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RESTAURANT JOURNAL

Something different for T-day

THANKSGIVING is a day of firsts. The first feast celebrating the colonists' first successful harvest in 1621. The first time the gravy turned out clump-free. The first time the white and dark meat were both perfectly cooked. The first time the pie crust baked up flaky.

If you're dining out this Thanksgiving (maybe for the first time), how about a new Los Angeles area restaurant celebrating its first turkey day? Many restaurants that debuted in the last year will be closed Nov. 22, including Bastide, Comme

Ça, the Foundry, Fraiche, Osteria Mozza and Rustic Canyon.

But a few interesting ones will be carving up turkeys, dishing out stuffing and serving up their own takes on other traditional dishes.

At Craft in Century City, chef Tom Colicchio's new (and first) L.A. restaurant, it looks as if Thanksgiving will be a pretty festive affair, if the menu is any indication. For chef de cuisine Matthew Accarrino, this year it's all about the house-made pickled cranberry sauce to go with the roasted organic heritage turkey. He makes the cranberry sauce with Champagne vinegar and honey. "Half sour, half sweet. Really good... nothing like my family served." No offense, Mom.

Those pickled cranberries are one of half a dozen sides to be served family style, such as sausage, raisin and fennel stuffing and acorn squash purée with spiced molasses. Even tables of two get all six sides — and that's



KAREN TAPIA-ANDERSEN *Los Angeles Times*

A FOLLOWING: *Tracht's in Long Beach tweaks the popular three-course holiday menu offered at sister restaurant Jar.*

after an *amuse* of celery root soup with black truffle vinaigrette and bay scallops, and a first course of crisp pork belly, apple confit, celery and pomegranate. If you don't feel like turkey on T-day, there's also Wagyu flatiron steak.

Chef Suzanne Tracht's Thanksgiving menu at Jar has had a devoted following for years. This year at her new restaurant, Tracht's in Long Beach, the

three-course dinner will reflect the traditions that started at Jar, but with some tweaks. At both locations, you'll get mashed potatoes with turkey gravy and braised Brussels sprouts, all served family style.

But at Tracht's, you can also order braised hearts of romaine with bacon, grilled artichokes and lemon aioli, and your roasted heritage turkey breast will come with dark meat turkey

confit. And yes, you can still order the signature pot roast on turkey day — at both restaurants.

Rather go for pork? Sapphire Laguna chef Azmin Ghahreman plans to serve braised Kurobuta pork shank with spiced pumpkin gnocchi, onion *jus* and homemade apple mustard. But also on the menu is free-range roasted turkey with dried fruit stuffing, mashed potatoes, pan gravy and citrus-spiked cranberries.

For dessert, apple *tarte Tatin* with Calvados-crème-fraîche gelato and warm Valrhona chocolate cake with orange caramel and ginger bread ice cream.

At Catch in Santa Monica, executive chef Michael Reardon will offer free-range roasted turkey with puréed potatoes, roasted carrots and stuffing. But also on the menu is Dungeness crab "fondue" and Santa Barbara *uni* (sea urchin roe) along with roasted celery root and apples. King salmon comes with polenta and sautéed porcini mushrooms. Never had seafood on the big day? There's a first time for everything.

— JENN GARBEE

Catch, Hotel Casa del Mar, 1910

Ocean Way, Santa Monica. Call (310) 581-7714 or visit www.catchsantamonica.com. Three-course *prix fixe* dinner. Reservations available 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., \$72 adults, \$36 children under 12.

Craft, 10100 Constellation Blvd., Century City. Call (310) 279-4180 or visit www.craftrestaurant.com. Four-course *prix fixe* dinner. Reservations available 2 to 8 p.m. \$95 adults, \$45 children under 12.

Sapphire Laguna, Old Pottery Place, 1200 S. Coast Highway, Laguna Beach. Call (949) 715-9888, or visit www.sapphirelaguna.com. Three-course *prix fixe* dinner. Reservations available 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. \$58 to \$75, depending on entree choice, half price for children under 12; children's menu also available.

Tracht's, Long Beach Renaissance Hotel, 111 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach. Call (562) 499-2533 or visit www.trachts.com. Family-style *prix fixe* dinner. Reservations available 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. \$52 adults, \$26 children under 12.

For a list of additional area restaurants open on the holiday, with descriptions of their Thanksgiving menus, prices and operating hours, visit OpenTable at www.opentable.com.