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MARCH 2025

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DATEBOOK 2025

Untamed BEAUTY

Adria Arjona Embraces Her Authentic Allure

THE LUXURY BEAUTY AWARDS:
THE PRODUCTS & PROS
TO GET YOU GLOWING

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FROM TOP: PHOTOS COURTESY OF: L'AGENCE; FASHIONPHILE

Secret Sauce

Top Chef star Jackson Kalb brings the flavors of Southern Italy to Costa Mesa's Paseo 17. Welcome to Ospi. *by* ALLISON MITCHELL

Clockwise from top: Explore Ospi's Southern Italian-inspired dishes during brunch, lunch and dinner; classic spaghetti with Jame's pomodoro sauce, basil and parmigiano; seasonal prime filet mignon.

Top Chef alum Jackson Kalb began his culinary career at 13 years old, apprenticing at the two Michelin-starred Melisse in Santa Monica. Gigs at the three Michelin-starred Joel Robuchon and Alinea followed—all before he earned a degree from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration. In 2018, he opened Jame in El Segundo, Ospi Venice in 2020, and Ospi Brentwood and Jemma Hollywood in 2023. In partnership with his wife, Melissa Kalb, Jackson has established Memento Mori Hospitality (mmh.co) as a force to be reckoned with. Now, he's headed

ALL PHOTOS BY MAX MILLA

south to Orange County, unveiling the latest location of Ospi (ospi.com/costamesa) at Paseo 17 (paseo17.com) in Costa Mesa. Here, we chat with the culinary star about his first O.C. restaurant.

What inspired you to open Ospi in Orange County? I'm so glad you asked this. We are not an 'L.A.' restaurant. We are a community-driven restaurant. We want to be the local neighborhood favorite wherever we end up, and I often rely on gut intuition when choosing locations. I have an excellent relationship with and admiration for both our broker, Chris Hodgman, and our landlords, Burnham-Ward. They both genuinely wanted me in this location.

Tell us about the concept. Orange County is a beautiful place with an abundance and range of cuisines. We hope to fit in and elevate the Italian sector of the restaurant industry just a bit. While the food may mostly appear familiar (chicken parmesan, spaghetti with tomato sauce), I was Michelin-trained, and I hope you can see, taste and feel it. Decades of experience have landed us right here, and we have poured countless hours into honing Ospi to make it the best it can possibly be. The pizza dough took over two years to develop, and the pasta program has only improved with time. We are using local, organic, biodynamic, sustainably farmed wheat in addition to Italian wheat. The sourdough starter for our pizza is over seven years old. Our chicken parmesan uses a scratch-made seasoning blend and is prepared by up to six cooks before it touches your plate.

What should we order? If I were to give you the list that I 'should' give you, it would look something like this: the kale salad, crispy provolone, copione pizza, spicy rigatoni and the chicken parmesan. And it's true—you should try them. But perhaps because I see these dishes so often or have always gone against the grain, my favorite dish on the menu is the ceci e tria pasta. The main ingredient is chickpeas, and it requires a ton of technique to transform that humble bean into something truly delicious. The beef tartare fett'unta is also a variation of something I made on the first episode of *Top Chef*, which was part of the winning dinner for the episode. That dish is very special to me.

What should we drink? Our espresso martini is absurdly good. It packs a punch and comes dispensed ice-cold and frothy directly from a tap designed for it. Guy Fieri will wax poetic about this drink to anyone who will listen (and *way* more people listen to him than me). The Hot Girl Summer is also fantastic, with notes of multiple variations of strawberry.

What's next? Our tiramisu just arrived in Costa Mesa. It's flambéed tableside and is a must-try. We may also launch an exclusive pasta-tasting menu soon. It will serve a maximum of four guests per night and will be offered at the countertop Chef's Table facing the kitchen.

From top: Chef-owner Jackson Kalb turns up the heat while making the the Jeremy Fox cocktail; Kalb worked closely with architect and designer Amy Steiner on Ospi's Costa Mesa location.

"Decades of experience have landed us right here, and we have poured countless hours into honing Ospi to make it the best it can possibly be."
–JACKSON KALB