

New restaurant roundup

A sampling of new eateries in Orange County.

Compiled by SqueezeOC Staff

Dozens of new eateries open in Orange County every month. While we can't keep track of all of them, SqueezeOC is pleased to present New Restaurant Roundup, a periodic feature to provide basic information on some of the newly opened restaurants and cafes around the county.

This roundup is simply informative and not meant to be a recommendation or endorsement of any of these businesses. These are not full reviews of the restaurants; we'd like you to provide us with those.

E-mail your reviews and new restaurant sightings to contact@squeezeoc.com.

NOVEMBER UPDATE

NIRVANA GRILLE—Mission Viejo

Owners: Lindsay Smith-Rosales and Luis F Rosales

Who's the chef: Lindsay Smith-Rosales

Details: Lindsay Smith-Rosales grew up in Laguna Beach in a vegetarian household with a mother who worked as an Ayurvedic naturopath. Although she now eats meat, Smith-Rosales still uses organic produce and carefully balances her ingredients so that they aren't overwhelmed by heavy sauces. The chef trained at Orange Coast College and worked six years in the kitchen and at the front of the house at The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, where she met her husband, Luis Rosales. The couple started a catering business in 2000 and took over P.M. Bistro to open Nirvana Grille on July 20. The 50-seat restaurant is simply furnished: white tablecloths, ceiling-to-floor curtains, tiled floor. New chairs and a patio are forthcoming. It's dim and intimate enough for a date, though if you're looking for a scene, you should go elsewhere – on a recent Wednesday visit, the restaurant was patronized by merry 50-something ladies and satiated-looking seniors. Hawaiian shirts OK, but not flip-flops.

Worth a try: Nirvana green salad (\$3.95-\$6.95), lump crab cakes (\$9.50), pistachio-crusting Chilean sea bass (\$26.95), sun-dried tomato-crusting rack of lamb (\$28.95).

—Jit Fong Chin