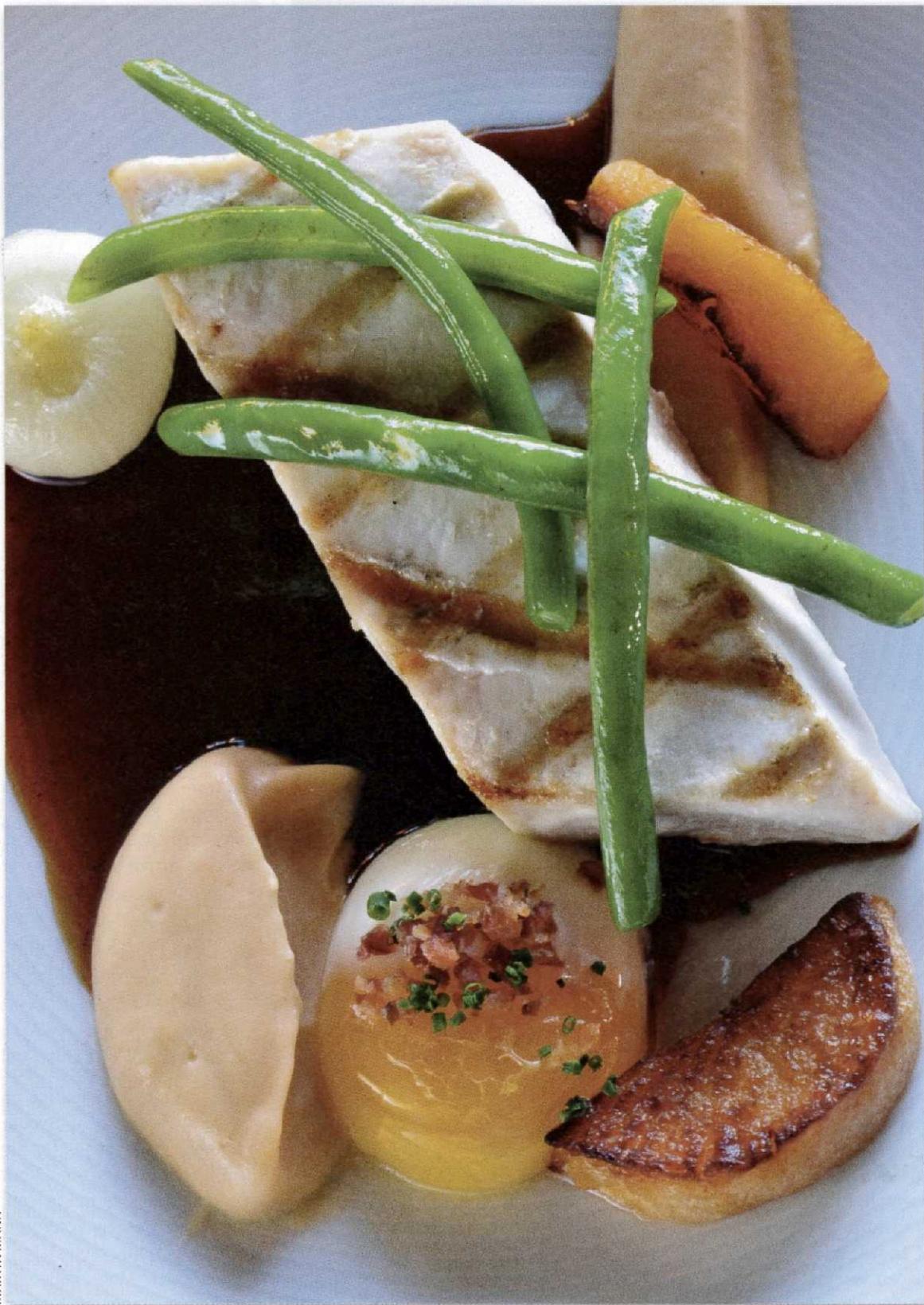


LIFESTYLES

DISH • RESTAURANT REVIEWS • RECIPES
SAN DIEGO LIFE • ON THE SCENE • PET PATROL



MARTIN MANN

Grilled swordfish with egg yolk and bacon jus is an example of what's sensational at Veladora, reviewed by Stephen Silverman on page 96.

VELADORA

Sensational food after remodeling

WOW! Let's repeat that: Wow! Wow!

Veladora, the main restaurant at new-and-improved Rancho Valencia Resort is serving some of the best food in the region.

After an expenditure of \$30 million to upgrade the resort and create a (relatively) casual, early-California dining room with soaring wood-beamed ceilings, wrought-iron chandeliers and a \$1.8 million Damien Hirst artwork near the kitchen, the pièce de résistance comes with Executive Chef Eric Bauer. He is what makes Veladora ascend.

Bauer has created — and continues to fiddle with — a menu that takes fine ingredients and makes them finer. His food is silken, supple, flavorful, beautiful and almost overwhelmingly satisfying. His short-rib pappardelle features the most exquisitely lithe pasta to be found in San Diego. Sure the whole dish is superb, but the pasta is ethereal. A lobster risotto is rich, savory and gooey with lobster. It's also covered with a dramatic puddle of black foam. Polenta with ratatouille ragout and asparagus is opulent and piquant. There's also duck breast with huckleberries, filet with shallot marmalade and swordfish with an egg yolk and bacon jus.

The bottom line for dining at Veladora is straightforward and simple: Go and be wowed. ♦



Service: Accommodating, informed and considerate, if occasionally too chatty.

Patrons: Diners tend toward folks comfortable in a privileged but not stuffy setting. Young or old, patrons know their way around a real martini.

Parking: Complimentary valet parking.

Noise: Low.

Details: Lunch and dinner daily. At dinner, starters are \$12 to \$17 and entrées are \$25 to \$42. Full bar. Rancho Valencia Resort, 5921 Valencia Circle, Rancho Santa Fe, 858-759-6216.

The revamped Veladora (bottom) features a lobster and burrata salad (top).