in Southern California. What fun we had sampling some of his new menu items and Ali North, the illustrious Concierge at the property, was our gracious host.

The restaurant focuses on signature seaside fare, and who wouldn't, with these killer views. I thought for a moment I was on a cruise ship as I peered out over the azure seas that just went on endlessly in the distance. Chef Ron is passionate about making everything from scratch and sourcing the finest possible ingredients. The restaurant is lovely with ample space for groups of all sizes and ginormous windows that open to the beach below. The dining room is flanked by two patios to the north and south. Perfect for a small group! A secret spot for groups of 14-20 is a Private Dining Room just steps from the dining room. It is completely enclosed with a balcony overlooking the ocean and secluded butler & wait-staff service. Just one floor below is the Splashes Bar. It instantly reminds me of the Marine Room in La Jolla with the waves crashing just outside the window. For anyone entertaining out of town guests, this is where you will surely earn your extra "Brownie Points". It is such a dramatic spot to enjoy craft cocktails, wine, beer and appetizers. The entire room faces the westward view. How perfect!



Hamachi Crudo

The lunch menu is impressive, however our dining experience began with two "off-the-menu" items. The first was a delicate Hamachi Crudo with an avocado puree, hearts of palm flown in from Hawaii, grapefruit sections, fennel compote, delicately sliced radishes, a Togarashi spice blend and micro-greens. What a perfect way to begin our adventure.

We began with menu options of Lobster Bisque, Steamed Mussels, Brussel Sprouts with candied sweet potato and a maple yogurt, and there was also a House Cured Salmon, and salads galore. Sandwiches

were popular among our group, with everything from Prime Grass-Fed Burgers to Grilled Chicken Sammies. The Prosciutto Flatbread caught our eye with black mission figs, rosemary and shaved parmesan. The Chicken and Artichoke flatbread was doused in Marinara sauce with sprinkles of blue cheese. Delicious!



Brussel Sprouts



Special Grilled Cheese



Salad with Fig & Persimmons

For main entrees, how could we not order the Sauteed King Salmon with Brussel sprouts julienne, dried cranberry, sesame tuile and a coconut curry emulsion. The Seared Scallops are a standout, just dancing on the plate, with a cauliflower puree, arugula, mutli-colored florets and a verjus reduction. Sublime.



Sauteed Salmon



Chicken & Artichoke Flatbread



Prime Grass-Fed Burger with Pepper Jack, BBQ



Seared Scallops

And not to be outdone by mains, the dessert menu makes me want to just close my eyes and hum along to each and every description. Warm Bourbon Bread Pudding with honey ice cream and crème anglaise. Yes please. Or, how about Pear & Ginger Cobbler, with blackberry ice cream and vanilla tuille. Cheesecake with toffee, apple pearls, maple chantilly and berries coulis. And for the chocolate lovers in the room— a Dark Chocolate Millefeuille—a a chocolate wafer, chocolate ganache, almond cake and a mango cremeux. Artisanal cheeses and a seasonal sorbet trio is also available for the asking.

I heard all about their recent Winemaker Dinner and I can only image what culinary creations Chef Ron Fougery was preparing. I am going to get myself on that email list and you should as well.



Meet Executive Chef Ron Fougeray- The techniques and ingredients of the kitchen were way more intriguing than nibbling on cookies when he was young. His quest for knowledge eventually led him to study at the respected Johnson & Wales University in the Culinary Arts Program. Time spent at Philadelphia's most famous restaurant, Le Bec-Fin proved instrumental for Chef Ron. Considered an institution in Philadelphia, the restaurant was rated America's finest French restaurant, and the Mobil Travel Guide consistently awarded it five stars for 40 years. During his nearly seven year tenure, Chef Ron was mentored by renowned owner and French chef, Georges Perrier, and worked his way up to Chef de Cuisine. Perrier left an indelible impression on Chef Ron, teaching him to expect only the highest standards for his menu, staff and cooking equipment. Chef Georges continues to be a mentor and personal friend.

In 2009, Chef Ron transitioned to Bibou BYOB, where he worked side-by-side with owner and chef, Pierre Calmels. He started off as Chef de Cuisine and worked his way up to Executive Chef in 2013. GQ Magazine named it one of "The Top 10 New Restaurants" and it was voted the top restaurant in Philadelphia on NBC.com. It was also named a James Beard Finalist for Best New Restaurant and received four bells (highest rating) from the Philadelphia Inquirer. There were only four restaurants in the entire city to be awarded that distinction.

Having learned from such respected culinarians, Chef Ron is passionate about making everything from scratch and sourcing the finest possible ingredients. A keen appreciation for food history plays a large role in the style and flavors that he displays fashionably at Splashes. While in the kitchen, Chef Ron stresses teamwork to elevate the performance of the entire staff. Everyone being in sync is critical to achieving the ultimate goal – smiles from guests. Chef Ron describes his culinary style as "creative & cutting edge". Combining his extensive knowledge of food history and classical techniques with his modern twist on flavors and presentation, Chef Ron's been able to construct an exquisite menu. Taking advantage of Southern

California's bounty of fresh seafood, he's able to source the finest ingredients available – a highlight noted with all of the new menu items he shared with us.

**Upcoming Events-** Guests can read all about their special offerings on the website, however I have included a few highlights below. Pick a day— any day, and there is something special going on right here! Splashes Restaurant- Mondays from 5-10pm is a Paella Party, Tuesday & Wednesday's from 5-10pm enjoy a three-course prix fixe menu with a wine pairing option, Saturday and Sundays from 11:30am-3:00pm a delicious brunch is served, and place your name on their email list for fantastic Wine Dinners throughout the year.

Splashes Bar- Daily specials, such as the 3 lobster beignets for \$14.

15FiftyFive Lounge- On Friday and Saturdays from 4-9pm spiked warm cider and donuts for \$16. Fridays are Clam Chowder Bowls for \$16 and Saturday evenings did someone say "Fondue For Two"? From 4-9pm enjoy sweet or savory options, for \$25. Select Gruyere Cheese with sourdough bread bites, mixed fruits and veggies or Belgian Dark Chocolate with pound cake bites, seasonal berries & fruit! Sunday fun-day is all about Fish Street Tacos from 11:30am-3:30pm, guests can select from beef, chicken or fish tacos for only \$5! Add a bucket of Coronas or local craft beer for \$25 or margaritas for \$14.

Winter Spa Treatments – Indulge the senses this season with new winter aroma blend treatments at

Aquaterra Spa. Seasonal treatments include:

- Lavender & Rosemary Aroma Blend Treatment – Guests can enjoy a 90-minute escape with a full-body treatment offering an exfoliating rosemary sea salt scrub followed by a soothing chamomile and lavender oil body wrap with warm stone application. \$205
- Seasonal Peppermint Pedicure – Delight in the rejuvenating holiday scent of peppermint with the one hour pedicure complete with a whipped sugar peppermint scrub, and peppermint body butter application. \$65

Fitness On The Beach – Kick start a "new year, new you" fitness plan with work-outs including a fitness class on the beach!

- Monday- Beach Bootcamp
- Tuesday- Tai Chi
- Wednesday- Core Conditioning
- Thursday- Interval Training
- Friday- Beach Toning
- Saturday- Pilates
- Sunday- Yoga