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Rao's Restaurant Group Opens Third Outpost In L.A.

Posted by [Correspondent Christina Xenos](#)

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A restaurant that is more than 100 years old is bound to have a few secrets. For Rao's famed East Harlem location that opened in 1896 in [New York City](#), that might still be how to secure a spot at the impenetrable 10-table hangout. Luckily, for those dining at the family-owned restaurant group's third [location](#) in [Los Angeles](#), reservation lines are open and attended to for easy dining access.

Executive chef Nicole Grimes, who landed in Los Angeles straight from the esteemed establishment's second outpost in [Las Vegas](#), leads a kitchen that offers the restaurant group's signature Southern Neapolitan Italian cuisine. First and foremost, this translates to Rao's famed meatballs. An order arrives at your table with two softball-sized spheres of juicy ground beef, pork, veal and breadcrumbs, slathered in Rao's signature marinara.

Rounding out the menu are daily chefs specials in addition to other classic fare such as lemon

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chicken and tender veal piccata with lemon, white wine and butter. You can also order veal marsala-style with sautéed mushrooms and marsala wine; a more substantial veal parmesan that comes breaded and topped with marinara, mozzarella and parmesan; or as a pan-seared chop.

L.A. foodies will be delighted by the range of contemporary dishes created specifically for them, such as a roasted beet salad with wild arugula, golden raisins, roasted beets, pistachios, goat cheese and a balsamic vinaigrette, as well as fusilli pasta with broccoli rabe and sausage. Prior to ordering, expect your server to pull up a chair to chat about menu highlights and describe the daily specials — just one aspect of the restaurant's attentive service.

The sturdy wooden bar that welcomes diners into the restaurant is the perfect spot for a classic martini before a meal, or where you may want to grab a coveted spot if you don't have a reservation. Sip a signature cocktail such as the Negroni Americana (Bluecoat American dry gin, Aperol, sweet vermouth, orange peel, served up) while selecting one of the many standards in the vintage jukebox, or browse the framed signed celebrity headshots and other carefully selected memorabilia.

It feels like Christmas every day inside the restaurant's Hollywood locale. Pine garlands with red bows accent the warm wood décor. The restaurant seats 95 guests in the indoor-outdoor space — at least double that of the New York location. Find Rao's by its bright red exterior, crowned with a neon clock in the old Hollywood Canteen spot, that's situated in the middle of studio lots and post-production houses south of Santa Monica Boulevard.

Plan for dinner at Rao's from 5 to 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; keeping up the tradition of its New York location, Rao's Hollywood is closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Photos Courtesy of Rao's Restaurant Group

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