

SAN DIEGO FOOD FINDS BLOG

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Campfire In Carlsbad

by Maria Desiderata Montana 📅 September 27, 2016



Owner John Resnick is thrilled to introduce his first solo project, [Campfire](#), to the burgeoning San Diego culinary landscape. In his debut restaurant, Resnick, a Consortium Holdings alum instrumental in the openings of Ironside Fish & Oyster and the original Craft & Commerce, delivers an innovative new dining and cocktail concept to the heart of Carlsbad, capturing the spirit of the campfire through live fire cooking techniques. To elevate the experience, Resnick has culled some of San Diego's most recognizable industry vets including Executive Chef Andrew Bachelier (CUCINA enoteca and Addison) and Bar Manager Leigh Lacap (Ironside Fish & Oyster, Sycamore Den and Coin-Op). Collectively the team plans to present San Diegans with an original concept comprised of a vast 6,000 square foot indoor/outdoor space aimed at engaging guests and inciting conversations among strangers. Designed by award-winning firm Bells and Whistles (Broken Spanish, Bracero, Sycamore Den, Starlite), diners can expect whimsical references throughout – a

welcoming space to enjoy classic cocktails and honest food, all reminiscent of the camping experience. Along with neighbors Carruth Cellars and Baba Coffee, Resnick hopes to play a pivotal role in fostering an organic extension of the already vibrant culture of North County while building an engaging environment that he hopes will become a forward-thinking community hub.

In the kitchen, Bachelier along with Chef de Cuisine Andrew Santana incite guests with a market-driven menu paying homage to the freshest bounty of each season. Using ancient and primitive live-fire cooking methods inspired by the idea of sharing food with friends around the fire, Bachelier's ever-evolving menu is centered on the communal dining experience, placing a strong emphasis on locally sourced and sustainable seafood and meats alongside vegetables coming from some of the city's most well-respected purveyors. Bachelier aims to apply the elemental cooking techniques acquired in his formative years spent alongside his grandfather in Arizona splitting wood, building and tending the fire and using nothing but cast iron to produce meals emanating with fresh, bright and spicy flavors. Harnessing the potential of the custom 12-foot hearth powered by a Grillworks grill (affectionately referred to as Grace) in the heart of the restaurant, Bachelier's menu utilizes wood, charcoal, embers and ash to create technique-driven yet deceptively simple dishes that let the ingredients speak for themselves, each with their own story to tell. Highlights of the menu include the [Carruth Cellars](#) with grilled date, pecan, red wine and griddled bread, [Baba Coffee](#) with goat cheese, licorice, honey and almond, [Baba Coffee](#) with opah belly, soft boiled egg, olive and shallot, [Baba Coffee](#) with mussels, white fish, calico corn and guajillo chile, [Baba Coffee](#) with sea island red pea, lettuce, goat milk and pistachio along with the requisite [Baba Coffee](#) a cheeky riff on the traditional campfire dessert with five spice graham phylo, chocolate and marshmallow and the [Baba Coffee](#) with fig, granola and caramel, both prepared in-house by esteemed Pastry Chef Donna Antaloczy, formerly of Thomas Keller's prestigious Bouchon Bakery in Yountville and most recently Ironside Fish & Oyster.

Bachelier's menu is complemented by an innovative stream of beverages crafted by Lacap to create a palatable synergy between bar and kitchen. With an emphasis on classic cocktail techniques and quality spirits and liqueurs along with fresh squeezed citrus and locally grown produce, Lacap seamlessly aligns the beverage program with Bachelier's culinary vision, focusing on the seasonality of the ingredients available. As with the dining menu, guests can expect a multi-sensory experience produced by the hints of smoke emanating from live fire cooking techniques, reminiscent of the great outdoors. Lacap has purposefully applied his cocktail acumen to divide his menu into three parts: [Baba Coffee](#) and [Baba Coffee](#), the latter with highlights including the [Baba Coffee](#) with tequila, charcoal, lime and salt, the [Baba Coffee](#) with rye, Belgian candy syrup

and lemon, and the _____ with mezcal, rice, pecan, lime and cinnamon. In conjunction with Campfire's focus on the communal experience, Lacap has added two large format cocktails to the list, intended to serve four to six and served in custom made ceramic growlers.

With a keen attention to detail applied to every aspect of the restaurant's cocktail and culinary direction, Bells & Whistles placed a similarly strong emphasis in its design approach on instilling a sense of camaraderie throughout the space. Formerly an auto repair shop, the property was redeveloped by local architect Brett Farrow who brought in a WWII era Quonset hut-style corrugated metal arch from nearby Camp Pendleton to anchor the space and preserve its historic integrity while infusing the existing structure with a fresh, modernist edge. Incorporating vintage relics sourced from all corners of the country, Bells & Whistles charted their course with the intention of harkening a sense of nostalgia in guests – evoking memories spent camping along the California coastline. Mindfully sourcing inspiration from the natural attributes of the nearby ocean and its surroundings, the designers pulled from the camping narrative to infuse the restaurant with of-the-moment yet equally antiquated elements aiming to subtly transcend guests to an experience reminiscent of the age old camping culture. From a handcrafted banquette made by local artisans Bradley Mountain to an outdoor 12-foot custom tipi for the children, Bells & Whistles created a blueprint designed in a manner intended to encourage interaction and synergy among guests from all walks of life. Whether enjoying a cocktail at the 25-seat copper bar, sitting down in the dynamic gathering space marked by a custom carved three-dimensional mural depicting a mountainous landscape, or catching a glimpse into the glass encased bustling kitchen, each guest will be given the rare opportunity to customize their own dining experience.

Campfire is located at 2725 State Street, Carlsbad, CA 92008. For complete information, visit: www.thisiscampfire.com.

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