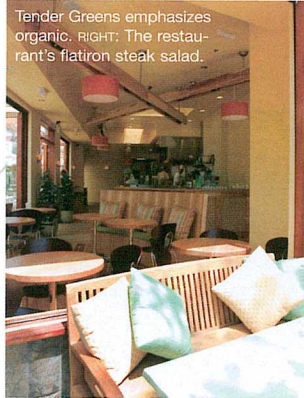


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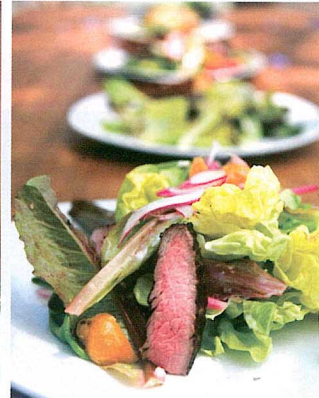
Spring 2007

Chopped, Tossed, & On the Side

Whether the occasion is power brokering, deal making, blind dating, or gossiping with the girls, the salad is LA's meal of champions. BY LARA MORGENSON



Tender Greens emphasizes organic. RIGHT: The restaurant's flatiron steak salad.



THREE WORDS THAT MAKE THIS TOWN GO *Let's do lunch.* And with the farmer's market bursting into the plat du jour. This is especially true at **La Scala**, home Leon Chopped Salad. On any given day the restaurant than 300 plates during the noon hours, luring in industry p and lunchin' ladies. The Leon's red-wine-drenched mix b of romaine and iceberg lettuces, garbanzo beans, salami, ous helping of mozzarella cheese. Most people don't eve menu—this has been *the* item of choice for more than 50 ye 434 North Canon Drive, Beverly Hills, 310-275-0579.

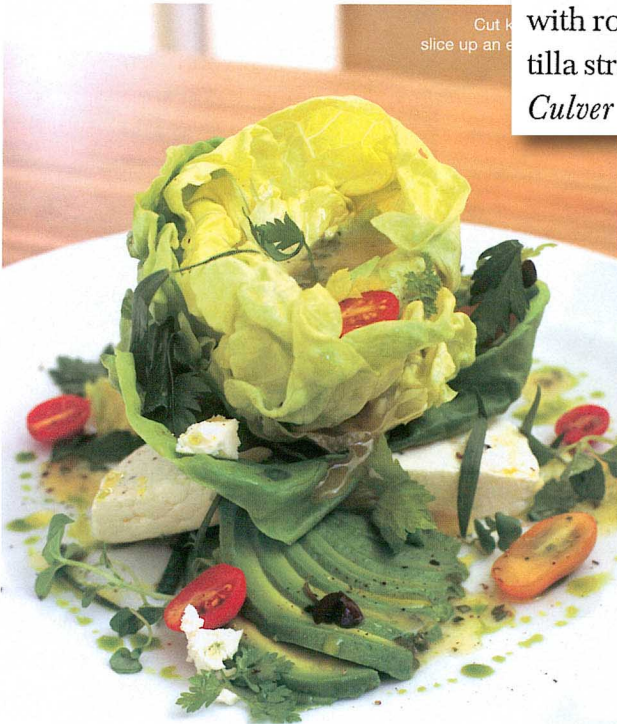
Newer—and better—versions of the chopped salad are in this greens-gobbling town. Case in point: It ain't just th are ordering at **Pizzeria Mozza**. There's an equal amou

In the midst of Culver City's growing food scene is **Tender Greens**. Featuring a menu of organic produce from a local farm in Oxnard, this cafeteria-style restaurant serves up everything from simple salads like red and green butter lettuce tossed in Dijon dressing to protein-packed versions like the flatiron steak with red and gold beets on a leafy bed, dialed up a notch with a horseradish vinaigrette. And while garden grazers can fill up on the Happy Vegan, those in the mood for something heartier can tear into the chipotle barbecue chicken salad loaded with romaine hearts, avocado, jack cheese, and a crunchy garnish of tortilla strips, all luxuriating in a creamy lime dressing. *Tender Greens, 9523 Culver Boulevard, Culver City, 310-842-8300.*

ley of turkey, bleu cheese, tomato, and baby spinach drizzled with a tangy grapefruit vinaigrette to the venerable Niçoise, which uses fresh seared Ahi rather than tired tinned tuna. *Sur, 606 North Robertson Boulevard, West Hollywood, 310-289-2824.*

Keep in mind that the green game isn't up when dinnertime rolls around. Before you slice into your filet mignon or New York strip at Wolfgang Puck's **Cut**, make room for the butter lettuce salad. It's the perfect start to an indulgent meal of steak and potatoes. Crisp slabs of butter lettuce hold crumbled Point Reyes blue and ripe crescents of avocado, finished in a decadent dressing of Champagne and herbs. Or make a meal out of the incredibly fresh Heirloom Apple Salad, which marries julienne of apple, fennel, and red endive with shaved parmesan, marcona almonds, and medjool dates. The crowning touch is a dressing of Tuscan olive oil, sherry wine vinegar, and lemon juice. Yum. *Cut, 9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, 310-276-8500.*

Or go out on a limb at Santa Monica's **Rustic Canyon Wine Bar and Seasonal Kitchen** and order up the mixed Moroccan salad plate with grilled flatbread and harissa. The perfect start to any meal or companion to one of the restaurant's 20 boutique wines, this combo skips leafy treats in favor of roast eggplant with garlic and cumin, roast baby beets, yogurt with shallots, and harissa, all begging to be scooped up with grilled homemade flatbread. *Rustic Canyon Wine Bar and Seasonal Kitchen, 1119 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, 310-393-7050. ★*



Cut k slice up an e

PLUS!
KIDADA JONES,
MELISSA RIVERS,
KATHY FRESTON