

Modern Luxury

SAN DIEGO



Jessica CHASTAIN

THE HUNSMAN: WINTER'S
WAR'S RED-HOT STAR
OPENS UP ABOUT
HER INSPIRATIONS,
ASPIRATIONS & WHAT
MAKES HER TICK

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INNOVATIONS IN
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2016 SALON & STYLIST AWARDS

SAN DIEGO'S TOP GO-TOS

PLUS

EXCLUSIVE:
ARI SETH COHEN'S
LEADING-EDGE STYLE

SAY OM:
MEDITATION-CHIC
IN LA JOLLA

GEORGE'S GOES
NEXT LEVEL

BAY WATCH

Just in time for a sizzling concert season, Humphreys Restaurant shakes up the Shelter Island scene with a badboy chef and a new attitude. Cue the music.

By Seth Coombs // Photography by Lyudmila Zatonva



THE BITE STUFF From left: Seared Georges Bank scallops (\$32) with charred eggplant, braised pork belly, brown-butter crumble and persnips; Hudson Vally Foie Gras Torchon (\$24), with huckleberry compote and brioche.



“Humphreys has a restaurant?” Such were the words of my date when I told her we’d be dining at Humphreys By The Bay, the revered concert venue that’s lured the likes of Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan and Jackson Browne.

But for Shelter Island locals, Humphreys has been a staple. The dimly lit bar, which neighbors the main dining room but is decidedly separate, is consistently packed with regulars ordering plates of seared ahi tataki and grooving out to a local band’s rendition of “You Shook Me All Night Long.”

Business is steady and Humphreys owners could have kept things as is, but, to paraphrase the aforementioned song, Humphreys shook things up a

bit late last year by hiring Nicolas Bour to take over for departing Executive Chef Paul Murphy.

I can’t think of a chef who’s both more than qualified for the job and also a big dice roll. Chef Nic is probably best known locally for helping put the Rancho Bernardo Inn’s restaurant, *Avant*, on the map and, more recently, overseeing all three of the restaurants at Loews Coronado Bay Resort. However, he’s also the guy who left a plush job at the InterContinental Hotel in Miami to open his own bistro, *Iris*, in a rather, eh, sketchy area of East Atlanta. So yeah, he’s cooked for two presidents and a Saudi prince, but he came to do that by never catering to the status quo.

We started the evening with an order of the foie gras and a roasted beet salad. When it comes to the former, chef Nic’s clever take on the buttery-rich dish is cooked *au torchon* and served with **CONTINUED...**

HUMPHREYS

2241 Shelter Island Drive
San Diego. 619.224.3577
humphreysrestaurant.com

Mon.-Thurs. 6:30AM-9PM
Fri. 6:30AM-10PM
Sat. 7AM-10PM
Sun. 7AM-9PM

Small plates, \$10-\$18; salads \$7-\$14; plates, \$16-\$48



FOOD & DRINK

review

« I count foie gras among my #sorrynotsorry, not-so-guilty pleasures, but I'm also a sucker for butter-poached lobster tail. »



...CONTINUED a warm brioche, Bing cherry jam and pickled chanterelles. It's a nice departure from the dried or pickled fruits preparation the pate is usually served with, and the chef trusts the diner to trust their palate when deciding just how much jam or how many chanterelles should accompany each savory nibble. When paired with a Wente Riverbank riesling, itself offering a refreshingly sweet acidity not often found in the all-too-sweet riesling wine regions, it felt almost like a dessert.

I count foie gras among my #sorrynotsorry, not-so-guilty pleasures, but I'm also a sucker for a butter-poached lobster tail. This one has a depth and creaminess to it, and was surprisingly sweet despite the earthy and spicy flavors provided by the ginger and fennel pollen.

It's with the entrees that chef Nic is really stepping out. Take the Georges Bank scallops, for example. He buys them directly from a fisherman in Cape Cod. Perfectly seared and served with caramelized parsnips, hen-of-the-woods mushrooms, chestnuts, bacon and buttermilk, the sweetness and saltiness of the dish was so sublimely balanced and the scallops so fresh, they may as well have been speaking to me in a New

England accent.

My date just couldn't resist getting the ahi tataki. It's a holdout from the previous regime and chef Nic kept it so as not to ruffle the feathers of regular customers. It's forgivable when the rest of the menu is such a bold and brave departure, and I hope that dishes like the wild mushroom flatbread and the lamb shoulder agnolotti soon become bar staples.

I think it's safe to say that we finally have something that San Diego has always needed: a historic and prestigious music venue with an accompanying restaurant that stands out on its own. With the Humphreys concert season already underway, patrons might be tempted to play it safe with a plate of ahi, but perhaps they'll be tempted to, well, shake it up a bit. ■

VIEW FINDER
From top: The bay front dining room is one of the hottest seats on Shelter Island, especially come concert season; dry aged New York strip (\$40) with wild mushroom duxelles, potato confit and black truffle butter.