

POST TASTE



Grace Hiney

THE STINKING ROSE

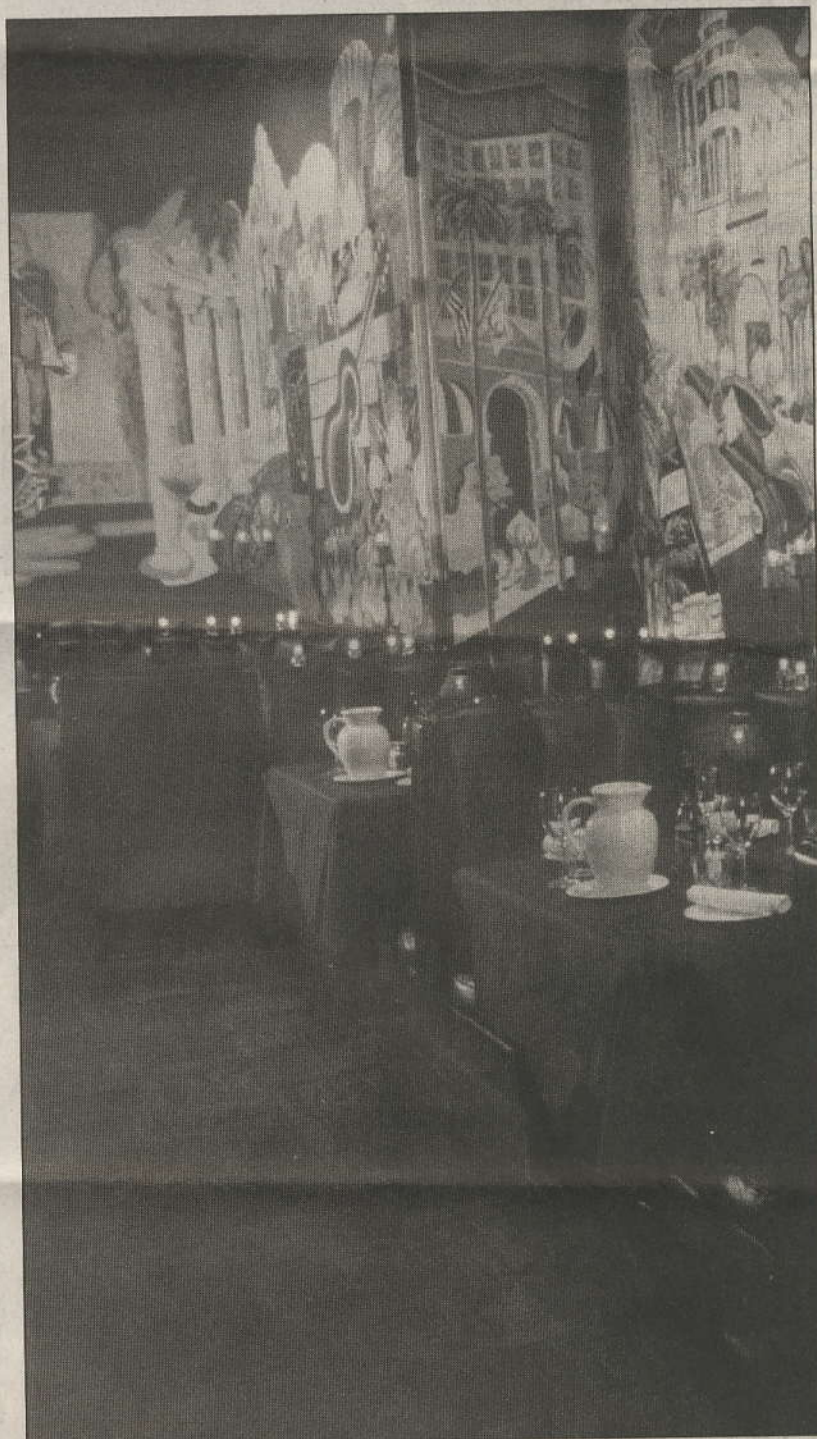
55 North La Cienega Blvd.
(just north of Wilshire)
Beverly Hills
(310) 652-7673

An opportunity to dine at The Stinking Rose after a decade long hiatus seemed too good to refuse. Garlic is the theme here. Known throughout the centuries for providing physical strength and endurance, this edible bulb is also renowned for its medicinal qualities such as lowering blood pressure and improving circulation.

But the best part of garlic at this restaurant is the amazing flavor given to each dish. We were treated to roasted, garlicky mussels and shrimp served in a sizzling iron skillet. Dipping these in the garlic compound butter with its lemony garlic flavor and capers made each shrimp or mussel more succulent than the last.

The restaurant is renowned for its bagna calda, which consists of garlic cloves that have been oven roasted in extra virgin olive oil and butter with a hint of anchovy. Creamy soft and perfect for spreading on the warm foccacia, this is another taste delight.

Pizzettes are another small plate here that is exceptional. These are oval in shape and thin crusted (which I always enjoy more) and are served with various toppings, such as barbecue garlic chicken with cilantro, mozzarella and thin slices of red onion. The barbecue sauce gave this pizzette a bright flavor, while the shiitake mushroom and asparagus version with garlic and mozzarella was a little mellower.



Inside the Stinking Rose on La Cienega in Beverly Hills.

Salads, too, had vibrant flavor including arugula with Gorgonzola, red onions and pine nuts in a garlic vinaigrette, and baby tomatoes with croutons topped with a garlic balsamic dressing. The latter was especially enticing.

The garlic-encrusted baby back ribs with rosemary and barbecue sauce were served with garlic-mashed potatoes, while the excellent seafood—both the salmon and halibut with their garlic, caper,

butter sauce—were tender and delicious. These were accompanied with acini di pepe, a tiny round Italian pasta. Cooked with a bit of oven-roasted tomatoes, lemon juice, chopped flat leaf parsley and sugar snap peas. This was a perfect side dish for the fish.

Gilroy, the garlic capital of California, is famous for its garlic ice cream, which is definitely an acquired taste even with its warm caramel mole sauce, but there are a number of other desserts listed.

While the décor is somewhat exotic with its dramatic lighting, tables covered with canopy tents, and its number of dining spaces to accommodate parties of various sizes, prices are moderate. Many of the entrees are priced under \$20 and small servings of appetiz-

ers such as roasted garlic mussels or shrimp are \$9.95. Of course, you can splurge and order tiger prawns or crab and prime rib in the large portion for \$44.95.

The bar near the entry features not only traditional cocktails and specializes in seven different versions of the mojito, but also serves a “gartini” which is a vodka martini garnished with a jumbo garlic-stuffed olive. The bar walls are adorned with photos of the famous who imbibed there during the past 12 years.

The Stinking Rose is open every day for lunch and dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. There is self-parking during the day and valet parking in the evening. A tasty, fun-filled place for any meal!