

## LA Unscripted | September 22nd, 2023

From hot spots and hidden gems We've rounded up some serious local flavor with our own L A unscripted Michelin love spots Hello and welcome to L A unscripted I'm Devin And tonight we are talking Michelin ratings Now if you don't know what that is Well it's a chef's dream The French tire company Michelin rates restaurants with up to three stars and it can actually make or break a spot So when this place Leon got recognized by Michelin just a few months after opening Well we had to give it a try and meet the very well lived and loved owner Frank Leon and I'm just going to say look at these oysters Leona is uh a Japanese fusion restaurant with a little bit of a touch of European and Peruvian flavors I had an Italian restaurant called La Loggia for so many years 30 we had a great run So we decided to do the the switch about eight months ago into Leona People were telling me said what are you doing Are you crazy Uh Yeah Studio City is the the the capital of the world for for sushi bars I mean I think we have more sushi establishment here per capital than Tokyo But look we have something here that a lot of people don't have We we're nervous but but it's paying off the chef Shige who's been my friend for almost 30 years I think he you know he has a lot to do with the with the Michelin guy recognizing him that he was here with me And um they just came in very early in in you know the 3rd 4th month of opening And uh we were overwhelmed Everybody who earned a Michelin star are very proud and they very and they work very very hard to keep that start all year round We are new into this year We're very proud that people can recognize us that we can compete in that you know lab We're happy and we we hope they can continuously raid in our restaurant until one day we can get one Well I came to the time when I was 17 years old II I start working uh in an Italian restaurant uh humble background you know washing dishes prep cook And then from there somebody with talent recognizes me that I had something special on me and and took me to a very fancy restaurant in Beverly Hills where practically I made my money there because in those days there were very good tips I always tell people I'm really living the American dream I came here with nothing I build something I work hard every single day But I also you know have a lot of mentors I I in my career in my life you know I had a lot of people who who took me uh to another level because they believe in me and they showed me and they taught me things that they already knew So I was very fortunate to find those mentors in my life You know it's it's good to have those those people Mart and I we met

when we were like 18 years old we turned our friendship into a relationship and we had two beautiful daughters which I adore and love You know she's an immigration attorney now Um She has worked also very hard in her life Uh She's from Cuba We decide to adopt two beautiful kids from Sierra Leone Not because we were looking for but primarily destiny Somehow somebody is powerful up there send us to that direction My oldest son Isa who's 13 phenomenal dancer now with Debbie Allen at that at school and we decide to add another sibling and a bull was in there He's 10 years old He wants to be a model He has done a few things The job of a parent is to just uh guide him love them care for them and provide for them what they never could have in their own country And and if I'm in that situation you know what uh it makes me happy I always like to be challenged I always like to find creativity and always like to look for new things I have a lot of friends who they also challenged me to do something different Something new exciting And you know I I took that challenge and we make the move and I'm happy that we made that move Here's the thing as good as this sushi looks It tastes even better So this is the truffle halibut Oh I I am loving every single bite of this Oh my gosh It's a a tender buttery Oh my gosh you're gonna love this place And if you're a fan of the show the Bear and you know getting a Michelin star was the end goal in season two And if you've watched the Chef Skills of Jeremy Allen White in the show then you have this master chef to take alert He basically threw me out of his kitchen I'm not he really did Yes Chef Yes chef yes chef chef everything Yes Chef Hi I'm chef Dave Dana I dare you to go through the bear training at Paoli Anything along the way Why does your mind look so bad Is a great neighborhood bistro It's Parisian style cuisine conveyed through California produce and we're here in Southern California So why not make that the focal point so far So far I would not hire you so far I would not hire you You're like three months prior to Jeremy entering this kitchen at this point with your skill set It it's an absolutely wonderful show He found out that Jeremy was coming in three days before he was finishing up his stint at culinary school So he and I texted a few times about what he needed and what time to be here and that was it He dove in but we'll figure it out So we're not gonna make you cook We're just going to plate a dish When did you know that Chris Storer was going to write the Bear So we had another restaurant in Santa Monica 18 seat tasty menu restaurant A friend of mine was dining and he brought Chris Store in as a guest He's the guy who wrote and created the Bear Hey I'm working on the show We'd love to talk to you about it We'd love to see if an actor could

train here with you for the show £25 No no no I ordered 200 The idea is the chef leaves his family in Chicago to go to New York to pursue his fine dining career Something happens in the family He has to move back to Chicago and really just wanted to talk about how this actor becomes a chef and kind of brings that back to his family's restaurant And so we thought well let's just bring him in let's figure out what Jeremy's capable of and what we're starting with and see how it goes And so we set up a cutting board across from us and basically just gave Jeremy a bunch of things to cut that Even if he screwed him up it didn't matter Here's the final product If we show them yours this is ok He is ok And then here is mine Not bad Right I mean I think he still looks better but not bad So all things considered and keep in mind my passion my enthusiasm my commitment to the final product Could I be a chef in your kitchen That was such a fun shoot for me Maybe not so much for him Ok So by the way you can earn up to three Michelin stars which are based on the quality of the ingredients used mastery of flavor cooking techniques and the personality of the chef Well this next chef is a winner in the personality department and his food is world class There's so much that I love about cooking You know I think part of it is that that adrenaline rush part of it is that you know immediate and instant gratification that you don't have to wait months or years to see the fruit of your labor It's just in a matter of minutes You feel that that that pleasure that you did something you know great You can't just look at you know the area around your cutting board You have to look beyond and into the environment and you know that's why whatever we're sourcing we carefully choose our our partners and our ingredients Astrid is a bit more of a reconnection into my uh professional upgrade and and growth So it's it's hyper seasonal It's Californian it's uniquely Angelino with influences from all around the country Sustainability is a huge part of you know my cooking philosophy and not only just for our own health but the health of the planet Astrid has such an amazing backdrop you know being here in downtown at the heart of all these you know amazing cultural institutions the Music Center Eric K the Broad Museum It it's just a beautiful backdrop for us It just really is embracing the culture ingredients and culinary traditions of the city Um You know and that's informed by you know all different parts of the world I started off as a buster handing out chips and salsa at a Mexican restaurant I switched over into into cooking My first real cooking job I would say was at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills So from there after spending seven years in the hotel I had an opportunity to open my own restaurant within another hotel called Fig And

that was at the at the Fairmont So I spent another seven years uh doing that and then I realized it was time for me to do something that was a bit more personally connected And that's when I opened up a broken Spanish which was a contemporary Mexican or Mexican American restaurant Ok Chef what are we doing today Ok We're gonna start with a uh Barrada salad that we do here at a OK Oh my God Yeah that cheese is so creamy and delicious But also you get the crunch of the apples and like the bitterness of the endive and croutons and then you get the salt from the oil Oh my God So good over my years of cooking I've seen such a great evolution in food here in Los Angeles to become one of the I think one of the best culinary cities in the world coming up a few chefs doing things a little differently and earning tons of praise We dig into Ethiopian and vegan when L A unscripted returns But right now I'm going to dig into this sushi here at Leona's and I'm eating with my hands Don't at me I can't do chopsticks Yes I'm still eating So sue me All right Welcome back to L A in scripted Michelin worthy roundup of restaurants I'm Dana Devin and we are at Leona's a new sushi spot that's already earned Michelin recognition Now when L A's famed food critic Jonathan Gold tasted the Ethiopian food at this next restaurant he turned it into an overnight sensation Let's meet the amazing gannett So everybody sits around nobody puts food in their mouth You feed me I feed you I've never been formally trained for anything and I raised my son being a waitress my son was my guinea pig I didn't have anything for my son But I had love and food While the Ethiopian salad is the most popular It goes with any Ethiopian dish you make period And we have collard greens cabbage and carrots potatoes carrots green beans yellow split peas We have sho cold dishes Also aza the green lentils tomato olive oil lemon juice some flower seed So it's it's endless in Ethiopia We have more here You concentrate it So this is this is in J that's Ethiopian bread We put it as you can see to place it on and then you break the chicken if you eat that in the tofu just to start with the tofu like this Yes And you can mix it with the salad I hope it's not spicy I'm not afraid of spice good good Mm mhm Just so good The late Jonathan gold spoke so highly of you and and wrote about you and what does that mean to you It means everything you are here and so everyone's ordering the door was oh my gosh You know what that means That means they gotta taste delicious That is delicious And you said this tastes it takes eight days with that I see why So now take out hours or Thursday through Sunday 5 to 8 Yes they can get it catered and private events are available like the whole week seven days a week they can book a private party L A has fantastic food So

many places Give you incredible dishes incredible food I think we're the star I love that these hands made all of this and now we're eating it together Yeah me too I'm very happy you're here Thank you Coming up The biggest name in plant food joins us And the Indian Fusion restaurant worth making a drive to Fullerton unscripted will be right back but my face is going to be right here Welcome back to L A unscripted Michelin worthy round up of hot spots I'm David Devin and we are sampling some of the best sushi here at Leona's a new Michelin darling Believe it or not there are only 25 Michelin rated restaurants in all of L A which is not a lot This next chef though is well on his way to owning 25 restaurants around the world however and they are all vegan plant food and wine was beloved by Angelino's in Venice and now it's found its new home at the four seasons So excited What's this orange sauce again Romesco So it's made it's toasted sunflower seeds and roasted red pig pepper Yeah this is my new favorite Ok Ok I don't know your take it off take it off plant food and wine has been for 10 years Sort of our flagship where we present plant based cuisine as as a legitimate cuisine Really Not so much about being vegan but it's about highlighting the potential within the plant based world and artistry that can be done with vegetables and so forth So the first plant based restaurant I opened a couple of people came in barefoot and they said they could only eat without shoes because they needed to be It evolved to become fashionable and it's ebbed and flowed multiple times but it keeps flowing upward What specifically about the four seasons attracted you guys It's always about their people I mean their teams they're just amazing operators They run impeccable infrastructure this space in and of itself like all the outdoor space and all the greenery around So it was a natural transition for us Chef I am so excited about all this food It is so colorful and beautiful before we talk about the specifics Tell me about kind of the inspiration behind this food It's California it's vegetables it's the farmer's market It's I go to the farmer's market twice a week and I just walk through and I let the farmers what they're growing inspire what we cook We make food for basically for the people who are scared to come eat vegan or can come eat plant based and be shocked that it's not that different And you're going to leave inspired satiated excited from that It's just so the food is just so exciting and so flavorful so bright It's there's no way that anybody would want to not come back or not try it or be against it So this is uh our fried Maitake mushroom over a cornmeal waffle This is some spiced maple a maple butter plant based butter of course And then a little bit of a radish salad and some pickles on there as well Is it kind of a spin off of chicken

waffles Yes Actually it's a cheese like a f it's a queso So it's made with butternut squash and cashews That's the base So it's no dairy obviously And we season it and blend it up into like very cheesy cheese like situation We have a bowl of ice Yeah that's a bowl of ice Yeah Free with free with every meal This is our stone fruit creamsicle So underneath all that peach ice granita is um so it's a nice flaky you know sweet peachy ice is on is a uh orange blossom gelato and then some turmeric fro yo and then stop maybe a secret biscotti that's crumbled up in there for some crunch Wow So that's I feel like if you're ok it's really hot You come here for the summer I would order like 17 of these Yeah that's why it's here It's like the best summer dessert still eating Now it's these to rolls and they're so good Ok when it comes to Michelin ratings this spot got some well earned recognition It's Southeast Asian Street food and I think it's actually my favorite And all of So so if you don't live in Fullerton you may want to move And I am not kidding When I say that our goal is to bring our cuisine to the level where other cuisines are Reason number 1000 I love this show You always get to try stuff you've never tried before Today we're trying a Pakistani restaurant in Fullerton and then Michelin recognized on top of it all concept It's a halal farm to table Pakistani Indian Afghani cuisine where we make sure that quality of the food and the ingredients that we use comes from farm from farmers and local farms Oh my God Every single dish here has been a 10 out of 10 I've only had three and still where to go What concept means It's a very popular name people especially from the tribe back called Northwest Pakistan That's where this tribe comes from and concept It's a legacy It means like it's a very respected thing and look how it keeps all the steam inside here Oh my God born in Pakistan came here in the year 2000 when I was 17 years old started as a dishwasher and always wanted to eat out I've always wondered like how come our food cannot be presented in a way where like Italian French cuisine is presented to present Pakistani food to a level where we can be proud of it that our food tastes good but it looks good as Well so we'll start with the pony puri First of all can we just talk about how cute this cart is You take the puff pastry put the water in there OK Just take one bite and you will have an explosion of spices in your mouth OK Let's have an explosion of spices Wow you're right That's an explosion The way we designed our menu it was uh street food He heavily street food And we got some items from Pakistan We got some you know dishes from Afghanistan some dishes from Bangladesh some dishes from India because we wanted to bring everything in one roof That's why we call ourselves

Daisy kitchen because the term Daisy means people from South Asia This is the Sloppy Joe your version of the sloppy Joe Sloppy Joe We call it sloppy co it's minced beef It's w meat and cooked with onion tomatoes and spices I would come to Fullerton It's about an hour away just for that That's how good it was This sloppy con the sloppy Con 10 out of 10 I have a smoked Negroni for you And it's a mock right This is not a moo no alcohol as a Muslim We wanted to give an experience of like how the bar works right I mean we all go out but we can't sit at the bar and we all miss that experience that How does it feel to be behind the bar So we created a bar and we want to come up with like craft mock fields The only difference is we don't use alcohol but we use alcohol substitute So it's the same thing without the bus That is so good It's so refreshing You know what Honestly like I just said there's not been a miss on this table We've had so many dishes Now I get why you're Michelin recognized and that is all the time we have tonight Thank you so much to this handsome man next to me Frank Leone and Leona for hosting us tonight Come try this food There is a reason they were instantly recognized by Michelin We'll see you next time Good night All right Will you help me do the goodbye Yes ready We're ready