

beverly hills

Lifestyle

10 MOST WANTED
FASHION DESIGNERS

kristin
CHENOWETH

*embraces an earlier era
honoring*

**MARILYN
MONROE**

first look at the new
**BUGATTI
VEYRON**





Fresh and airy, the décor makes you feel like you're on summer vacation in the South of France.



Food:	★★★★	Refined, genuine Mediterranean
Service:	★★★★	Stylish & knowledgeable
Ambiance:	★★★★★	Fresh, airy & European casual
Overall:	★★★★★	Great food with no guilt

crostini & cocktails

Fig and Olive, Melrose Place | by Jennifer Wood | photos by Ben Miller

West Hollywood's newest neighborhood gem, Fig and Olive, is taking off. If you want to jump into the Beverly Hills socialite scene, this classy restaurant could easily become your new favorite spot. Serving both lunch and dinner, Fig and Olive is not a specialty restaurant; it's a place you can visit often for any occasion.

Fresh and airy, the décor makes you feel like you're on summer vacation in the South of France. In accordance with the Mediterranean cuisine, the walls are lined in stainless steel olive oil cans and bottles while the flowerbeds are filled with rosemary bushes. The simple courtyard setting with outdoor furniture provides a comfortable and crisp environment.

Staying true to its Mediterranean roots, each dish is prepared with a selected extra virgin olive oil, including the ice cream. For a restaurant that doesn't use any butter, they are to be commended on the flavor in each of their dishes. "It's a good concept," Manager Henri Marquis says of the recently opened hotspot. "I left something really good to be here. The French chef, Pascale Lorange, knows what he wants and how to put together a good meal. For me, it's about the whole experience of a restaurant, not just the food, ambiance, or music. It's the whole package, including how you were greeted at the door."

Generally serving healthy dishes, Fig and Olive focuses on using local and imported ingredients to create refined and genuine flavors from the South of France, Italy, and Spain. In addition to its fresh fare, according to management, Fig and Olive is the only

restaurant in the city that mixes fresh drinks in such volume. Bar tenders start prepping fresh fruit in the early morning and continue all day for the evening drinks. I would venture to say that you couldn't go wrong with any of their flirty cocktails. Among the favorites are the Dirty Martini made with hand-stuffed fresh olives, the Acai Vodka Martini, and the Red Wine Sangria. In addition to its full list of cocktails, this most booked restaurant boasts a notable wine list.

All meals start with freshly baked olive oil bread and your choice of one of three olive oils: one with a hint of strawberry lagrassa, another a buttery tasting Portugal oil, and the final with a dash of pear.

The appetizers at Fig and Olive are good enough to eat as a meal and that is just what some frequenters do. The crostinis are to die for, particularly the Bresaola, Goat Cheese, and Black Olive. Another appetizer not to miss is the Fig Gorgonzola Tartlet with warmed gorgonzola, prosciutto, fig, walnut, and tomato on a fine puff pastry. The cheese platters act as great openers to a meal or can be a fine way to finish off your meal as well.

Served in Mediterranean fashion, the soups are chilled. Items from the grill not to be missed include the Branzino with Fig and Balsamic, the Paella Del Mar with just the right hint of saffron, and the Rosemary Lamb Chops. If you are not in the mood for something too heavy, the Orecchiette, a kind of homemade pasta typical in Puglia or Apulia, with broccolini and grilled halibut is a great way to go.

If you want to get a sneak peak of your dessert before it arrives at your table, the outside dining area has a window where you can see the pastry chef hard at work preparing your treat. The chocolate soufflé melts in your mouth leaving you with a surprise citrus taste. And hey, if you are not in the mood for the soufflé, you can always order crostinis or a cheese plate for dessert!

Considering this is a newly opened restaurant, Fig and Olive is well on its way to being considered one of LA's most popular spots. "When I first walked in, I thought, 'This place has been here a long time,'" commented their newest manager. Thursday through Sunday there is a live DJ at night, but Fig and Olive's bar scene is vibrant most days of the week. The service is stylish and knowledgeable, and the waiters are attentive to the details.

My own visit proved a wonderful experience. Fig and Olive is the kind of place where you can stay for hours and enjoy good food and company. While most of the food was delightful, I highly recommend the lamb chops. With the opportunity to add the distinct olive of your choice, the dirty martini is also something not to be missed. The clientele is ultra hip, so be sure to dress the part. Plan on arriving early or be prepared to wait. And whatever you do, don't forget to order the cocktails and crostini. You will not be disappointed.