

FOR: TART RESTAURANT
Farmer's Daughter Hotel
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THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER HOTEL HAS A NEW TART ON THE BLOCK
Charming new Fairfax District restaurant features exquisite produce from regional family farms, Latin-Caribbean influenced menu, and a few hearty Southern classics

(LOS ANGELES, CA)-L.A. may not immediately conjure up an image of gingham and down-home hospitality, but TART, the new restaurant at The Farmer's Daughter Hotel, is planning to change that. Located in the revamped space of in-bar of the 90s, The Olive, the 37-indoor/60-outdoor seat restaurant's name is a play on the hotel name, as well as an inside joke to those familiar with the 40-plus-year-old property's history as a formerly grand hotel turned room-by-the-hour-flophouse.

The Fairfax District is today one of L.A.'s hottest neighborhoods, just minutes from Hollywood, the Sunset Strip, L.A. County Museum of Art, and the Melrose Shopping Strip. But while the environs may be Los Angeles at its most glitzy, The Farmer's Daughter and TART are anything but. Says co-owner Peter Picataggio, "Technically, we're a boutique hotel and restaurant, but I'd really like to redefine that term. It's a hip place: local artisans have helped with the design and décor, celebrities wanting to be low-key stay here, but this is not a 'place to be seen.' We're very family-oriented. My wife also did a lot of the design, and kids are welcome. We don't want a pretentious place-we want real people here."

That family touch is just as evident in the charming new restaurant, TART. Executive chef Jason Segal and sous chef Dennis Mejia are combining their diverse personal and professional backgrounds to create a locally sourced menu with Latin-Caribbean influences. Segal, 35, grew up right in the neighborhood, and cooked on Maui at celebrity chef Roy Yamaguchi's restaurant, Roy, from 1990 to 1993. Segal also served as executive chef on the 2003 Vans Warped Tour. Mostrecently, Segal was executive chef at the esteemed Continental and Le Meridien hotels, both in Beverly Hills. He brings to TART his diverse culinary background, influenced by his travels and time spent cooking with Yamaguchi-who is known for his eclectic use of traditional Asian and classical European ingredients-as well as his hotel experience.

Meija, 28, grew up on a farm in Belize, and is a former agricultural student and garde manger chef of L.A.'s now-defunct Bastide, all of which have had a profound impact on his culinary philosophy. A passionate supporter of family farms, Meija cooks with the seasons and gives TART its farm focus.

Light hardwood floors and a white brick and wooden lattice backdrop adjacent to the counter seating area offset cheerful turquoise and milk chocolate-colored walls. Retro farmhouse dishware, fresh flowers, and a view of the sunny courtyard make TART an affordable, pleasant place to grab a perfectly frothed Cappuccino and still warm, house-baked Blueberry, Cranberry, Banana Nut, or Poppysseed Muffin, or a more substantial meal of the signature Egg and Bacon Tart; Creole Omelet with Andouille Sausage, Bermuda Onions, and Smoked Cheddar; Eggs Benedict; Brioche French Toast; or down home Southern favorites such as Country Style Grits, Chicken Fried Steak and Eggs, or Fried Eggs, Biscuits and Gravy. Seasonal Fruit Coolers, juice blends of organic ingredients such as Melon and Mint, or Watermelon and Ginger are also available.

Lunch menu items include a Lobster Dynamite Sandwich, tender chunks of Maine lobster meat folded into a cayenne and chipotle aioli; Wild Salmon with Artichoke, Leek, and Pancetta Hash with Tomato Saffron Sauce; and a classic Newport Wedge Salad of Iceberg Lettuce, Bacon, and Blue Cheese, with Buttermilk Dressing.

Dinner might begin with Seared Hamachi with Black Tea Gelè, Togarashi, Ginger Infusion, and Kiwari Sprouts; Wild Salmon Ceviche with Tangerine, Blood Orange, Cilantro, Serrano Chili, and Chorizo Oil; Pan-Seared Crab Cakes with Poblano and Corn Emulsion, then move on to entrées such as Seared Ahi with Purple Thai Coconut Rice and Lemongrass-Cilantro Sauce; Chicken Pappardelle with Forest Mushrooms, Baby Leeks, and Manchego Cheese in a Sherry Garlic Sauce; or the off-the-menu signature dish, Hay-Smoked Cowboy Steak with Moonshine Sauce, Cornbread, and Sautéed Okra and Fried Green Tomatoes.

The wine list is a small but sophisticated selection of mostly California producers, with full bar also available.

Tart is located at 115 S. Fairfax Ave., across the street from Farmer's Market and the Grove. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily, with an all day brunch menu on Saturdays and Sundays. The restaurant opens at 7:00 a.m. and last orders are taken at 9:30 p.m. Valet parking is available. Reservations for dinner are recommended and can be made by calling 323.556.2608.

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