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# PACIFIC

SAN DIEGO

## CHAIN OF GOURMAND

10 top S.D. chefs create America's Finest feast



Chef Stephane Voitzwinkler duck confit  
at Mister A's in Bankers Hill

THE DINING ISSUE

# A DREAM CRUMB TRUE

THE GREATEST THING SINCE  
SLICED GINGERBREAD

BY MICHAEL BENNINGER / PHOTO BY SARA NORRIS

Every year at the Rancho Bernardo Inn, AVANT Chef Margaret Carvallo and a handful of the restaurant's staff members spend months cooking and constructing a gargantuan gingerbread house that's bigger than many of San Diego's studio apartments. Among other ingredients, the recipe calls for one ton of powdered sugar, several gallons of molasses and more eggs than the Broken Yolk cracks open on a Sunday. In the end, the edible abode is adorned with the traditional holiday trimmings and put on display in the hotel's lobby.

But back in the kitchen, there are bound to be leftovers.

A portion of the remaining gingerbread batter is baked into cookies and set aside for AVANT's celebrated seasonal drink, the Gingerbread Martini. This reinvented and reinvigorating holiday concoction

is carefully crafted with Kahlúa, Baileys Irish Cream, Stolli Vanil vodka, and AVANT's own housemade ginger sauce. The silky artisanal cocktail is then poured into a chilled martini glass that's dusted with cookie crumbs before being topped with a rich dollop of whipped cream. The final product is an addictive autumnal libation that's as decadent as it is delicious.

"Our Gingerbread Martini seems to pique everyone's palate," says Jason Carroll, General Manager of AVANT. "It's a great way to end your meal while enjoying one of our signature desserts and sitting fireside on our patio."

It's okay to touch the ginormous gingerbread house, by the way, but taking a bite of it would be in poor taste (but delicious).

**AVANT at the Rancho Bernardo Inn**  
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