

LA's Great  
Brain  
Surgeon

BY LINDA MARSA

The Last  
Days of the  
Ambassador

A PHOTO GALLERY

The iPod  
That Ate  
Hollywood

BY CLAUDE BRODRESSER

Rebecca  
Romijn Goes  
Triple 'X'

THE ENCOUNTER

# los angeles

Inside the Pound:  
The Lost Dogs  
of Los Angeles  
BY JESSE KATZ

# 52 Dream Weekends

» Great Places to Unplug,  
Unwind and Recharge

BAJA FRESH!  
Esperanza in  
Cabo San Lucas



\$4.95  
MAY 2006

Swimsuits  
That Make  
a Splash



CARNEROS INN

viewing Cyrano de Bergerac, stop by the brasserie bar at **Chateaulin** (541-482-2264 or [chateaulin.com](http://chateaulin.com)) to dip your own nose into a glass of Montrachet. •



DANA POINT, CALIFORNIA

## Lounge by the Sea

WHICH YOU PULL UP TO THE Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel (800-241-3333 or [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com); \$375-\$4,000), one glance at the serene bluffside resort tells you that you are not leaving anytime soon. Once you get a load of the service—four-hand massages in the spa, three kinds of sugar placed on your cappuccino spoon, friendly greetings from the staffers—you will want your towels stamped with a lion and a crown from now on. To keep up with the Montage resort down the block, the Ritz put \$40 million into a makeover. Clean-lined rooms echo the seascape with a palette of beige and blue, and vast arched windows look onto the horizon from **Restaurant 162**, the Asian-influenced dining room. Laguna has loads of shopping, and star chef Michael Mina recently debuted **Stonehill Tavern** (949-234-3318 or [michaelmina.net](http://michaelmina.net)) in the St. Regis across the street. But after a couple of afternoon mojitos by the pool, it's likely you're staying put. •



NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

## Table Hop

EATING ONE'S WAY THROUGH Napa County is not just about patronizing culinary shrines. Even the humblest establishment can astonish. In the town of Napa, crowds at the endearingly funky **ABC Bakery** (707-258-1827 or [alexisbaking-company.com](http://alexisbaking-company.com)) testify to its appeal as a breakfast destination (try the cinnamon bread). In St. Helena, the inconspicuous **Market** (707-963-3799 or [marketsthelema.com](http://marketsthelema.com)) serves a lunchtime macaroni and cheese made from Fiscallini cheddar, whipping cream, sour cream, Dijon mustard, parsley, and chives. Any hope of burning off calories by strolling St. Helena's Main Street quickly vanishes. The **Model Bakery** (707-963-8192 or [themodelbakery.com](http://themodelbakery.com)) purveys chewy oatmeal cookies, while **Woodhouse Chocolate** (800-966-3468 or [woodhouse-chocolate.com](http://woodhouse-chocolate.com)) sells an addictive

almond bark. A day spent sampling fare that passes for commonplace here provides the perfect prelude to a big-time dinner. From its zinc bar to its steak frites, **Thomas Keller's Bouchon** (707-944-8037 or [frenchlaundry.com](http://frenchlaundry.com)) in Yountville is the quintessential bistro—and it's not as hard to get into as Keller's French Laundry or as expensive. The **Carneros Inn** (707-299-4901 or [thecarneros-inn.com](http://thecarneros-inn.com); \$435-\$1,200), a collection of cottages overlooking the Carneros vineyards, offers a luxurious spot to rest a weary head and a full stomach. •

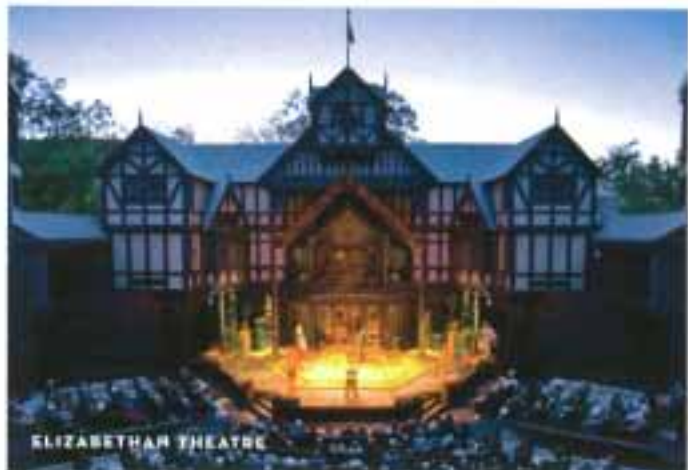


ASHLAND, OREGON

## Hail the Bard

LUMBER WAS KING IN THE ROGUE River Valley until 1935, when an Ashland staging of *Twelfth Night* sparked the creation of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (541-482-4337 or [orshakes.org](http://orshakes.org)). Today the festival runs from

February through October, boasting three stages and a repertoire that includes Edmond Rostand and Oscar Wilde, it is one of the West's most renowned regional companies. From your room at the comfortably revamped **Ashland Springs Hotel** (888-795-4545 or [ashlandsprings-hotel.com](http://ashlandsprings-hotel.com); \$79-\$209), you can walk over to the full-scale Elizabethan Theatre for a tour. Lunch outdoors at the **Standing Stone Brewing Co.** (541-482-2448) and sip barley wine while you plot. Remember that comedies sell out faster than tragedies, Sundays and Tuesdays are best for scoring tickets, and if no seats are available for *Hamlet*, a 9:30 a.m. box-office release occurs daily at will-call (go early). Dine preshow at the teeny, six-table **New Sammy's Cowboy Bistro** (541-535-2779)—possibly southern Oregon's finest restaurant—and after



ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

FROM TOP, COURTESY CARNEROS INN; 1. CHARLES BRIDGEMAN



AIRFARE

MANY WEB SITES deliver airline discounts. "The thing that most people don't realize is that fares fluctuate throughout the day," says [airfarewatchdog.com](http://airfarewatchdog.com) publisher George Hobica. So check often. "I've found that some of the best deals pop up on weekends, especially Saturday mornings." Also clean the cookies from your browser, he says (a Help search will tell you how), or you could be returned to the same fare.