

HOME ON THE RANGE

COASTAL DELICACIES WITH LOCAL FLAIR PREDOMINATE
AT SOLVANG'S COAST RANGE & VAQUERO BAR

by ANNA CONSTANTINO
Photographs by SILAS FALLSTICH

I flick through a collection of old records as a hearty “Cheers!” and clink of cocktail glasses erupts behind me. Not only does Coast Range & Vaquero Bar pour delectable creative drinks, they also spin the vinyl to complement your cocktail. Naturally, I’m enticed by The Ramblin’ Man, a concoction of tequila and pineapple, topped off with champagne. I retreat from the bar to my table, slowly sipping the fusion margarita. Tequila and champagne is an increasingly common combination, and with a crisp finish and black-salted rim, it exceeds my expectations.



Ramblin’ Man

The Fresh Fish Crudo and Tomato and Peach Burrata are first to catch my eye, as Coast Range is known for its use of exceptional local ingredients. The crudo is drizzled in shiro-dashi and yuzu kosho, adorning my palate with a citrus spice. The tender bluefin tuna is buttery, complemented by a fresh burst

of microgreens and cilantro. I jump to the next appetizer, an artistic array of yellow peaches, heirloom tomatoes, and burrata imported from Italy. I break the burrata open and smother my next bite in the soft cheese, creating a flavorful take on peaches and cream. The zing of the pickled peach vinaigrette and olive oil tie the flavors together beautifully.

As I await my next plate I sip on an Amaretto Sour—Luxardo di Saschira, citrus, and egg white topped with a black cherry, evoking a smooth almond flavor. Suddenly, a goblet of ice is placed before me decorated with two hearty Channel Island Rock Crab Claws. I look at the legs sideways wondering how on earth one is supposed to reach the insides, to which the bartender hands me a metal cracker and chimes, “You’ve got to work for it!” Despite the daunting nature of the task and my novice crab-cracking skills, I dive in. Pieces of shell fly about as I finally reach the rich meat, which pairs perfectly with their mustard creme fraiche.





Wagyu Steak Tartare

The House Made Pastrami Sandwich is next on the itinerary, on a sesame bun with horseradish, and swiss cheese. I dunk the sandwich into the accompanying au jus and devour the dripping bite, the pastrami melting in my mouth. My post-dinner cocktail, Mr. Tambourine Man—fresh tangerine, vodka, and mint from the garden, is as vibrant and relaxing as the famous tune. To accent the citrus notes, we opt for the Meyer Lemon Tarte for dessert. Meyer lemons, a hybrid fruit of citron and mandarin, are known for being exquisitely sweet and floral. The tarte evokes these flavors, with a whipped vanilla bean cream atop.

I finish my cocktail and pass through the bar on my way out, taking in the speakeasy-esque decor and sneaking one last peek at the record player. The entrancing nature of Coast Range & Vaquero Bar is eclectic and refreshing. The hospitality, chipper ambiance, and delicious food is not only a reason to stay through the night, but an even better reason to come back for more. *

Meyer Lemon Tarte



Vaquero Burger



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