

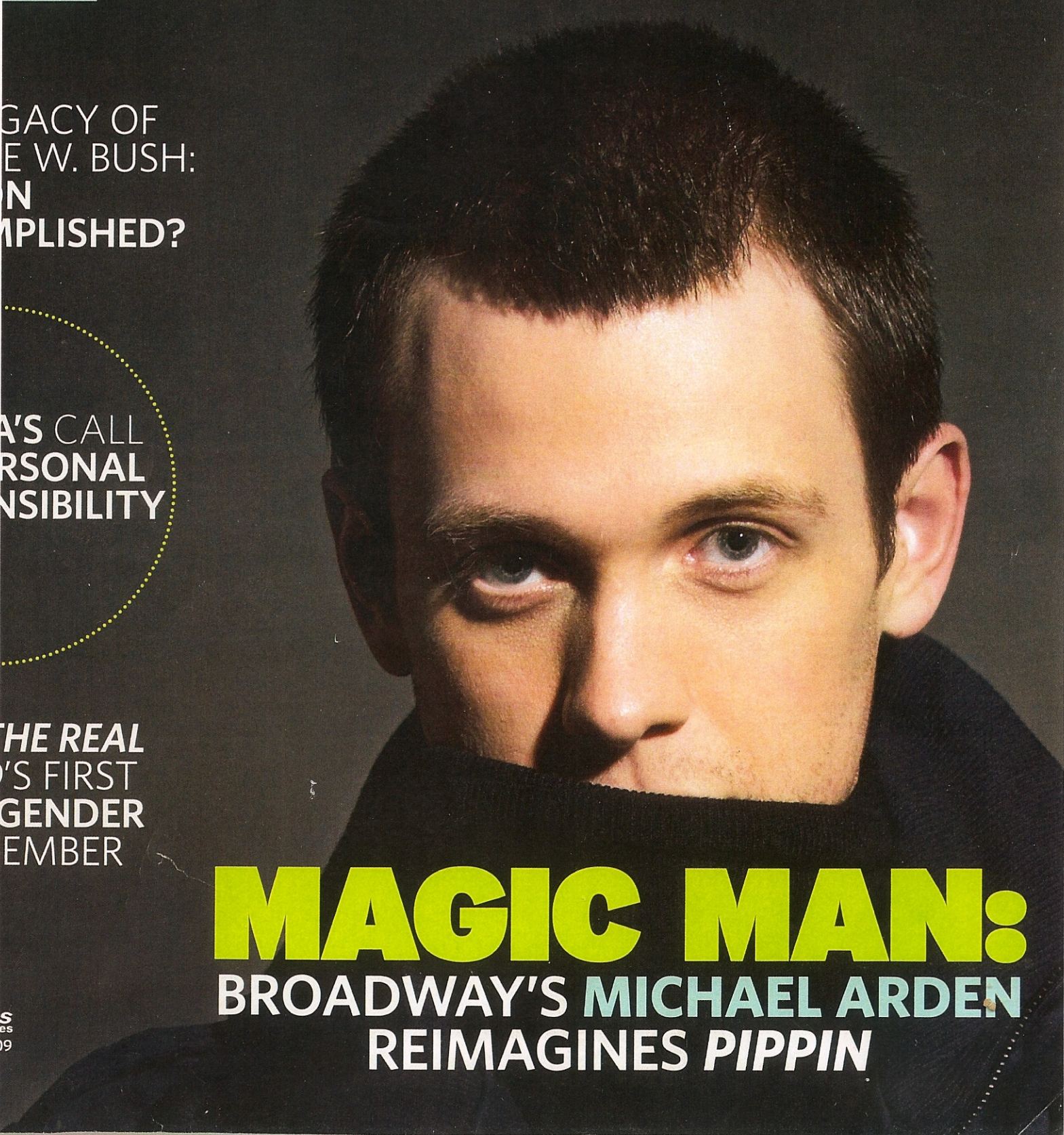
FRONTIERS

LEGACY OF
GEORGE W. BUSH:
UNFINISHED
BUSINESS?

THE PRESIDENT'S CALL
TO TAKE PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY

THE REAL
POLITICS OF THE
GENDER
MEMBER

MAGIC MAN:
BROADWAY'S MICHAEL ARDEN
REIMAGINES PIPPIN





An Adventure in Middle Eastern Dining Riding High Atop The Carousel

BY TONY SPANO, JR.

BE PREPARED FOR A FEAST WHEN YOU DINE AT Carousel Restaurant in Glendale, where the hungrier you are upon arrival, the more adventures in taste you'll get to experience. Bring a group of friends and indulge in a banquet served family style at your table.

While authentic Middle Eastern cuisine is the menu, Carousel's décor whisks you away from the mundane and off to a faraway land, complete with fountains, ceremonial swords and other artifacts lining the walls.

Ultimately, however, one comes for the food, and there is much to sample, starting with a variety of cold and hot *mezza*, or appetizers. The expected hummus is fresh, while unexpected dishes give one a reason to rejoice, like the flavorful *kebbeh nayyeh* (Lebanese steak tartar). The delicious *muhammara*—a spicy Syrian dip made of crushed walnuts, red pepper paste and pomegranate juice—begs to be tasted.

Some of the hot *mezza* are almost worthy of entrée status. *Manté* are mini meat pies, topped with tomato and yogurt sauces. Another hit is the *fatayer*, pan-fried turnovers stuffed with feta and Lebanese white cheeses. Along with traditional Lebanese dishes, Armenian flavors are also dominant. *Soujuk flambé*, made of Armenian beef sausage, is flame-broiled with *arak*, (a Lebanese anise-flavored drink) tableside.

Hopefully you have saved room for the main entrées. With multiple kebabs and *shwarma* to choose from, there are endless possibilities to satisfy your cravings. Of note is the yogurt kebab, with tender barbecued cubes of beef served on a bed of cracked pita, topped with warm yogurt and touches of garlic and roasted pine nuts. The lamb *kastaleta* is another must-have, with center cut lamb chops seasoned and charbroiled to perfection.

Vegetarians and seafood lovers will find plentiful choices, including falafel plates, *mousakka* (a delicious eggplant dish), shrimp kebabs and varieties of fish. Try the imported fresh fish from Lebanon, traditionally prepared and served with *taratur* (tahini-parsley sauce) and fried pita bread.

Desserts are also part of the adventure, and the varieties at Carousel include fresh fruits, tiramisu and Lebanese specialties of ice creams and pastries. *Ashta B'Aasal* is a deceptively simple, sweet dish consisting of authentically prepared *ashta* (condensed milk), layered over fresh banana with honey. Complete your experience with an Armenian coffee and enjoy the relaxing end to a flavorful feast.

Belly dancers perform to live music on Friday (\$38 per person) and Saturday nights (\$43 per person).

VITAL INFO

Carousel Restaurant

304 N. Brand Ave., Glendale
818/246-7775; carouselrestaurant.com

Cuisine: Middle Eastern

The Scene: Fine Middle Eastern dining with weekend entertainment

Must Try: Muhammara, fatayer, lamb *kastaleta*

Cost: \$\$\$

HOT PLATES

PRICE KEY

\$ - UNDER \$20 \$\$\$ - \$31-40
\$\$ - \$21-30 \$\$\$\$ - \$40+

FULFILLED: For a snack, dessert or even light lunch, stop by Fulfilled, a creative bakery near Rodeo Drive. The specialty at Fulfilled is *ima*, traditionally known in Japan as *imagawa-yaki*. Bursting with flavor, this treat is a pancake-like pastry filled with a variety of sweet and savory items. In its original version, the pastry is filled with sweet azuki bean (called "sweet geisha" on the menu). In modernizing this early 1800s Tokyo delicacy, owner Susumu Tsuchihashi has created a fusion of Japanese and American cuisine. Savory menu choices include "sumo Italiano" (with prosciutto, smoked ham, parmesan and basil), or "green ninja" (with spinach, feta cheese and sundried tomato). For your sweet tooth, menu choices include "nutty Buddha" (Ghirardelli chocolate, toffee and crunchy peanut butter) and my favorite, "Harajuku monkey" (banana and nutella). 9405 S. SANTA MONICA BLVD. 310/860-0776 JAPANESE-AMERICAN PASTRIES \$



THE HALL: Whatever you call The Hall at the Palihouse Hotel, new chef Brendan Collins' innovative food is unequivocally delicious. There are starters like a weightless and creamy wild mushroom soup, a moist salmon tartare over red beets and ricotta salata that is bathed in Meyer lemon, and sweet and juicy Alaskan king crab over tangy avocado puree. Notable main courses include a crisp arctic char with grilled eggplant and sweet steamed rice, gamey venison over even gamier venison pâté with wild quinoa and fresh huckleberries and a beef *bourguignon* that makes excellent use of Kobe hangar steak, fingerling potatoes and spinach. Try the *crème brûlée* for dessert, or the chocolate molten cake with caramelized bananas; both will make you melt... 8465 HOLLOWAY DR. 323/656-4020 FRENCH FUSION \$\$\$\$

FRONTIERS

HOW PRE-MARITAL
COUNSELING CAN
STRENGTHEN YOUR
RELATIONSHIP

OUR **BIG** **BUSINESS** ISSUE

MICHAL GREGUS
IS ONE OF EIGHT
ENTREPRENEURS WHO
INSPIRE US
P. 44



LONG BEACH & ORANGE COUNTY SECTIONS

KOKOMO CAFÉ: Long a gay staple at Farmer's Market on Third, Kokomo Café has moved to more modern, stylish digs at Beverly and Martel. We love its chocolate and turquoise color scheme, more convenient location, and especially, the food! The menu is more expansive at this location, though still offering Kokomo classics such as the roasted tomato soup and scrumptious patty melt. We are devotees of their Cajun-infused breakfast offerings, especially the eggs Sardou—similar to eggs Benedict only with artichoke and spinach in lieu of ham—and the fantastic low-carb omelette (egg whites with smoked turkey, goat cheese, spinach, and tomatoes). This may be our favorite breakfast/lunch find in some time. P.S. Kokomo is now a star, featured as the Peach Pit in the new *Beverly Hills: 90210*. **7385 BEVERLY BLVD. 323/933-0773 CALIFORNIA DINER \$**

CHIPOTLE: I have a friend who refuses to eat Mexican food anymore, complaining of being confronted by too many plates of indistinguishable bean-y, cheesy goop. I couldn't completely disagree with his observation until a recent visit to Chipotle. Supporting their manifesto "Food with integrity," Chipotle offers gourmet flavor with high-quality ingredients (like sustainable produce and naturally raised, antibiotic-free chicken—trust me, you can taste the difference)—at lightening-fast service. The marinated chicken burritos with roasted chili-corn salsa are beyond delicious and rank among the city's best. The carb-conscious can skip the tortilla with a low-cal fajita bowl. And I don't have space to describe the delicious margaritas! Suffice to say, Chipotle gives fast food a good name. **THERE ARE OVER 60 LOCATIONS IN SOCAL. FIND ONE NEAR YOU AT WWW.CHIPOTLE.COM. MEXICAN \$**

THE WAFFLE: Comfort food with high-quality, artisan ingredients, late-night hours, and deliciously modern décor? Yes, please. Lesbian Chef Scooter Kanfer delivers the goods with her reinvention of the American diner, and we really feel the love digging into culinary creations such as the cornmeal jalapeño waffle with crispy boneless chicken breast, old-school greens and brown gravy, the blueberry lemon waffle, and Scooter's famous mac & cheese. The daily Blue Plate specials are out of this world, and The Waffle even extends the love to those of us with food allergies, with such lip-smacking offerings as the vegan Ruben, gluten-free waffle, and nondairy milkshake. Did we mention there's also a full bar, and you can get breakfast any time of day? Almost too much goodness here—we hope Chef Scooter opens more locations. **6255 W. SUNSET BLVD. 323/465-6901 AMERICAN DINER \$\$**

CALIFORNIA VEGAN: Carnivores rejoice! Should your eco-conscious new lover pull the vegetarian test on you, ride-share them over to this Thai/Chinese-inspired restaurant and spare yourself from the overpriced and tasteless vegan stereotypes. For although there is no meat or dairy to be found within the confines of this karma conscious kitchen, you'll hardly notice because their soy and seitan meat substitutes are surprisingly close to the real thing. With a few exceptions, even the most die-hard meat eaters will find the food here tasty and hearty enough to spare you the McDonald's run afterwards—and if you grab a lunch or dinner special, it will cost about the same. **7300 W. SUNSET BLVD. 323/874-9079 THAI/CHINESE \$**

WHERE TO EAT



Salades de Provence

For months we drove by this charming little French place at the corner of La Cienega and Holloway, lured by its kelly green signage and idyllic patio. But when we finally stopped in for lunch we bemoaned the delay, because Salades de Provence is near perfect as far as French cafes go. The food is fresh, delicious, and beautifully prepared. Check out the soups and quiches du jour for the quintessential lunch combo, paired with one of their inspired salads. We especially love the quiche Lorraine with the salad Méditerranéenne, washed down with Orangina and followed by a foamy cappuccino. They also serve up a lovely little brunch, and are open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It's the kind of place where you want to take your time to savor the flavors and the ambiance, so do. In the fall they are even opening up another location, in the Frédéric Fekkai salon on Rodeo Drive. **1040 LA CIENEGA BLVD. 310/657-9696 WWW.SALADESDEPROVENCE.COM FRENCH \$**

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Numbers

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