



California Kitchens

CHARLES RUNNETTE

Despite a sensational farmers' market, Santa Monica, Calif., has long been something of a culinary void. But lately things have been looking up. **Rustic Canyon Wine Bar and Seasonal Kitchen** (1119 Wilshire Boulevard; 310-393-7050; entrees \$16 to \$34) began the turnaround with Samir Mohajer's seasonal dishes like lamb shanks with polenta and roasted baby artichokes. Michael Reardon's **Catch** (above; 1910 Ocean Way; 310-581-7714; entrees \$26 to \$42) serves inventive seafood plates in the Casa del Mar hotel, and in the Huntely hotel, the **Penthouse** (1111 Second Street; 310-393-8080; entrees \$22 to \$48) features farmers' market fare prepared by Seth Greenburg.

Most recently, Joe Miller set up the Barcelona-style tapas place **Bar Pintxo** (109 Santa Monica Boulevard; 310-458-2012; tapas \$2 to \$10). It's open daily until midnight, as is the new Japanese gastropub nearby, **Robata Bar** (1401 Ocean Avenue; 310-458-4771; small plates \$2.50 to \$20). The town's most anticipated arrival is Alain Giraud's brasserie **Anisette** (225 Santa Monica Boulevard; 310-395-3200), coming this spring. Having taken a few years off after helping open the beloved Bastide, Giraud will serve, he says, "real food, with the freshest ingredients and none of the uptight feeling."