

THE GUIDE

■ Walter's Restaurant

You might want to sit on the patio at this Village eatery loved for its Afghani, California and French inspired dishes. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sunday. Reservations recommended. 310 Yale Ave., (909) 624-4914

CORONA

■ La Mesita

The Mexican fare here ranges from tacos and flautas to more than 18 varieties of burritos. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. 2279 Eagle Glen Parkway, #101, (951) 549-9850; 1181 Magnolia Ave., #102, (951) 817-5005

■ RA Sushi Bar Restaurant

This stylishly edgy sushi bar and Japanese fusion restaurant is known for its upbeat vibe and playful approach. Lunch and dinner daily, late night dining. Promenade Shops at Dos Lagos, 2785 Cabot Drive, (951) 277-7491

■ Rodrigo's Mexican Grill

The tastes of old and modern Mexico are dished up in an upbeat environment with a Mexican village feel. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sun. 150 W. Parkridge Ave., (951) 738-0373

■ Sugar Tart Desserterie

Not just another cupcake shop, this place is all about desserts—bread pudding, cupcakes, brownies, s'mores, etc.—plus specialty drinks. Promenade Shops at Dos Lagos, 2795 Cabot Drive, Suite 104, (951) 277-7713

■ TAPS Fish House & Brewery

Signature fish dishes, American classics and hand-crafted ales make TAPS a popular place for casual dining. Lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sunday. Promenade Shops at Dos Lagos, 2745 Lakeshore Dr., (951) 277-5800

■ Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

A rustically-elegant decor complements the premium-casual American barbecue menu. Lunch and dinner daily. Promenade Shops at Dos Lagos, 2785 Lakeshore Drive, (951) 667-4200

HEMET/SAN JACINTO

■ Los Vaqueros

This Mexican cantina/grill is a popular place for food and fun, with entertainment and a menu that includes sizzling fajitas, combination plates and seafood specialties. Lunch & dinner daily. 3909 W. Florida Ave., Hemet, (951) 766-1192

■ The Maze Stone

The dining room at the Country Club at Soboba Springs

60 SECONDS WITH CHEF DAVID TEIG

Chef David Teig traces his culinary roots back to his youth in upstate New York, where he began washing dishes at a local Buddhist ashram as a teenager. His training has included work at a three-star Michelin restaurant in France along with a number of private and hotel restaurants in Europe and the United States. Before he became the resident chef for McKinley's Grille at the Sheraton Fairplex in Pomona, he traveled for Starwood Hotels doing openings and providing operational support. He currently runs the hotel restaurant as well as overseeing the entire Los Angeles County Fairplex food operations year-round.

What were some of the greatest influences on your food career?

I grew up in a rural area, with dairy farmers for neighbors, so there was always access to great local products. I was cooking organic before organic was cool, before anyone even knew what it was. So I am used to sourcing local, which is what we do now at the Fairplex, where we have our own farm. On our three-quarters of an acre, we grow stone fruits, almonds, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, Japanese mustard and other fruits and vegetables that we use in our kitchen. We even have a horticulturalist on staff at the Fairplex to advise us.

Where do you find your recipes?

Many are my own invention. I might see a product at the Claremont Farmer's Market, where I shop for my family, that inspires me. I go with what's fresh and local. We are very lucky to live in California, where so much is available year-round.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

Balance and flavor are what cooking is about. You don't want a dish to be too salty or too sweet. A lot of the sauce work I learned in France helps as well.

What is your greatest challenge as a chef?

I am only as good as the weakest link in the cooking chain, especially when I cannot oversee every aspect of the food production. Training my staff to interpret the dishes is very important. It is exponentially more difficult to run a corporate operation, such as catering all the events at the Fairplex, than it would be to run my own small restaurant.

What are your job's greatest rewards?

I enjoy developing cooks and managers. They are a reflection of me as a chef. Basically, I am a food guy who enjoys eating. One of my favorite events is our Table to Farm dinner, when we grill food and serve guests right on the Fairplex farm.

What advice would you give to up-and-coming chefs?

Work hard and get yourself under the tutelage of people who are super knowledgeable. One of my own "chef heroes" was Olivier Roellinger, chef of Les Maisons de Bricourt in Brittany, France, where I trained. The people you surround yourself with are important. You are a reflection of the people you encounter along the way.

— Penny E. Schwartz

