

WATERMARK

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Ann Flower Communications
Ann@annflowerpr.com
310 305 7169



Watermark Restaurant Opens in Ventura

**RESTAURANT IN ICONIC HISTORIC BUILDING TO TAKE SEASIDE COMMUNITY
DINING SCENE TO NEW LEVEL**

(Ventura, CA) – Housed in one of the most splendid buildings in all of Ventura, complete with a remarkable and intact 1920's interior, Watermark brings a sophisticated dining experience to the quintessential beach town of Ventura.

After an 18 month-long meticulous restoration by the Hartley Family that restored the hand-painted plaster ceilings, original murals, arts-and-craft tile work and mahogany woodwork, the restaurant opened on Tuesday, August 12th.

Watermark may celebrate the past but it firmly embraces the future. In addition to the main dining room on the ground floor and seating on the mezzanine level, the restaurant literally “raises the bar” with its rooftop, glass enclosed lounge and bar that features a retractable ceiling. With spectacular ocean and mountain views, W²O will double as a unique open-air music venue thanks to a state-of-the-art sound system.

“The project, besides being a landmark in Ventura and one of the most beautiful buildings in the county, provides an opportunity to bring world-class dining and an exceptional experience to the Central Coast,” states Mark Hartley, owner of Watermark. “Our hope and intention is that Watermark will attract people from out of the area to visit and discover Ventura.”

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On the ground floor, booth and table seating is available beneath oversized windows and the beautifully preserved 1928 murals. On the right side of the room, a mahogany bar wraps around into a separate bar area, and in the back, beyond extensive wine cabinets, the bank's original vault protects high-end spirits and liqueurs.



In addition to dining tables that overlook the main floor through the exquisite original wrought iron railings, the mezzanine level 'wine loft' has a fireplace and a private dining room suitable for wine tasting and special functions.

Overall, the design of Watermark reflects its historical perspective – the color scheme is warm, golden and inviting, with rust and green walls and golden marble floors with copper inlays. Iron and mica chandeliers, amber glass sconces and an under-lit gold onyx bar illuminate the room. Booths are upholstered in rich brocade with cognac leather seats, and burgundy velveteen draperies soften the nine-foot high windows.

In contrast, the rooftop bar and lounge, is decidedly contemporary and a study in blues and silver, echoing the skies and ocean that surround the restaurant's 'aerie.' W²O is certain to become a meeting place of choice, serving lunch, a small plate menu and late night dining from its dedicated kitchen. Surrounded by water and fire features, guests are invited to relax in intimate seating areas – at both booths and tables. W²O also features a private dining room ideally suited for meetings, complete with a drop down flat screen and its own ocean view terrace.

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“Watermark will allow us to provide a five-diamond experience in an unpretentious but elegant setting, combined with all the friendliness and warmth that defines the area,” explains Jim Rice, Managing General Partner. “This is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a restaurant to be in a building like this in a community like Ventura, surrounded by the best ingredients in the country.”

Executive Chef Greg Kurtz will head up the kitchen, coming from another of the group’s Ventura restaurants, the popular Westside Cellar. “Locally inspired cuisine will be the focal point of the menu – we can see the ocean from here and we are surrounded by small grower and sustainable farms. What we can source locally will be a determining factor as to what appears on the menu and as a result, some items will change daily,” explains Kurtz. “Overall, the menu will be contemporary regional American cuisine, featuring a balance of fish, steaks and other meat dishes, along with the freshest seasonal vegetables.”

Watermark Restaurant is housed in one of the most architecturally significant buildings in Ventura. Originally built in 1907 to house the Ventura Power Company, the building was extensively remodeled in 1928 into the elegant brick building it is today. Combining Spanish Colonial Revival design with influences of Zig-Zag Art Deco, the stunning edifice artfully pairs terra cotta bricks with Malibu style ceramic tile. Inside, the hand-stenciled ceilings and wood paneling are reminiscent of Hearst Castle. The murals, painted by renowned La Jolla based artist Norman Kennedy, depict early life at the Santa Buenaventura Mission. The architects responsible for the 1928 transformation were John C. Austin and Frederic M. Ashley, whose other work includes the Griffith Observatory, the Shrine Auditorium and the Los Angeles City Hall.

Open for lunch and dinner, Tuesday through Sunday, Watermark is located at 598 Main Street, at the corner of Chestnut Street, in Ventura’s vibrant historic district. For reservations please call 805 643 6800.

www.watermarkonmain.com