

Daily Dish

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON FOOD IN LOS ANGELES August 19, 2010 | 2:51 pm

Scott Conant's Scarpetta to open in Beverly Hills in October

New York chef Scott Conant is expanding the [Scarpetta](#) empire to Beverly Hills this fall, with an expected October opening at the [Montage Beverly Hills](#). The original Scarpetta, a rustic-meets-refined Italian restaurant on the edge of New York's meatpacking district, debuted two years ago. New branches have since opened in Miami and Toronto, and another is planned for Las Vegas this year.

"It's really exciting. I've been sitting on this for a long time," says Conant, a critics' favorite who hosts the Food Network's "24 Hour Restaurant Battle" and is the author of cookbooks "New Italian Cooking" and "Bold Italian." "I only want to open restaurants in places where I want to spend time. And the thing is, I think L.A. is one of the most exciting places in the country right now from a cuisine perspective. The produce and products in California really set the standard for the rest of the country."

Conant says that 40% of the original Scarpetta menu works at his other locations, but the rest is open to creativity. Signature dishes include creamy polenta with "truffled mushrooms" that Frank Bruni of the New York Times described as "one of the best, most decadent things ever to happen to cornmeal"; raw yellowtail with ginger oil; and spaghetti with tomato and basil. The latter sounds prosaic, but some claim the \$24 dish is the best spaghetti *al pomodoro* in New York. "The signature dishes seem to be things that resonate with people," Conant says.

Scarpetta Beverly Hills will take over the space that houses the Montage's Parq restaurant (80 seats in the main dining room plus more in the bar and outdoor courtyard). Parq is expected to close next week, and the restaurant will get an "Old Hollywood-inspired" redesign from Gaia Studio (Tao Las Vegas, W Mexico City).

Conant says he hasn't decided who will helm the kitchen but he likes the idea of co-chefs de cuisine. "Somebody within my company working with somebody local. I still have to work that out."

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-- Betty Hallock

Photo credit: Scarpetta

