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Nic's Beverly Hills Restaurant & Martini Lounge

By Merilee Kern | Posted: Apr. 4th, 2011



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Whether you like yours shaken or stirred, you haven't *really* had a martini experience until you've been served at Nic's **Beverly Hills** - one part martini lounge with a decidedly cool vibe mixed with one part restaurant serving killer cuisine. This vodka-centric respite delivers tastes, sights, sounds and soul in the heart of Beverly Hills.

Vibe

Despite its elite locale, the ambiance at Nic's is not at all stuffy but rather upbeat and lively - the only thing stiff here are the drinks. This crowd is clearly out for a good time, and Nic's duly delivers with distinctive dining, worthy of its zip code coupled with memorable martini innovations and unforgettable vodka tasting experiences. All this amid a sexy and sultry lounge where DJs mix from Monday to Wednesday and live music jams an eclectic mix of jazz, blues, R&B and contemporary lounge music each Thursday to Saturday.



Dine



Offering both indoor and outdoor lanai seating, the open dining area at Nic's is replete with rich drapes, over-the-top chandeliers, comfortable plush seats and mood lighting. Lime green, blue, orange and yellow striped walls adorned with black and white old-school surfing photos give the space a retro feel that, all combined, just works.

The cuisine at Nic's is a mix of contemporary American with a European flair. The restaurant's 'Vodkamentary' menu offers a myriad of vodka-friendly fare like caviar, platters and 'dipity dips' to share, soups, salads and small bites.

Starter specialties include Aunt Margie's Deviled Eggs and Sevruga Caviar and Nic's famous sautéed Oysters with Spinach, Walnuts and Garlic (both of which were insanely delicious as agreed by all in my party); wild caught Sevruga and Osetra caviar; Láncut Piroshki with Braised Cabbage, Bacon and Sour Cream; Vodka Cured Salmon on Pumpernickel Raisin Crostini and Caper Dill Aioli; Grilled Hoisin Marinated Skirt Steak with Wasabe Demi; Roast Beets en Papillote with Mache, Feta



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and Zinfandel Vinaigrette; and Fresh Grilled Clam Pizza.



Larger appetites can enjoy big fish, fowl and prime steaks. The evening of my visit my group feasted on Nic's succulent Charred Cumin Crusted Colorado Lamb Sirloin with Beet Greens, Fava Beans and Sumac Demi; Grilled Breast of Duck with Bok Choy, Bacon Hash and Pomegranate Glaze; and Grilled Scottish Salmon on Brussel Sprouts and Shallots with Lemon Au Jus.

Each dish was conceived and cooked to utter perfection and beautifully plated. Other distinctive dishes on the Vodkamentary menu include the Steak Tartare with Capers and Maui Onions and the Mak-aela and Cheese with Pine Nuts, Scallions and Truffle Oil.

Our culinary quest ended with Nic's Chocolate Caramel Torte with Vanilla Bean Gelato and Hot Fudge Sundae with homemade Marshmallow and toasted Walnuts. Dessert martinis are, of course, also on the dessert menu and include "Ketel Lime Pie" - Ketel Citron, Lime Juice, Vanilla Licor and Graham Cracker Crust - and "Vincenzo a la Macchiato" - Van Gogh Caramel Vodka, Espresso and Cream.



Drink

Martini's at Nic's are the star of the show, with a two-page list of creative concoctions that run the gamut from sweet and sour to spicy and smooth. The special-tinis, as they are called, boast premium vodkas, unique mixers and playful names. Here you'll find martinis made with fresh fruit, spices, stuffed olives, specialty liquors and even jalapenos for those who like their martinis hot, hot, hot.



A few of the many notables from the martini menu: 'What a Nice Pair You Have' - Grey Goose

'Poire' Vodka with pear juice and shaved Parmesan; 'Goose Me' - Grey Goose La Orange, Orange Curacao and lychee nuts; 'Maytag Repairman' - Chopin potato Vodka and Maytag blue cheese olives, 'Where's My Effen Martini?' - Hamptons Black Cherry with a handful of blackberries; 'Marry Up' - Modern Spirits Celery Peppercorn Vodka with Organic tomato juice and toasted pepper; 'Viva la Veev' - VeeV acai spirit and muddled cucumber, sage and S & S; and 'Devil Without a Cause' - 666 Pure Tasmanian Vodka, Hibiscus reduction, Pineapple and Serrano syrup.

Distinct

In addition to its inspired Martini cocktails, Nic's is also famous for its VODBOX vodka **tasting experience**. For this, patrons excitedly don loaner faux fur coats and hats before they step into a walk-in exhibition tasting freezer, adjacent to the lounge area, that is set to 28 degrees. Inside, a Vodka-mixologist pours pure vodka shot flights of every sort - from sweet to spicy to savory and everything in between. The VODBOX features premium and rare vodkas from all over the world and groups delight in having this most unique and fun experience.



The VODkART is another unique service in Nic's dining room. This Lucite lighted two-tier cart with custom-designed martini glasses offers special vodka tasters and martinis mixed to order table-side.

In all, my experience at Nic's far exceeded expectations. This venue's kinetic, music-infused atmosphere is rife with fun-loving patrons dining on fabulous food while enjoying top-shelf martinis and vodkas. If you're looking for a good time in L.A., this is the place to be.

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