

## **Aliso Creek Inn Restaurant Laguna Beach**

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**April 12, 2009** - [PRLog](#) -- By Michael Webster

ALISO CREEK INN lies in Aliso Canyon on 80 acres, someone measured it we guess and it is 365 yards from the beach. And just down the road from the Montage Resort.

They advertise that the resort's restaurant plays up its views of the golf course and red rocks and we found that refreshingly true. They also urge you to discover the perfect blend of nature, fine wine, fine food and elegant comforts. We found that true too and we want to add. It has a heated pool, spa and lots of parking, a rarity for most anywhere in Laguna Beach. They say they take pride on having the most spacious resort in Laguna beach and that their unpretentious yet impeccable service will make you want to visit again and again! And we would not be doing it justice without mentioning the Nine-hole golf course and pro shop. But we were there tonight for the restaurant and lounge.

The first thing that stuck us going into ALISO CREEK INN was the short drive in. It is in just far enough that you don't hear the traffic from coast hwy. In a serene valley of gorgeous greens of Laguna Beach's only golf course and a majestic mountain view with the fresh water of Aliso Creek running through the beautiful length of the property, then empties into the Pacific Ocean, at one of the cleanest beaches in America, ("Aliso Creek Beach). This is truly a tranquil rustic resort in one of the few Canyon Resorts in all of Orange County.

My wife, and our friend Sam and myself a few years back while walking this natural creek, we recovered imbedded in a recent cliff fall from a previous heavy rain a prehistoric man, woman, child and a dog dating back some eight thousand years. Back then they say that Salmon run the creek and that the area was very popular place to live for the early peoples of the area. They had plenty of food from the abundant sea and the Fish and Crawdads in the creek. And to this day Steelhead, other fish and bright red Crawfish have been reported. We in fact at one time before the pier was torn down, you could bait large Lobster and we had Lobster more then anyone should have in those days. Even though the pier is gone the fishing is still great from the beach.

Getting back to the ALISO CREEK INN the reason we are here and is one of our most liked places, which by the way was recently purchased by the local world class resort, the Montage.

The restaurant is simply magnificent the décor is hearting, the service is great and the food is world class. Its prepared by chef Robert Biebrich who has been extra busy lately because of the 5.4 earthquake we just had and the epicenter was only 4 miles from his house so he has been busy cleaning up the mess.

Robert says his food philosophy is very basic he likes to use the best products available that are in season and to prepare them simply. His sleek presentations and fresh ingredients are part of the appeal at the casually elegant ALISO CREEK INN.

Due to his background training it is entirely French, so the food is based on French ideals. Robert said "I rarely like to use more than 3 or 4 core ingredients on the plate because I feel simplicity is the best way to showcase nature's products". Robert should know something about both food and wine, having spent the past 4 ½ years in Napa Valley. That experience gave him an extra appreciation for local sustainable products and he is slowly pushing the restaurant in that direction by trying to source out only local products.

We were seated by restaurant manager Jaqeline Kane who was very friendly and also very knowledgeable about the property and the local Laguna area as well and we chatted for some time. Our server Elli was pleasant and really knew her foods and all the details and was able to answer mine and my wife Peggy's many questions. If and when we looked up and needed anything there she was, seemed like on Q. Everyone, from the hosts to the table clearers, and exudes warmth and friendliness.

Limited to nine appetizers and salads, seven entrees and what turned out to be a seven-course dinner for us. The entire menu was surprisingly reasonably priced. All the food served us was by far and away some of the best food we have had in a long time. And considering Peggy and I review restaurants for a living that's saying something. The opening volley was a new presentation called, Amuse: A crab salad, (big chunks) with avocado puree with a heavenly Thai herb dressing.

Our second offering was a White gazpacho with pickled cherries toasted pine nuts and smoked paprika with warm corn chowder and if you can believe it, it came with fantastic marinated shrimp.

Then come an heirloom tomato and water melon salad with cucumber and whipped balsamic teamed up with roasted asparagus salad with chervil oil and morels a la crème which lift us both breathless it was so good!

Next a seared scallop with piperade, white bean stew and bitter coca emulsion with crunchy sautéed halibut with stirfried beans and shitake mushrooms and truffled mushroom broth. We were in paradise no question about it.

Then fresh from the Roberts kitchen came a whole roasted quail with fennel salad and licorice sauce with crispy pork belly and Santa Barbara spot prawns with fenugreek sauce and shaved Fuji apple. Not to shabby I'd say!

The roasted dry aged New York cut steak put before us melted in our mouths. It rivaled some of the finest Filets we've had. It came with rosti potatoes king trumpet mushrooms and red wine jus. Just delectable.

Next was a sampler of house pulled mozzarella with mcevoy ranch olive oil and radish salad truly yummy.

Finally a serious dessert, deep fried square bread pudding about the size of a saltine creeker and about an ½ inch thick with very tasty home made (in their kitchen) vanilla bean ice cream and a out of this world caramel souse tasted from the first bite and than continued throughout the dish. The coffee flavor was deep and rich and melted artfully with this dessert.

Oh and we indulged in the grape from their savvy selections on the short wine list of about 50 or so which emphasize value. Although most of the choices fall into the \$20 to \$65 range, you could splurge on a Dom Perignon, France, 1998 (\$199). But Beringer “Founders Estates” Pinot Noir, California (\$28) would do just as well for us. Or a Stag’s Leap Petite Syrah, Napa Valley (\$55). Clos Du Bois, North Coast (\$31) is typical of the whites. If you are into Martini’s enjoy their Canyon Sized. They have a large selection and respectable choices of domestic and premium beers.

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