

Beyond LAX

With more than 140 regularly scheduled departures each day, SkyWest Airlines is among LAX's busiest carriers. Many of those passengers find rest, relaxation and a world of opportunity less than an hour away—flying time that is. Here's news you can use—just beyond LAX.

| SANTA BARBARA

Gastronomic Crustacean Creations



above: Santa Barbara Cioppino Elencanto

In winter, Santa Barbara's gourmet *raison d'être* is spiny lobster. Harvested locally in the nutrient-rich Santa Barbara Channel and surrounding Channel Islands, this sweet sister to the Maine lobster is prized in Asian markets for its fine texture and succulent flavor. On the American Riviera, chefs can't seem to get enough of this clawless wonder, more petite than its Eastern counterpart and definitely an insider's treat. Foodies can get up close and personal with the local catch at the Fisherman's Market at Santa Barbara Harbor every Saturday morning where fresh halibut, rock crab and spiny lobster roll off the boats to a frenzy more befitting a Prada purse sale.

Tapping into this translucent treasure is easy as chefs around town sauté, poach, grill and bake spiny lobster into tasty tacos, sevice-style appetizers, seasonal salads and the classic foil to drawn butter. At Bouchon Santa Barbara the lobster and chanterelle gratin steps up with locally foraged mushrooms infused with thyme and a rich goat cheese to melt the day away. Other local picks include Santa Barbara Shellfish Company on Stearns Wharf which serves spiny lobster in tacos, salads and pasta or the Wine Cask with its riff on seafood sevice combining spiny lobster with fresh watermelon, avocado and tomatoes in a chilled martini glass. Pair it with a local chardonnay for true bliss.

For more information visit www.santabarbaraca.com ■

| CARMEL

GET AN UPSCALE TASTE OF CARMEL

TRUFFLE HOUNDS should follow their noses to the 10th Annual Bernardus Truffle Dinner in Carmel Valley, December 8. Executive Chef Cal Stamenov will drive the stoves, transforming these rare diamonds into a work of art.

Carmel also offers a bounty of food for the eyes. With more than 100 studios and galleries gracing the landscape and a lively lineup of 200+ world-class specialty shops, it's a fine place to find everything from fine art to fashion, dolls to dog goods. Carmel Plaza's recent \$4 million renovation expands the retail repertoire with Tiffany & Co., and luxury clothier Wilkes Bashford.

For additional Carmel visitor information go to, www.montereyinfo.org. ■



above: Marinus Restaurant