

NEW & NOTABLE DINING



Photos Courtesy of The Park Club

THE PERFECT PAIRING: THE PARK CLUB AND PACIFIC SYMPHONY

As Orange County continues to establish itself as one of Southern California's premier cultural destinations, experiences that seamlessly combine exceptional dining with world-class entertainment have become increasingly sought after. Few evenings accomplish this more effortlessly than dinner at Park Club followed by a performance at Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

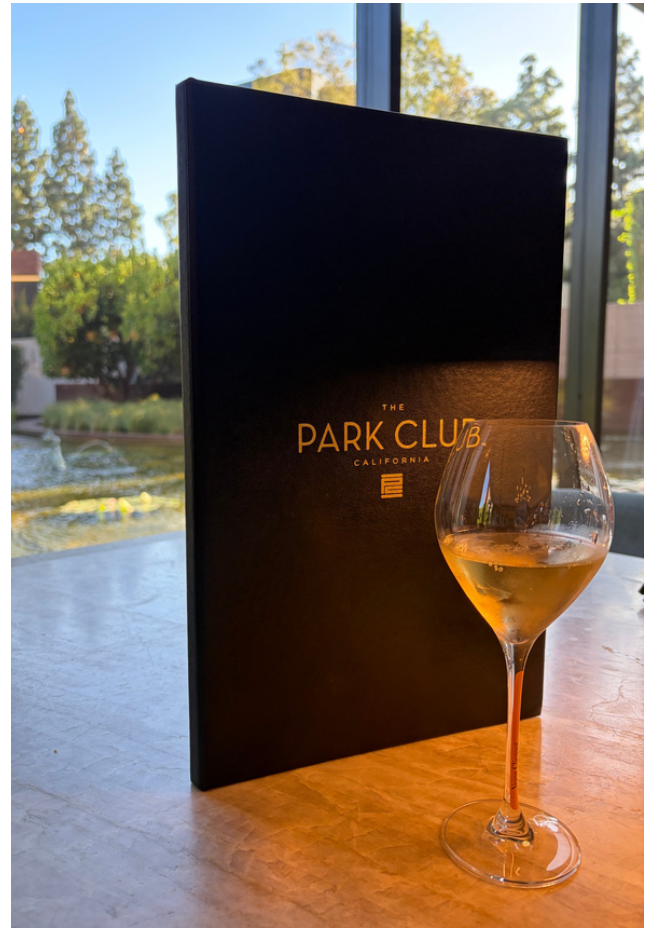
Costa Mesa's newest private social club has quickly become one of the county's most talked-about destinations, offering members an elevated social experience centered around exceptional hospitality, thoughtful design, and a culinary program that rivals many of Orange County's most celebrated restaurants. To make the evening even more memorable, Park Club curated a complete Dinner and a Show experience, pairing dinner at Monet Restaurant with tickets to Pacific Symphony's Shelley Conducts America at 250, a special performance celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary featuring Artistic and Music Director Designate Alexander Shelley alongside acclaimed pianist Conrad Tao.

The result was a reminder that the best evenings are never just about one destination, they're about how every piece comes together.

Upon arrival, Park Club immediately feels different from a traditional private club. Sophisticated without feeling stuffy, the property has been designed as a place where members can gather for everything from casual cocktails to celebratory dinners and cultural events. One of the most unexpected highlights is the view from Monet Restaurant itself. Large windows overlook a peaceful lake where resident ducks glide across the water throughout the evening, creating a surprisingly tranquil backdrop in the heart of Costa Mesa. As the sun begins to set and reflections dance across the water, the setting encourages guests to slow down, order another glass of wine, and settle into the evening.

At the culinary helm is Executive Chef Daniel Hohng, whose impressive résumé includes Michelin-starred kitchens, world-renowned chefs, and some of the most respected culinary institutions in the world. After graduating from Le Cordon Bleu, Chef Daniel refined his craft at Michelin-starred Ortolan, worked alongside Charlie Palmer, Amar Santana, Helene An, and Wolfgang Puck,





while also leading kitchens internationally before returning to Southern California. Today, he brings that wealth of experience to Park Club, where his menu reflects a blend of Contemporary American, French, and Asian influences grounded in seasonal Southern California ingredients.

Chef Daniel's latest offerings can be found throughout the club's two distinct dining venues, Palm Bar and Monet Restaurant, where every dish demonstrates both technical precision and a genuine respect for flavor.

Dinner began with several selections designed for sharing. The Truffle Cheese Pita arrived warm from the oven, layered with Parmesan Reggiano, mozzarella, and saba, while the Tuna Cigars delivered a playful contrast of textures with tuna poke and silky avocado wrapped in a crisp shell. Both provided an excellent introduction to Chef Daniel's style: creative, polished, and deeply satisfying.

Among the starters, the Beet Salad was particularly memorable. Arugula, candied pecans, fresh orange, and honey balsamic vinaigrette created a beautiful balance of sweetness, acidity, and crunch that felt perfectly suited for a spring evening. The Sweet Pea Agnolotti followed and quickly became another favorite, with delicate pasta filled with pea and ricotta accented by mint and preserved lemon. Light yet flavorful, it showcased the season's freshest ingredients while providing one of the evening's most elegant courses.

As impressive as the opening courses were, the entrées are where Chef Daniel truly shines.

The Grilled Lobster Tail, served atop bouillabaisse risotto with radish and a dramatic black tuile, combined classic French influences with contemporary presentation. Rich and comforting while remaining refined, it was a standout example of coastal California cuisine. The Angus Filet Mignon offered an entirely different expression, pairing beautifully prepared beef with banchan and browned butter ssamjang, allowing subtle Korean influences to complement rather than overpower the dish.

Yet the undisputed favorite of the evening was the Soy Lime Short Rib.

Served over silky celeriac purée alongside ninja radish and cipollini onions, the dish delivered extraordinary depth and complexity. The richness of the slow-cooked beef was balanced by bright citrus notes from the soy-lime glaze, while the vegetables added both texture and sweetness. Every bite seemed to reveal another layer of flavor. It was the kind of dish that immediately sparks conversation around the table as everyone reaches for another taste. Comforting and sophisticated in equal measure, it perfectly captured what makes Chef Daniel's cooking so compelling: global influences, technical precision, and an unwavering focus on creating memorable flavors. Equally impressive is Park Club's beverage program. The bar serves as one of the property's social hubs, offering a thoughtfully curated cocktail menu alongside a wine list that balances recognizable favorites with exciting discoveries. While seeing familiar labels such as The Prisoner is always appreciated, one of the evening's most pleasant surprises was being introduced to Eight Years in the Desert.

Created by renowned winemaker Dave Phinney, the same visionary responsible for The Prisoner, Eight Years in the Desert proved to be the perfect companion to the meal, particularly alongside the short rib. Bold and expressive with layers of dark fruit, spice, and subtle chocolate notes, the wine delivered the same rich character that fans of The Prisoner have come to love while offering a personality entirely its own. By the end of the evening, it wasn't simply a new discovery; it had become a new favorite.

Dessert provided a fitting conclusion to the meal. The Chocolate Hazelnut layered chocolate sponge cake, mousse, praline, candied hazelnuts, and gianduja into a decadent finale, while the Macadamia Cheesecake offered a lighter yet equally satisfying option featuring graham cracker, white chocolate, and salted caramel chantilly. Both demonstrated the same level of care and execution found throughout the menu.

Following dinner, the evening continued just moments away at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, where Pacific Symphony's Shelley Conducts America at 250 delivered a powerful celebration of American music and artistry. Under the direction of Alexander Shelley and featuring pianist Conrad Tao, the performance served as the perfect complement to the culinary experience that preceded it.

Together, Park Club and Pacific Symphony created something increasingly rare, a complete evening that feels thoughtfully curated from beginning to end. Exceptional cuisine, a tranquil lakeside setting, outstanding wine, world-class music, and genuine hospitality all came together to showcase the very best of Orange County's evolving cultural scene.

