

# NORTH COUNTY TIMES

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## NOW SERVING: Twenty/20 takes local, informal approach to haute cuisine

By LAURA GROCH - Staff Writer

Firepit blazing on the patio; cool breeze freshening the air; spectacular sunset over the ocean. Sounds just about perfect.

That's the idea behind the name for the Twenty/20 Grill & Wine Bar recently opened at the Sheraton Carlsbad Resort & Spa: 20-20 means perfect vision, after all.

But the view and the surroundings aren't the only appealing thing about this 5,200-square-foot restaurant, which opened in February at the Sheraton's fourth San Diego County location, the first in North County.

With dark woods and ironwork contrasting with picture windows of the view to the west, Twenty/20 is aiming for a Mediterranean feel with casual California style.

And the food? Call it "globally driven vineyard cuisine," said general manager Stan Kaminski, who worked with chef Steven Patrick to develop the restaurant menu. "We go around the world: French Mediterranean, Italian, Waikato chicken from New Zealand ..."

"And, of course, California," added Marje Bennetts, public relations representative for the restaurant. "Local ingredients. We're very connected to the farms, very locally driven."

Patrick is a California native with a background in organic farming, wine country resorts and restaurants, including El Bizcocho at the Rancho Bernardo Inn, the Temecula Creek Inn and the Vineyard Terrace at Temecula's Callaway Winery. He is also author of "The Fire Magic BBQ Cookbook" for the Fire Magic barbecue company.

The "vineyard style" menu reflects his philosophy of "using global products, artisanal foods," he said. "You try to leave the ingredients flexible so they can fluctuate with the seasons."

Twenty/20 serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, and has a bar/lounge menu.

Breakfast offerings include Banana Chocolate French Toast With Raspberry Drizzle (\$12); Dutch Baby pancake with sauteed pears and blackberries (\$11) or a Scottish Tower of Irish Smoked Salmon, Goat Cream Cheese, capers and a toasted bagel (\$16).

Lunch might be pizza with your choice of toppings, such as grilled chicken and pesto, spinach and soft-roasted garlic, or pears and pine nuts (\$10, plus \$3 for each pair of toppings); Hibachi Shrimp Salad With Fresh Citronette Dressing (\$19); or the English Bleu Grinder (shaved honey ham, English Bleu Shropshire cheese, \$11).

From the dinner menu, choose among dishes such as Iron Seared Rib Eye Saddle Steak with white corn polenta (\$29); Pan-Roasted Breast of Waikato Chicken with crushed Yukon potatoes (\$18); and Shrimp Panzanella (\$26); or Mussels With Potato Dumplings (\$16).

Patrick and Kaminski said they intend Twenty/20 to have a friendly, family atmosphere, reflecting the fact that many guests will be families visiting nearby Legoland. For example, to keep hungry children happy while their meal is being prepared, the wait staff will bring a plate of crudites for everyone to start noshing on.

The idea of shared plates also reflects their concept of "taking the pomp and circumstance out of dining," said Kaminski—as if you were in a vineyard, the day's work done, sitting down with friends, family or co-workers and several plates of food, bottles of wine, loaves of bread to be passed around and enjoyed together.

"Things to Share" even have their own menu heading, with items such as Artisan Cheese Selection (\$12); Greece Island Meatballs (\$7); or Avocado/Asparagus Fritti



Chef Steven Patrick has an array of fresh, seasonal ingredients to work with as he prepares tapas on the patio of Twenty/20 Grill & Wine Bar at the Sheraton Carlsbad. Tapas are 'small plates' meant to be ordered several at a time and shared. Photo by Phil Ireland

With Spanish Romesco Sauce (\$10).

Even more sharing is coming with the advent of the Friday tapas menu starting May 16. Tapa means "lid" in Spanish, and some say the history of tapas comes from the custom of covering a customer's drink with a saucer to protect it from flies or cigarette ash. Bartenders started putting a little tidbit such as nuts or olives in the saucer, and eventually more elaborate foods—but still in small portions—became known as tapas.

Tapas aren't a starter; if you order tapas, make that your meal. Patrick suggests ordering three or four plates for your party, and when you're halfway through them, set up another order. Go from heavy to light, he suggests, as the meal progresses.

To start, "Try a bread, a pepper or cheese and something olive—things that say a lot about wine," he said. Which, of course, you'll be enjoying with your tapas.

Patrick will prepare tapas on Twenty/20's patio, with a huge round grill top and a setup table of assorted meats, seafood, vegetables, breads, cheeses and more to grill and combine into savory plates. Tapas will be priced from about \$4 to \$16 for a larger to-share item.

What's a typical tapa? Patrick grilled a piece of olive oil-marinated strip steak, then sliced it and divided it among three plates. Hand-torn chunks of crusty Italian bread went on the grill to toast, then joined the steak with slabs of pecorino cheese gently warmed by the grill. A dollop of red chimichurri sauce rounded out the flavors.

Or Chicanitas Tacos, with grilled salmon, Greece Island feta cheese, tomato-onion-basil salsa, and sliced onions and serrano pepper roasted in oil and sea salt.

Other tapas might be grilled marinated shrimp or baby octopus; an avocado-stuffed calamari; or several lamb meatballs.

As for the wines, Bennett said the restaurant is selecting from emerging vineyards, "chosen for value as well as good taste. Sixty percent of the wines are below \$60."

Added Patrick, "Everyone should be able to afford to drink wine. That's the approach we take."

Twenty/20 can accommodate 38 people at the bar, 58 in the restaurant, and 70 on the patio. It also has a private dining room that seats about 20.

"The local support has been great," said Patrick, from tourists, business travelers and area residents. "It's as good as it gets without (the restaurant) being right on the water, and in some places that even are on the water."

"We want to surprise the eater. You want them to be familiar with the foods, but you want them to go 'Wow!'"

And not from the prices, Kaminski said. "We don't want Twenty/20 to be a special occasion restaurant. We want people to come in ... and not walk out with sticker shock."

**WHAT:** Twenty/20 Grill & Wine Bar at the Sheraton Carlsbad

**WHERE:** 5480 Grand Pacific Drive, Carlsbad

**HOURS:** Daily; breakfast from 6:30-10:30 a.m.; lunch 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; dinner 5:30-10 p.m. Bar menu and wine bar from 2:30-11 p.m.

**CALL:** (760) 827-2400; [www.twenty20grill.com](http://www.twenty20grill.com)

**PRICES:** Breakfast \$4.75-\$12; lunch \$7-\$19; dinner \$6-\$29; tapas and lounge menu \$4-16