

# The Most Exciting Chef In Downtown

At Alma, Ari Taymor  
Does Things His Way

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A Fantastic Magic Flute | 13

## Restaurant Buzz

### More Restaurants, Cooking Classes and Other Downtown Food Happenings

By **Eddie Kim**

**Hip to Be Square:** Behold, you can now grab a bite to eat at Pershing Square! The **Little Square Café**, which opened in the last week of October, is serving build-your-own rice bowls. Customers can choose white or brown rice, a variety of vegetables and a protein (including chicken, beef or tofu). Owner **Brian Choi** said he wants to offer diners an easy and affordable meal (bowls are \$6.50) that actually fills you up. "Even though salads are popular, they kind of leave people hungry," he said. "We thought this was a healthy alternative that would be satisfying for a lot of people." The cafe also offers milk tea boba drinks; there is outdoor seating for about 40.

At 532 S. Olive St. or (323) 230-9784.

**Winning the Loteria:** Chef **Jimmy Shaw's Loteria Grill** has racked up plenty of glowing reviews since opening at the Original Farmers Market in 2002. Now, Shaw is bringing a fast-casual take on the restaurant to the food court at **FIGat7th**, along with a new Mexican sandwich restaurant. The Downtown Loteria Grill will serve various takes on classic regional Mexican cuisine, including specialty tacos and heftier entrees like sea bass in a spicy Morita sauce. The new **Torta Co.**, which Shaw is opening with his brother Andrew, will delve into sandwiches packed with all manner of fillings: turkey in mole, pulled pork, chorizo, Oaxacan cheese and more. Both establishments are slated to open Dec. 13.

At 735 S. Figueroa St. or figat7th.com/taste.

**Chill Out:** Also new to the FIGat7th lineup is **Pazzo Gelato**. The shop, which has locations in Silver Lake and Echo Park, had its grand opening on Monday, Nov. 25. It offers high-quality gelato and sorbetto in a wide array of traditional and cutting-edge flavors, from chocolate hazelnut to Guinness Extra Stout to avocado with cayenne pepper. Pazzo uses local and organic ingredients to make its icy desserts, and also serves coffee and pastries.

The Downtown location is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

At 735 S. Figueroa St. or figat7th.com/taste.

**Party Planning:** The notion of cooking a big meal for a holiday party scares some people. **Border Grill** chefs **Mary Sue Milliken** and **Susan Feniger** want to help alleviate your fear. The duo is hosting two holiday cooking classes on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. They'll demonstrate a full menu of holiday dishes, from tequila-spiked punch and smoked mussel ceviche to main courses like the seared calamari with chorizo and oregano-braised lamb shank. The class costs \$75 per person and includes a multi-course lunch, cocktails and a recipe booklet to take home. Reservations are recommended.

At 445 S. Figueroa St., (213) 486-5171 or bordergrill.com.

**Pour Them:** The **Buzz Wine Beer Shop** at Fifth and Spring streets has been offering a top-notch selection of hard-to-find wines and beers since opening in 2011. Curiously, however, Buzz has never been able to serve full glasses because of a condition on its alcohol license capping individual servings at two ounces (normal pours for wine are six to eight ounces; beers are around 12 ounces or more). Now, Buzz is trying to lose the restriction, and on Nov. 19 the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to support the bigger pours. Though the state department of Alcoholic Beverage Control has the final say, Buzz's blemish-free track record as a business should help lead to the unlocking of the condition in coming months. "We just want to be like every other business that has the alcohol license we have, which gives us the right to serve regular pours," co-owner



photo by Gary Leonard

Ice skaters and other visitors to Pershing Square no longer have to leave the park to get something to eat. The Little Square Café opened there at the end of October.

**Scott Kamalski** said at the DLANC session.

At 460 S. Spring St., (213) 622-2222 or buzzwinebeershop.com.

**Wine 101:** The world of wine can be intimidating to newbies and experienced drinkers alike. Thankfully, the folks behind **LearnAboutWine** are hosting an "Intro to Wine" class at the Arts District market **Urban Radish** on Saturday, Dec. 7. The session will teach attendees how to taste wine in a critical way, how to pair wine with food, how to purchase and store bottles, and more. Attendees will taste seven different wines, from a fresh Buttonwood Sauvignon Blanc from Santa Ynez to a bold Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley's Silverado winery. Students also get cheese plates to enjoy with their drinks. Tickets to the 3-5:15 p.m. event are \$65.

At 661 Imperial St. Tickets at learnaboutwine.com.

Got any juicy food news? If so, contact Restaurant Buzz at eddie@downtownnews.com.

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