

HOMAGE *to* FROMAGE

AT A NEW ITALIAN RESTAURANT ON MONTANA AVENUE,
CHEESE TAKES CENTER STAGE

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE LYN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF FORMA

Parmigiano. Pecorino. Romano. Pecorino Gran Cru. It's all cheese, and it's all delicious. Unique, however, are the large wheels of these cheeses that are used to create the unforgettable dishes at Forma, a contemporary Italian restaurant that just opened on Montana Avenue.

Named in honor of its star ingredient, formaggio, Forma features a unique Dalla Forma preparation, where freshly cooked pasta is tossed in the aforementioned wheel with the cheeses. (If that isn't mouth watering enough, the menu also offers flatbreads, risottos and a selection of main dishes, too.) To showcase Forma's main attraction, a custom floor-to-ceiling glass cheese case and bar set the stage for diners to watch Dalla Forma take place.

As for the atmosphere, the artisans at AERO Collective mixed modern, clean sophistication with rustic charm to create a sleek yet comfortable ambience where guests can pull up to the marble bar or grab a seat at the communal table for a more casual experience. The main dining room features a tufted leather wall and solid walnut tables and chairs, perfectly complementing the cuisine.

"At Forma we highlight the art of simple cuisine by using locally-sourced ingredients," says Executive Chef Piero Topputo. "Whether we are introducing our customers to a new cheese, or serving them a fresh grain salad, we're focused

on creating a memorable experience that combines modern and classic forms of cooking."

Showcasing chef Topputo's passion for fromage, the extensive program highlights a vast selection of semi-soft, semi-hard, hard, soft-ripened, blue-veined and washed-rind cheeses. Guests can order as many individual varieties as they would like, or enjoy a tasting of three, as part of a wine or beer flight.

The menu at Forma also features modern Italian dishes that embrace the style and ingredients of California. In addition to a daily charcuterie plate, menu highlights include: Artichoke and Fennel "Casserole" with Manchego cheese; Single "Raviolo" filled with broccolini in a light cherry tomato sauce with anchovy; Filet of Sole with crispy artichoke; and Fresh Tagliolini pasta with heirloom cherry tomatoes and lemon zest.

To wash it all down, Forma offers a collection of wines from California and various European regions, as well as an extensive craft beer list highlighting breweries from across the country.

As the vision of restaurant veterans Topputo and General Manager Mario Sabatini, and backed by entrepreneur Robert Donnell, Forma is poised to become the next neighborhood gem—one that allows guests to travel to Italy without ever stepping on a plane.

FORMA RESTAURANT & CHEESE BAR

1610 Montana Avenue, Santa Monica, 90403 | 424.231.2868 | FormaRestaurant.com

