



EL ENCANTO

A BELMOND HOTEL
SANTA BARBARA

EL ENCANTO, A BELMOND HOTEL, SANTA BARBARA, LAUNCHES A MEDITERRANEAN-INSPIRED CULINARY JOURNEY WITH CALIFORNIA FLAIR

APRIL 2025 – [El Encanto, A Belmond Hotel, Santa Barbara](#), has introduced a brand-new Mediterranean-inspired menu with a California twist, led by El Encanto's Executive Chef Alexander Bollinger, aligning with the healthy principles of the Mediterranean diet and the property's wellness-focused philosophy. Nestled among idyllic hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean and spread across seven beautiful acres of secluded gardens, El Encanto provides the perfect setting for a relaxing gastronomic experience.

AN INSPIRED NEW CHEF TAKES THE STAGE

Leading the exciting new seasonal updates at El Encanto is Chef Alexander Bollinger, whose culinary journey exemplifies a profound commitment to the art of cooking, characterized by both dedication and passion. Prior to his role at El Encanto, Chef Bollinger built a distinguished career in Washington, D.C.'s dynamic dining scene, holding key positions at acclaimed restaurants such as Charlie Palmer Steak and Urbana Wine Bar at Hotel Palomar, as well as Hook & Tacklebox and Sou'Wester at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. His unwavering commitment to utilizing fresh produce from both land and sea ensures that each dish not only embodies creativity but also reflects contemporary American cuisine.

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A TASTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Guests can begin their culinary journey with fresh baked Rosemary Focaccia served with a flight of Ojai Valley olive oil, infused with herbs and citrus zest fresh from the hotel's gardens, alongside a delightful array of spreads and dips. Highlights include creamy whipped feta and roasted tomatoes garnished with Santa Barbara pistachios; the rich and flavorful sweet potato hummus with zhoug, crispy chickpeas, and avocado honey from local purveyor Santa Barbara Hives; and muhammara with walnuts, pomegranate molasses, roasted pepper, and pomegranate seeds.

The Mediterranean-forward menu also boasts a variety of small bites designed to be shared with the whole table, such as Kefta Skewers with sumac onions and charred Persian cucumbers, and Grilled Halloumi with blistered red grapes, purple watercress, and minus 8 vinegar. Those seeking something light and refreshing can opt for a plethora of raw selections available on the menu, including Hamachi Crudo with coconut, ginger, lychee, lime, Fresno chili, and cilantro; Beef Carpaccio featuring pickled beech mushrooms, pomo tomato, crispy shallot, truffle aioli, and 25 year old balsamic vinegar; as well as the plant-based Fennel Crudo with Cara Cara orange, chili, fennel pollen, and olive oil.

Larger plates feature standout dishes such as Ora King Salmon with saffron basmati rice tahdig, English peas, dill, and preserved lemon honey glaze. Another signature dish, Abalone From Our Neighbor, showcases spaghetti al Nero de sepia, rainbow chard, champagne lemon beurre blanc, kaluga reserve caviar, and Abalone from Santa Barbara purveyor Cultured Abalone Farms. Harissa Honey Fried Chicken with polenta and dilly pickles, perfectly golden and crunchy, is generously drizzled with fiery yet sweet honey, creating a mouthwatering blend of bold flavors. For dessert, guests are treated to the indulgence of pillowy ricotta donuts; Goleta lemon with lemon curd, local pistachio, white chocolate, yuzu mousse; and olive oil cake with rose water, lemon syrup, pistachio cream, toasted pistachios, dehydrated rose petals for a sweet end to their meal.

AFTERNOON TEA STEEPED IN ENCHANTMENT

El Encanto has also enhanced its afternoon tea service, Botanica, for the spring and summer season with new menu items. Guests can indulge in the 'Art of Afternooning' atop the Santa Barbara hills complete with astrobotanical infusions from Ojai-based ceremonial tea brand, Magic Hour. A selection of custom blended teas, herbs, and adaptogens will be available, designed for guests' sun sign. The seasonal menu will feature savory delights, seasonal scones, and divine desserts, such as Deviled Eggs cured with beets; Apricot and Lavender Mille-Feuille; Mango Coconut Pavlova; and Lemon Poppyseed Scones served with rhubarb vanilla jam, clotted cream, and butter with local honey. Botanica Afternoon Tea will be served Monday through Thursday from 2:30pm to 5:00pm.

ROOTED IN CARE

El Encanto takes great pride in its commitment to local sourcing, carefully sourcing ingredients from the property's Chef's Garden wherever possible and partnering exclusively with fisheries that provide fish certified as non-endangered. In addition, all of the restaurant's eggs come from farms with certified sustainable practices, such as Chino Valley Ranchers, ensuring dishes are both delicious and environmentally conscious. Other local purveyors include Santa Barbara Hives for avocado honey; Cultured Abalone Farms for farm-raised abalone; Ogo Seaweed for salads; Brandt Beef and Kanoloa Seafood for land and sea culinary offerings; and Cuyama Orchards, McGrath Family Farms, Harry's Berries, Coleman Family Farms, and Weiser Family Farms for its fresh fruit and produce.

For more information, please visit belmond.com/elencanto or contact reservations.ele@belmond.com.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Images of El Encanto, A Belmond Hotel, Santa Barbara can be downloaded [here](#).

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ABOUT BELMOND

Belmond was born from a passion for connecting discerning travellers with the world's most remarkable properties, locations and journeys. From hotels and trains to river cruises and safari lodges, Belmond's Slow Luxury invites guests to discover a new pace of travel as they savour time, engage with local culture, and connect with nature and people around them through incomparable experiences and unforgettable stories. With a legacy spanning over 45 years, since the acquisition of Hotel Cipriani in Venice in 1976, Belmond has grown into a global collection of 44 properties spread across 25 countries and territories. Exceptional destinations connected by legendary journeys are the very soul of Belmond, where the path that brings you to a place is as important as the destination itself. A pioneer of slow travel, Belmond has been operating the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express since 1982. Belmond later expanded to include pristine beach resorts, such as Maroma on the Riviera Maya, historic hideaways such as Villa San Michele in the Florentine foothills, urbane icons, such as Copacabana Palace in Rio de Janeiro, and gateways to UNESCO world heritage sites, such as Hotel das Cataratas in Brazil's Iguassu National Park. As proud custodians of storied properties, Belmond is committed to building on the past to create a new legacy: the heritage of the future. Working with communities and local talents, together with the world's most respected chefs, designers and artists, Belmond continues its purpose of perpetuating the legendary art of travel. Since 2019, Belmond has been part of the world's leading luxury group, LVMH (Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton).

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