

Opinion

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CALIFORNIA FOCUS

New celebrity restaurants are on the menu

Over the years, many celebrities have opened their own restaurants, among them Roy Rogers's roast beef place, New York City eateries run by Robert De Niro and Mariel Hemingway, L.A.'s own submarine-themed Dive, owned by Steven Spielberg, and the most star-studded of all, Planet Hollywood and the Hard Rock Cafe.

What is the appeal restaurants have for stars? My own theory is that even when a star is not working on a project, his or her name can be up in lights anyway, and he or she will always have a place to eat and wine.

In any case, certain celebrities' images cry out for having their own restaurants:

Judge Ito's Sushi-Mania. As you approach the Sushi Bench, you'll be sequestered with your party and given conjugal privileges with a variety of previously sworn-in raw fish. Your personal "judge" will either sustain or overrule your objections to the meal. During the course of the evening you'll be taken on a field trip to the location where the fish were slaughtered. At the end of the meal, you'll be given the check, some sliced oranges, and a book deal.

Ralph Nader's Recalled Restaurant. This is the only restaurant in the world that does not prepare its own food. Instead, food from other restaurants is brought in and presented to the diners, whose job it is to figure out what's wrong with it, file a class-action suit, and storm out of the restaurant in a huff. Decor consists of recalled Chevy parts, and paintings contain applied manufacturers' hate letters threatening Nader to be careful when he starts his car in the morning.

The Heidi Fleiss Have It Your Way Cafe. Select from a variety of the world's cuisine, especially chosen to bring you to the heights of ecstasy. Private rooms are available, or join the fun in the Food Orgy Room. See why countless others have dined here and made the same comment about their experience. "Yes! Yes! God, yes!" Dinners are \$25, or for \$250 you can eat all

MICHAEL LEVINE

► **THE ISSUE:** A walk on the wild side of Hollywood's Restaurant Row.

► **THE WRITER:** Mr. Levine is a public-relations specialist with a firm in Beverly Hills.

night. Slave and Master Card accepted.

Richard Simmons's Eatin' to The Oldies. Enjoy your favorite rock 'n' roll hits as you gorge on unlimited portions of fresh celery sticks, parsley, and mineral water. At 7 p.m. each night, Richard himself makes an appearance to thrill diners with a moving medley of Barbra Streisand hits. Diners are encouraged to stand up and scream out how many pounds they've lost, after which Richard, teary-eyed with compassion, will give them a hug they won't soon forget. Exact replicas of Richard's short-shorts and tank tops available in the adjacent Spendin' To The Oldies boutique.

The Marion Barry Club. Enjoy a complimentary crack pipe as you compete with other diners in the popular How Quickly Can You Bankrupt Your City? placemat game. Beverages include Coke, Coke Classic, Coke Light, Cherry Coke.

The Kate Moss Cafeteria. No food. Customers just lean up against things, striking bored poses. Fashion of Choice: Dresses from Sears Little Girls Department.

International House of Carlos the Jackal. Shortly after being seated, you will be handed a note informing you that your car has just been blown up by the People's Terror Party. Your husband never quite makes it back from the bathroom as he is being ransomed for funds to continue the spread of terrorism throughout the world. Popular dishes include the Cherry Bomb Souffle, Molotov Cocktail, and TNT Meatloaf.

The Rosa Lopez Cafe. Delicious, low-priced ethnic cuisine. The one complaint diners seem to have is that their

waiters seem to disappear after taking their orders, showing up weeks later in El Salvador. No members of the media allowed inside. Don't get too comfortable, because at any point during your meal, you may be subpoenaed to testify against one of your previous bosses in court. Whatever you do, don't ask Rosa to sing the "West Side Story" tune, "I Like to be in America."

Jimmy Carter's Diplomacy Diner. World's first combination restaurant/agreement-negotiation forum. Shortly after you're seated, Carter himself will join you at your table, and work out a compromise for any problem you may be having with your dining companion. After assuring you that he is not doing this solely to gain a Nobel Prize, Carter will regale you with amusing anecdotes from his presidency, pose for photos with you, and offer complimentary peanuts and Billy Beer.

Congressman Sonny Bono's "I Got You Babe" Bistro. As you walk down the long hallway toward the dining area, enjoy the photo gallery of highlights from Sonny's show business career, with Cher's head cut out and replaced with that of Bono's current wife, Mary. You will be served by waiters and waitresses dressed as gypsies, tramps, and thieves. A 25 percent discount for anyone with a geekier sounding voice than Sonny's. Don't forget to sign Sonny's congressional petition to make long hair, love beads, and animal skins the wardrobe of choice for Washington politicians.

The Menendez Brothers Drive Through. In a hurry? Pull right up to the actual scale models of the brothers' parents, and scream your orders into their ears. Don't worry about being too loud — they won't hear you and even if they did, they'll just ignore you and abuse you later. Each order includes a sledge hammer to destroy the Menendez parents, as well as recommended legal representation, plus, as an added bonus, the phone numbers of at least five Hollywood production companies anxious to make a TV movie of the week about your life story. Don't miss the Shotgun Fries.