

TRAVEL + ESCAPES



Chef Gabriel Woo at Bar Cecil.

RESTAURANTS

Just Order the Steak

Food trends may come and go, but ribeye and ice-cold martinis still reign supreme.

Story By KRISTA SIMMONS

With its close proximity to Los Angeles and constant influx of top-tier talent, Palm Springs is always tapped into the culinary zeitgeist. But no matter how many times we visit and are impressed with the execution of on-trend dishes—the perfect Neapolitan-style wood-fired pies at Birba or the transcendent Viet fusion at Rooster and the Pig, for instance—for us, it’s the old-school steakhouse that we’ll return to time and again.

Perhaps it’s nostalgia for the Rat Pack era that fuels our passion for perfectly prepared steaks and excellent martinis. Or maybe it’s the fact that quality “fast casual” dining has become the norm in most urban areas, and folks are just looking for an excuse to splash out. But we simply can’t stay away from the steakhouse, which always delivers the air of sophistication and high-level service that we so desperately crave these days. Here are the best spots to get gussied up for your throwback moment.

FROM TOP: MOLLY KIMBERLING THOMAS / J. STORY

Melvyn's

MR. LYON'S

1 The owners of desert hot spots Birba and Cheeky's really delivered when they revamped this classic originally opened in 1945. Walking through the dimly lit dining room, you'll find yourself fawning over jumbo shrimp cocktails, bowls of French onion soup bubbling with Gruyère, and their beautifully presented signature beef Wellington. The real star of the show, the Honest Martini, is made as purists agree it should be. Gin and dry vermouth are stirred and served up, with a twist. Sorry, Mr. Bond. mrvlyonsps.com

BAR CECIL

2 While it may not technically be a steakhouse in the traditional American sense of the word, Bar Cecil is the most significant modern evolution of a classic bistro, with an iteration of steak frites that'd stand up to your favorite spot in Paris. Instead of red naugahyde clichés, you'll find eye-popping eclectic design, a smart wine list, and art inspired by the restaurant's namesake, British photographer Cecil Beaton. If you're so bold, order the Beaton Martini, a Beluga vodka cocktail served with a deviled egg topped with Regiis Ova caviar, house-made potato chips, and a house-pickled cocktail onion. After the first sip, you'll discover that the \$50 price tag is very much warranted. barcecil.com

MELVYN'S

3 Undoubtedly the formula that all other steakhouses turn to for inspiration, Melvyn's is a can't-miss classic for anyone serious about exploring Palm Springs history and the cuisine that comes along with it. A favorite hang-out of Sinatra and his gang, Melvyn's has been a staple in the desert dining scene since 1975, and one could rightly argue it's because they have truly mastered the trifecta of a perfectly seared steak, chilled martini, and wedge salad. The restaurant, which is housed inside the historic Inglewood Inn, still delivers an aura of elegance, and continues to be a spot to be seen for locals and travelers alike. inglesi-deinn.com/melvyns

MARK DURLING



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