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### [Food and drink with a view: Vu Restaurant](#)

Let me preface this post with this statement: This restaurant is in Marina del Rey. Unless you live in Marina del Rey or really close to it, you probably don't frequent the area much. I know I don't. But I may start now that [Vu Restaurant](#) has opened at the waterfront [Jamaica Bay Inn](#), which just underwent an extensive makeover.

Vu (pronounced "view"), which just opened this month, turned out to be a pleasant surprise for me, despite some hiccups at the bar (make sure head mixologist Jolie Klein makes your drinks, and you'll be golden). The food's origins are all over the map, literally — there's Asian, Italian and good old American, among others — and even some molecular gastronomy thrown in. A bit confusing, but somehow it works. Here are some of the highlights from my dinner there last week.

The pork belly sitting on a crispy cake of grits and topped with root beer gelée was my favorite bite of the night. As Lindsay William-Ross, editor of [LAist](#), noted, the flavors were reminiscent of chicken and waffles. I liked this because the root beer wasn't overpowering but lent just the right amount of subtle sweetness to complement the dish.



Pork belly on crispy grits topped with root beer gelée

My second-favorite dish of the night was the chicken-fried watermelon. This worked because the watermelon was pickled, making it more vegetable-like. The crispiness of the outside went well with the softness of the inside, too.



Chicken-fried watermelon

This amuse bouche, dubbed the Reconstructed Caprese Salad, intrigued me right away. It's a balsamic vinegar-injected cherry tomato wrapped in basil-infused mozzarella and topped with micro basil. It's such a cute interpretation of the traditional caprese salad.



Reconstructed Caprese Salad

Another appetizer that I enjoyed were the Thai mussels served in a green curry broth with a hamachi salad, coconut gelée, scallion and micro cilantro. A wonderful combination of flavors. I only wish there were more of it.



Thai mussel

Chef Kyle Schutte is from Atlanta, so that explains the presence of Southern comfort food on the menu. But Schutte has managed to elevate this food to make it pair nicely with wine and the delectable concoctions from mixologist Klein, who made some really awesome drinks, including dessert and digestif cocktails. So next time you're in MDR, stop in and check out the chicken-fried items (there's also chicken-fried calamari) and grab a glass of anything Klein feels like making you that day. You may just be tempted to go back some time.

*Note: This meal was hosted.*

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#### About The Author



**Maya Meinert**

Other posts by [Maya Meinert](#)

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