

# SPACE

LOS ANGELES

PEOPLE PLACES PROPERTY

MAY 2007 \$4.95





# MODAA



MUSEUM OF  
DESIGN ART +  
ARCHITECTURE

A VERSATILE  
GALLERY SPACE  
ADDS NEW  
ENERGY AND  
CREATIVITY TO  
CULVER CITY

The Museum of Design Art and Architecture (or MODAA) was not only created by the architects of SPF:a—it actually houses the firm's design studios. "You can't separate art and architecture," says Judit Fekete, who curates the gallery's shows while juggling her role as president and CEO of SPF:a (Studio Pali Fekete Architects). "We love supporting up-and-coming young artists who speak the same language we do."

Since its opening in early 2006, MODAA has hosted a lively mix of installations, including photographs by Julius Shulman and Juergen Nogai; the bold, abstract paintings of Chuck Arnold; and striking stainless steel sculptures by Cheryl Ekstrom. For two months beginning on May 17, MODAA will feature the exuberant and playful sculptures of Brad Howe. ▸

MODAA prides itself on being accessible and welcoming. The gallery flows directly into the architects' work space, inviting visitors to wander freely between the two. It's a fitting design for an institution that aims to explore the complex interplay between art and architecture.

"We aren't selling art—we're hosting shows that highlight things we like," explains Fekete. "We've also opened the space to town meetings, professional conferences, fashion week events, a student design competition. It's created a way for us to be more connected to the community."

This block-long, mixed-use development has been a catalyst in revitalizing Culver City's downtown, bridging the gap between the Helms district and the cluster of up-and-coming galleries further east. The building, with its textural checkerboard façade, combines seven residential lofts, SPF:a's design studio, the MODAA gallery space, and Wilson, an intimate neighborhood bistro. It's a visionary experiment, pioneering a new blueprint for creative live-work developments in Culver City.

—Lisa Renaud



MODAA  
8609 Washington Blvd., Culver City  
310.558.0902 | [www.modaagallery.com](http://www.modaagallery.com)



# HIP & HAPPENING IN LOS ANGELES



## WILSON



Culver City's Wilson is the newest restaurant from Chef Michael Wilson (son of Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson) and partners Antonio Muré and Stefano de Lorenzo of Piccolo Ristorante and La Botte. **Vibe** Wilson provides an adventurous array of flavorful dishes and service with a bit of well-earned pretension. **Décor** The restaurant is tucked into the corner of Washington Boulevard's new MODAA building. Wilson has that clean and crisp mid-century mod décor that seems to be sweeping through

Culver City. **Chef** With an emphasis on aromatic spices, Chef Wilson (formerly of Venice's 5 Dudley) fuses oddly contrasting big flavors, turning out inventive dishes: beef stuffed calamari with horseradish aioli or potato fig tortellini with parmesan and Celtic sea salt. **We Loved** the tasting menu. The "slowww" roasted pork with African spices, maple grits, hominy and cranberry barbeque sauce is one of the house favorites. **Drinks** The wine list is ample and there is an eclectic global selection of ales and lagers. **The Crowd** Culver City gourmards lean in close to keep conversations hushed. 310.287.2093 | [www.wilsonfoodandwine.com](http://www.wilsonfoodandwine.com)

## RUSTIC CANYON WINE BAR

Owners Rustic Canyon-born Josh Loeb brings us a charming neighborhood restaurant named for his Santa Monica birthplace. With a background in wine and restaurant management (Capo), it was his series of weekly gourmet dinner parties for friends that led to opening Rustic Canyon Wine Bar. **Vibe** This place is buzzing with upbeat locals and good conversation—communal tables are optional. **Décor** Loeb's girlfriend Claudia Reyes designed the warmly candlelit interior with its contrasting white walls and dark wood furnishings. She even created the tree-motif art on the walls. **Chef** This is the first head chef role for Samir Mohajer, formerly of Axe and The Little Door. The changing menu is Farmer's Market-inspired and features mainstays like the mouth-watering mixed Moroccan salad plate with homemade grilled flatbread and harissa. **We Loved** the fact that Loeb circulates the dining room and that this is an extension of those private dinners with delightful food and wine pairings. **Drinks** Loeb also handpicks rare selections from boutique wineries across the globe, while sparkling Prosecco cocktails made with fresh juices are worth the trip alone—try the refreshing Indochine with lemongrass and ginger. **Best Night** Any night, Tuesday through Sunday, but plan ahead. This place books up fast and has not slowed down since opening in January. 310.393.7050 | [www.rusticcanyonwinebar.com](http://www.rusticcanyonwinebar.com)



By Heather Burgett