



Long Beach en Fuego at Hotel Maya



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San Francisco-based hotel chain Joie de Vivre already replaced Venice's Marina Pacific Hotel with the **Hotel Erwin** this summer. Now they've launched the Hotel Maya in Long Beach, featuring 360-degree views of downtown Long Beach, the Queen Mary and the bay, plus Coastal Latin cuisine at Fuego.

Executive Chef Jesse Perez has forged a modern Latin menu at Fuego. The Texas native previously cooked at Francesca's at Sunset in San Antonio and Nava in Atlanta and considers Coyote Café's Mark Miller a mentor. Last month in Dallas, Perez received the first Flavors of Passion Award as Top Latin Chef in the U.S. "I was raised and immersed in the familial culture of Latin food and cooking since I was a boy," Perez says. "It's in my blood. The exotic ingredients and flavors are innate to my cooking style." I hope to bring this, as well as the seasonality of California, to the table." At Fuego, seasonal pan-Latin dishes include Sweet Corn Soup (\$9) with epazote & lobster-Poblano salsa, Plantain-Crusted Local Catch (A.Q.) with mole Amarillo aji & chipotle black beans, and Guajillo-Glazed Lamb Chops (\$29) with red chile potatoes & agave-guajillo chile essence.

At the bar, you'll find Latin-influenced cocktails like Spiked Horchata (\$12) with Seven Tiki Fijian rum and Pablo's Margarita (\$13) with Partida reposado tequila, organic agave nectar &

fresh lime juice on the rocks. Fuego also features two kinds of Fuego Sangria (\$8 per glass): Roja with red wine, orange, tamarind, pomegranate, brandy & cinnamon; and Blanco with white wine, apple, pear, kumquat & seasonal berries.

Bar bites include Blue Agave-Cured Salmon Totopos (\$10 with cilantro-Serrano spread; Cilantro-Jalapeno Skirt Steak Asada Tacos (3 for \$9) and a Green Chile Kobe Burger (\$15) with pepper Jack cheese, watercress, avocado, jamon Serrano & pickled peppers. Staff bangs on antique drums when guests order tequila from the bar. Fuego even features a private tequila tasting room with a mahogany table that accommodates up to a dozen people.

On Sunday afternoons, the Fiesta Domingo brunch takes place outdoors and includes roasted Puerto Nuevo-style lobster, barbacoa, live music and salsa dancing. Through the end of September, 10% of proceeds from each brunch benefits local charities like the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and The Museum of Latin American Art.

L.A. based firm Arya designed the hotel, which features an entrance with 13-foot floor-to-ceiling glass panels, an outdoor patio and a lounge with a copper-topped bar. The space features a magenta, orange and red color scheme and incorporates reclaimed wood, decorative stone and Mexican tilework.