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The Strand House is a leader of dining in Manhattan Beach

Scott Bridges
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2011 was a big year in South Bay dining. That was the year **The Strand House** opened in Manhattan Beach, providing a major contribution the emerging dining scene. Since then, the Michael Zislis-owned restaurant has shown that this is not your typical beachside eatery. While the pier view from the four-tiered glass-and-stone structure is what you'd expect of M.B., Master Chef Neal Fraser's menu isn't.



Burrata and caviar, paired with 2011 Trefethen Estate Chardonnay, Napa Valley

L.A. native and USC alum Zislis has opened several restaurants and hotels in the area (including the Shade Hotel), and in addition to recruiting Fraser (whose credits include a Culinary Institute of America education and stints at Spago, Pinot Bistro and Rox), he also has secured the talents of **Greg Hozinsky** in his kitchen. Hozinsky was recently named one of Zagat's 30 Under 30.

But Zislis has made a name for the restaurant by luring great chefs from around the country with his Master Chef series. On Monday night, the latest installment of the series featured Chef **Rick Tramanto** and wine pairings from Napa's Trefethen Family Vineyard (with the lovely Hailey Trefethen introducing the selection of wines and sharing stories).

"We're excited by the gastronomical feats we have been able to accomplish and share with our guests through our Master Chef series ... [We] are gratified by the overwhelmingly positive feedback and appreciation our series has gotten, and through which we have been able to bring vastly different epicurean events to share with our guests."

Why you should go:

In addition to having one of the best brunches in town, The Strand House offers an oyster cart, which moves from table to table, offering an array of fresh oysters to diners.

And while most nights of the week are ideal for enjoying Hozinsky's farmers market-inspired dishes, it's the monthly Master Chef series that is worth highlighting for the unique meals in this beautiful venue.

What to order:

Each of the events is different (and a value at \$100, with \$50 extra for the wine pairings). Tramanto's five-course menu began with a burrata and caviar appetizer paired with Trefethen's 2011 Chardonnay (all of the family-owned vineyard's wines are estate grown).

The second course – Summer Corn Tortelli – featured Dungeness crab, tarragon and beurre noisette, with the 2009 Harmony Chardonnay, for my money, the pairing of the night.

A third course of Roasted Cod with Clams was served with garbanzos and white anchovy aioli, and paired with the 2010 Pinot Noir.

It was followed by Braised Beef Short Rib with rutabaga puree and a pair of 3-year-old reds: the Dragon's Tooth Red and the Cabernet Sauvignon.

And for dessert, the chef served up a Roasted Pineapple Carpaccio with buttermilk-key lime sorbet and matched with the 2011 Trefethen Late Harvest Riesling, reminiscent of an Inniskillin ice wine.

For drinkers:

A full bar is not only available, but overlooks one of the most beautiful stretches of beach in the county.

But if the 2009 Harmony Chardonnay is still in stock, do yourself a favor and order a glass or two. And after dinner, the Late Harvest Riesling is a sweet finish.

What people are saying:

Sophie Gayot, in attendance at Monday night's dinner, has previously written glowingly about the Master Chef series, as has **Karin Baker** of Flavorpill, also in attendance.

The Beach Reporter was effusive in its praise of the restaurant, saying, "Every now and then, a new establishment comes along that sets the bar for others and changes the landscape of a city. The Strand House in Manhattan Beach is one of those places."

What I think:

It takes one heck of a restaurant for me to recommend that anyone travel south of the 10 for dinner. The Strand House, one of the most beautiful settings in the city, is also one of the best dining experiences. I'll be back for brunch later this summer.

Scott Bridges has covered the Los Angeles scene for over ten years as a journalist and food critic. Follow him on [the Huffington Post](#)

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