

**jackass**  
**number two** R now playing  
 click to get tickets and showtimes

**LOS ANGELES**  
**CITY BEAT**

Search

**Grand**  
 AVENUE FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006 • DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES  
 11AM-5PM GRAND AVENUE BETWEEN TEMPLE & 4TH STREETS



mc rai kinky

**Dive in!**  
 See 10 hot beach trips now

Expedia.com

[ HOME ] [ CLASSIFIEDS ] [ PAST ISSUES ] [ SPECIAL ISSUES ] [ ADVERTISING ] [ CONTACT ] [



**HOME**

**COVER STORY**

**Life After Death**  
 The West Memphis Three were convicted of child murder, but troubling questions and a series of films have led many to doubt their guilt

**FRONTLINES**

**Gang Crimes as Hate**

**EAT**

## Two Cheers for Tapas

Despite flaws, Olé! in Studio City offers a nice taste of Spanish tradition

~ By RICHARD FOSS ~



Photo by Richard Foss



all them appetizers, grazing menus, small plates, or whatever

**Crimes**

Activists hope that the recent high-profile murder convictions of Avenues gang members will raise awareness that some shootings are pure hate crime

**Turf Battle**

The national fight over eminent domain comes to the intersection of Hollywood and Vine

**3RD DEGREE****Linda R. Hirshman**

The political philosopher on why men don't stay home and why having Ph.D.s wiping butts is immoral

**EDITORIAL****Thank Your DNA****LETTERS****LEFT COAST**

Cartoon By Ted Rall

**TAKE MY PICTURE**

Photographs by Gary Leonard

**7 DAYS**

**HAPPY 225th, L.A.!**

**L.A.&E****Dreams of Ecstasy and Disaster**

Silversun Pickups on the thrills and spills of being a real band

you will, meals of many small courses are popular in L.A. The current hip label is tapas, a term used on all manner of menus. The problem is that, of the many popular names for this style of dining, tapas is specific to a cuisine – native to Madrid, light meals to accompany glasses of wine. Tapas fans decry the Californication of their beloved cuisine and claim it's impossible to get real tapas in L.A.

They're not far wrong. Restaurants serving traditional tapas are rare around town. I was in the mood for the real thing when a friend recommended Olé! Tapas Bar in Studio City. The look of the place was charming – dramatic interior of paintings and red light, a cheery outdoor patio overlooking Ventura Boulevard. We were seated outside, and a friendly server named Adriana arrived with menus. Most selections were modern; though raw halibut with lavender habanero lychee sauce sounds interesting, it is definitely not a traditional Spanish tapa. We ordered hot and cold samplers that promised Madrileno classics, and one modern item just for comparison. Some main courses were intriguing, including Spanish-style lamb, but we stuck with tapas. Adriana took our orders and promised water and drinks would come soon.

Nothing happened for some time, which was odd, because we were there early and the restaurant wasn't full. Our server arrived with wine, apologized that bread wasn't out of the oven yet, and promised water would be forthcoming. When she returned with our first courses and saw the water still wasn't there, she made sure a busboy brought it immediately.

The plate of cold appetizers (\$11) was substantial: roasted red peppers, green olives, cubes of Manchego cheese, a pile of Serrano ham shavings, and green beans with figs and Cabrales blue cheese. The green beans were a daily special our server substituted for the usual green bean and mushroom salad. They deserve a place on the menu; when they are offered, by all means get them. The ingredients were first-class, the combination inspired. Elsewhere, things were hit and miss: good, slightly sweet peppers, decent olives, and chewy, meaty ham, but oddly dry and funky Manchego, usually one of my favorite cheeses.

We paired the cold plate with glasses of a delicious Salvenal Albarino and a good Finca Antigua Cabernet – generous pours reasonably priced at \$5 and \$6 respectively. The by-the-glass menu here is very good, a fact obviously appreciated by the noisy crowd in the rapidly filling restaurant.

Our plate of hot appetizers (\$14) arrived as we finished the cold plate, and our server looked alarmed when she realized that nobody had brought bread. She returned with cold bread and apologized for some problem in the kitchen that was complicating things. We were engrossed in studying our meal, which included fried calamari in red pepper sauce, goat cheese fried with honey and balsamic vinegar, sautéed mushrooms and artichokes in onion sauce, potatoes fried with olive oil and herbs, and a dollop of purple onion relish. We had thought the red pepper sauce might be chili peppers, but the tasty mild red pepper and olive blend was more in the Basque tradition. The mushroom and artichoke mix was bland but acceptable, the potatoes tasty, but the star of the meal was the fried cheese. That honey and balsamic vinegar drizzle tasted great even on the cold and substandard bread, and it was pure heaven on the feather-light balls of

**SUBBACULTCHA**

**In on the Ground Floor**  
Say goodbye to the ivory tower

**LIVE**

**Staying Sick**  
Drive-By Truckers and the Cramps rule Sunday at the Junction

**GROUNDWELL**

**Lofty Ideals**  
Veteran NYC spinner David Mancuso brings his song-centric style to SoCal

**FILM**

**Rated S for Scathing**  
Kirby Dick's documentary gets under the MPAA's skin

**A Chinese Odyssey**  
Zhang Yimou's latest is a deeply moving family tale

~ NOW PLAYING ~

~ LATEST REVIEWS ~

~ SCREENINGS ~

~ SHOWTIMES ~

**STAGE**

**Relevant Twists**  
'Corpus Christi' and 'Arturo Ui' offer updated takes on good and evil

**LISTINGS**

~ SOUNDS ~  
~ CONCERTS ~  
~ STAGE ~

fried cheese.

The modern dish was an interesting contrast – three plump grilled scallops atop pulped eggplant, topped with mango sauce and a few red caviar eggs (\$8). It had enough continuity with Spanish ideas of flavor that it wasn't outlandish – fruit and fish are companions around the Mediterranean, and the mango and scallops with robust eggplant certainly hit the spot. I celebrated with a glass of Onix Priorat – at \$10 a glass, the most expensive Spanish wine on the menu, but worth it. We finished with coffee and fried custard squares dusted with cinnamon, a Spanish dessert that deserves to be more popular – it was everything I like about a crême brûlée, but with a more interesting texture.

Olé! isn't perfect – some items needed work, and, despite Adriana's earnest attempts to provide good service, staff communication is lacking. Still, it's better than many places around L.A., with a taste of the ambience, food, and wine that are the core of Spanish tradition.



★

*Olé! Tapas Bar, 13251 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, (818) 986-3190. Open daily. Wheelchair access good; valet or street parking; full bar. Call for reservations. Info: Oletapasbar.com.*

08-31-06

~ DANCEBEAT ~  
~ GALLERY ~  
~ READINGS, ETC. ~  
~ SUBMISSIONS ~

**EAT**

**Two Cheers for Tapas**  
Despite flaws, Olé! in  
Studio City offers a nice  
taste of Spanish tradition

© 2006 Southland Publishing, All Rights Reserved. Development and Hosting [OurGig.com](http://OurGig.com)