

WEST HOOKER “...Our Focus Is on Flavor.”

When **Locanda del Lago** opened in April 1991, the Santa Monica restaurant quickly established a reputation as having perhaps the only menu in Los Angeles to focus on the cuisine of Lake Como in Northern Italy.

Today, celebrating its 18th anniversary, Lago maintains that unique identity. Featuring specialties from Bellagio, the restaurant has continued to attract an eclectic crowd of celebrities, locals and travelers by offering exceptional food and service.

Guests at Lago enjoy a true “Lake Como experience” featuring dishes, particularly on the dinner menu, not often found at Italian restaurants in this country. “Our menus are rooted in the authentic, quality cuisine of Lombardy and evolve from it to create a balanced selection of dishes that take full advantage of the best flavors of the season, the best specialties of Lake Como and the availability in Los Angeles of spices, fruits and vegetables not grown in Italy,” says Co-Owner West Hooker.



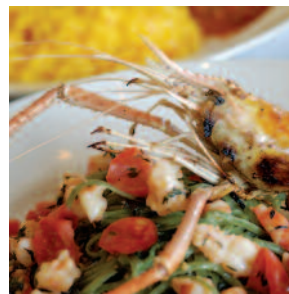
“Lago, a window on Lake Como, is the expression of the passion for hospitality I developed during my upbringing in Bellagio, Italy,” says Hooker. “I was mentored by my stepfather, Sergio Poletti, and starting at the age of 10, I learned from him as we resided in the luxury hotels that he managed. This same passion was also instilled in me by the professors at Cornell, my work in Food and Beverage for The Mayfair Regent Hotel in New York, where the original Le Cirque restaurant resided, and from what I learned working at the Beverly Hilton, the Irvine Hilton’s Morell’s Restaurant, and the New Otani Hotel in Los Angeles.”

Hooker adds, “In 2009, our focus is on flavor. With the invaluable resource of two farmer’s markets on the restaurant’s doorsteps each week, Lago’s chef and I search for the tastiest produce. We look for the tastiest produce among our local organic growers, supporting sustainability and the local economy, as well



as finding the best veggies. Our chef's seasonal menu, changing weekly, reflects these efforts. In addition, Lago reevaluates the entire menu four times a year in order to incorporate the freshest, most delicious ingredients of the season in the menu.

"And," he says, "sensitive to current economic situations, we continually shop for ingredients that are available at favorable prices from the purveyors without compromising quality, which must always be of the highest level. These lower costs, while available only for very short times, often allow us to create two or three course dining experiences of the highest level and at reasonable pricing. This is possible due to the hard work of our chef and his purchasing team always seeking out even the smallest windows of price opportunity. We pass this savings on to our customers by designing our specials around that seasonal ingredient."



Open seven days a week for lunch, weekend brunch, and dinner.

LOCANDA DEL LAGO

231 Arizona Avenue | 310.451.3525 | LagoSantaMonica.com