



LOCAL CHEFS SERVE UP COMFORT FOOD: Comfort food is essential during the coronavirus pandemic. Thankfully, Santa Barbara has no shortage of chefs who are eager to craft dishes that speak to our souls and satisfy our palates. With many local restaurants re-opening for business (with social distancing measures in place), you can choose to dine al fresco or order carry out. These are some of our favorites.

**APNA INDIAN KITCHEN:
CENTURIES IN THE MAKING**

Inside Apna Indian Kitchen on State Street, brothers **Kuldeep** and **Ninder Singh** work rotating shifts in the kitchen, preparing curries, tandoori plates and other flavorful dishes on the stove and taking turns answering the phone for to-go orders at their contemporary Northern Indian eatery. The brothers both wear masks and gloves; the empty tables lined up in the narrow dining room present an uncertain dilemma for the relatively new business owners.

Opened in June 2019, the restaurant is a mecca for curry lovers. In the pre-coronavirus days, seats were filled with foodies who shared dishes that have been in the Singh family for generations.

During the pandemic, the brothers' family recipes have provided comfort to diners with savory rich and aromatic seasoning and sauces, representing a wide variety of regional Indian cuisines.

With prices ranging from \$3 to \$16, Apna's menu is only one page and straightforward: Indian lentils simmered in tomatoes, ginger and garlic; samosa turnovers; fish marinated in chickpea batter; marinated chicken served in a butter cream tomato sauce; seasoned tandoor tiger shrimp; and lamb vindaloo with tomatoes, onions and potatoes, infused with paprika, lime juice, and tamarind chutney.

And of course there are curries: four signature versions, including a vegan dish called Nirvana: a blend of spices, red onions, bell peppers and lemon grass simmered in fresh coconut milk.

Apna is located at 718 State Street. Call 805-770-8479 to place an order for pick up. Delivery service is available through Grubhub.



**LOS ARROYOS MEXICAN RESTAURANT:
COOKING WITH PASSION**

Like curry in India and Bolognese in Italy, a well-prepared molé is about as close as you get to gastronomical nirvana.

Los Arroyos Mexican Restaurant Founder **Tony Arroyo** learned the art of rich and aromatic molé from his madre in the family's kitchen in La Piedad, Michoacan.

Today, Arroyo and his culinary team prepare the molé on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Pasilla, ancho, mulato, and ancho de arbol chilis are ground up and combined with garlic puree and a liquid stock. Roasted peanuts, charred banana, and fried bread are then mixed into a rich sauce. Chocolate is added to reduce the spiciness, Arroyo said.

A Santa Barbara anchor for nearly 22 years, Arroyo continues to prepare sophisticated regional Mexican cuisine at his restaurants in Montecito, Santa Barbara, and Goleta. Popular dishes include chile relleno, fajita steak, seafood enchiladas and fish tacos.

Arroyo sources Angus beef, free-range Jidori chicken and locally-caught seafood for his menu. Twice daily, Arroyo's team prepares fresh batches of chile rojo (fresh tomatoes, garlic and cumin), and chile verde (green tomatillos and onion) from scratch.

As far as his own dishes go, Arroyo admits that the poblano mole is one of his favorites.

The recipe most likely hails from the colonial city of Puebla, Arroyo said. "Unlike some sauces, mole holds its flavor very well," he explained. "The dry chiles and spices never go bad. After a few days, the mole doesn't taste bad, it tastes better."

Los Arroyos is located at 1280 Coast Village Road. Call 805-969-9059 to place an order for curbside pick up. Delivery service available through Grubhub.



**THARIO'S KITCHEN:
ITALIAN HOME-COOKED CUISINE WITH CONTINENTAL FLAIR**

The fragrance of Star jasmine and honeysuckle lend a country cottage feel to Thario's outdoor dining space. Owners **Mario** and **Thais Rios** are recent Los Angeles transplants who opened their bistro (formerly Bordellos Pizzeria) on Santa Claus Lane in Carpinteria a year ago.

For Thario's Kitchen, chef Thais has created a simple menu consisting of savory staples: shrimp and leek appetizer; parsley meatballs; a gorgonzola, goat cheese, mozzarella and ricotta pizza; fresh arugula topped with Parmigiano-Reggiano with roasted tomatoes. Entrees range from \$13 - \$22. The couple curates a European wine selection; Marielle Michot Pouilly-Fume Sauvignon Blanc (\$12) paired nicely with a garlicky shrimp pomodoro.

A master dessert maker, Thais also created a popular indulgence she calls "a little warm melting chocolate cake" (\$7) with Callebaut Belgian chocolate, eggs, flour, butter and powdered sugar.

Thario's Kitchen is located at 3807 Santa Claus Lane in Carpinteria. Call 805-684-2209 to place an order.



**TASTING NOTES WITH BELMOND EL ENCANTO
EXECUTIVE CHEF JOHAN DENIZOT**

I have always admired Margerum Wine Company for its dedication to the region and **Doug Margerum's** trailblazing spirit that has practically put Santa Barbara wines on the global map. The winemaker's Grenache-based M5 blend is elegant with its layers and yet a versatile table and food wine. At Belmond El Encanto I recommend it for guests ordering our flame grilled 10- oz. American Wagyu Flat Iron, served with duck fat potatoes and roasted cippolini onions. For lighter fare, it's best to try Margerum's 2019 Riviera Rosé and 2019 Sauvignon Blanc. The rosé works well with grilled sourdough and local burrata and sweet peas and the Sauvignon Blanc is perfect with an artichoke and asparagus salad complete with mustard frills and aged Spaniard goat cheese. A shared passion for Central Coast cuisine (he's a winemaker and a restaurateur!) is what sparked our recent partnership. Our teams have joined together to create a special Belmond Trio of wine - Margerum's 2017 M5, 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, and 2019 Riviera Rosé - to enhance everyday experiences at home. The Trio will be unveiled on Instagram Live @belmondencanto on Saturday, May 30 at 4 pm. Order the Belmond Trio for pickup in advance at www.margerumwines.com/belmond.

