

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN

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Inside Ex-Padre Mark Loretta's
Rancho Santa Fe Home
Garden Tour's Historical Hillcrest



Water Grill's menu features a range of shellfish platters in sizes serving 1-2, 3-4 and 5 diners.

WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE? CH Projects, dedicated to creating ultra-hip eateries in neighborhoods with chart-topping glamour scores (North Park, East Village, Little Italy) is opening a second **Soda & Swine** in Liberty Station, the former Naval Training Center San Diego. Liberty Station has developed a respectable restaurant row, so it will be interesting to see how locals regard Paul Basile's inventive décor and Chef Jason McLeod's vegan meatball variations, seafood dishes and Negroni-inspired cocktails (I don't make this stuff up).

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME. But if we're going to stop by the ballpark-adjacent **Rare Form** en route, let's look twice at Chef Aldo Negrete's hot dogs before ordering. He makes them from a classic pork combo, which in a spokesperson's new-speak lends "a smoky, rich dimension to the flavor profile." OK, but why mess up a pup with bacon, roasted pineapple and charred jalapeños? Mustard, relish and chopped onion make any dog dandy.

THE ENDLESS TURNOVER of restaurants in the Gaslamp Quarter sometimes improves

the neighborhood. **Sab Lai Thai Kitchen** stylishly revives the fine corner location (Fifth and Island) next to Blarney Stone. In fact, Sab Lai provides food to Blarney Stone patrons, and Blarney Stone reciprocates by providing drinks to Sab Lai. As is so frequently true of Thai eateries, the dining room décor delights — and so does the menu. If the offerings mostly repeat other restaurants' menus, the dishes seem better cooked. Rare pleasures include a seafood curry served in a coconut.

HOUSE-MADE SAUSAGE is so abundant in San Diego that the city begins to resemble Germany — sort of. Pickled-on-premises sauerkraut is part of the package at the Cohn Restaurant Group's **Draft Republic** in the Golden Triangle. The place is jammed on weekends and enjoyably antic, if loud. Starring items are fat pork sausages flavored any way the chef decides, but reliably delicious and well textured. Porky pigs will go whole hog by ordering the Big Plate o' Pig — piled with two sausages, smoked pulled pork, maple-bourbon bacon, sauerkraut, and pleasantly creamy potato salad. Oink! ❖



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