



## **LOCAL PRODUCTS FIND GLOBAL TASTES ALONG LAS VEGAS' SILK ROAD**

### ***Silk Road Restaurant at CityCenter's Vdara Hotel & Spa Opens with Chef Martin Heierling's Erudite Dishes***

**LAS VEGAS** – Silk Road, the new globally inspired restaurant by Chef Martin Heierling, captures the essence of Vdara Hotel & Spa's eco-conscious spirit with worldly flavors born of local products. Set in CityCenter's luxuriously green-minded Vdara, Silk Road's contemporary Mediterranean menu begins with only the freshest sustainable ingredients, then travels the world via Middle Eastern and Asian influences brought to Europe along the legendary Silk Road. Dishes are recognizable favorites subtly enhanced by the gifts of ancient trade – many already integral to contemporary cuisine worldwide. The opulent décor by Karim Rashid draws inspiration from the colorful spice bazaars all along the route. Overlooking the energy and excitement of CityCenter, Silk Road offers both walk-in appeal and world-class destination dining for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Chef Heierling, no stranger to international cuisines, is the innovator behind Bellagio's acclaimed Sensi restaurant, which unites flavors from the four corners of the world in a single experience. Born in Germany, but raised in New Zealand, he holds years of culinary experience, with time spent at the venerable Badrutt's Palace in Switzerland, on the opulent Royal Yacht Lady Moura, at Partington's in the Sheraton Hotel Towers Auckland (now The Langham) and at Restaurant Essence in Auckland. He has worked with such notable chefs as Gray Kunz, his mentor at the four-star Lespinasse in New York City, and New Zealand's Michael James.

At Silk Road, his ingredient-driven menu articulates a savory story of East-West contact. Each dish, zealously based on the seasonal organics of California, brings this history alive with memorable aromatics from along the road: Sumac, rose, orange blossom, ginger and more bring their fragrant intensity to classic Mediterranean dishes. House-made North-African harissa, (a traditional condiment of smoked peppers), deepens flavor profiles in multiple ways – as a marinade for White Anchovies, served as a starter with roasted garlic croquettes, watercress and spicy saffron aioli; and to flavor a Hearts of Baby Romaine & Field Greens salad along with golden cilantro falafel and roasted rabbit loin.

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Another Mediterranean classic, Charred Marinated Beef Carpaccio, finds a subtle spin with Egyptian dukkah (a roasted seed and nut spice mix) served with crisp cheese “Twinkies,” mushrooms and baby arugula. The more tropical scents of Southeast Asia inform Aromatic Chicken & Coconut Soup perfumed with cilantro, galangal, tapioca, kaffir lime and Asian mushrooms, while the Middle Eastern spice blend ras el hanout provides a toothsome marinade for the Seared John Dory entrée served with a fragrant spice and mussel curry.

Select dishes employ the Moroccan tagine technique to produce tender, flavor-intense meats. Silk Road’s opening winter menu features two unforgettable tagines: Marinated Lamb, Charred Tomatoes, Cassia and Eggplant prepared with Persian cucumbers, parsley and red pepper; and a Shellfish selection with saffron, artichokes, potato with pistachio, and quince.

The alchemical wonders of Silk Road’s pastry program have been created by Frederic Larré, formerly of Le Cirque at Bellagio. Turkish coffee, milk & honey, nougat, ginger, pomegranate, fig – and a treasure trove of other Mediterranean and Eastern pleasures – combine into ambrosial delights extraordinaire. To end each meal, guests enjoy the delicate perfection of house-made specialty candies.

The restaurant’s 200-bottle-strong wine list has been designed to span an impressive range of selections – delicate and bold; domestic and international; boutique and widely established. In keeping with Vdara’s dedication to the environment, special focus has been given to organic, sustainably produced wines. Attentive to accessibility, the list offers a wide range of price points, and more than 20 selections are available by the glass each night, including some of the world’s finest vintages.

Signature cocktails make exotic tastes amenable to urban palates. Divine flavors such as passion fruit, guava, ginger and rosemary mix and mingle into elixirs both wickedly alcoholic and respectably virgin. House-made mixers like Pan Pan Soda and East India Fixer lend an inimitable quality to already layered flavors. A selection of brewed-to-order French press coffees (never drip) and loose-leaf teas infused with edible flowers present additional tempting tastes.

Silk Road’s opulent décor, designed by Karim Rashid Inc., complements Vdara Hotel & Spa’s desert-inspired landscape with an equally soothing palette drawn from the mesmerizing colors of a spice bazaar. Throughout the 180-seat space, white, pink and saffron twinkle along bead-adorned metal walls, catching the light of gold-mirrored floors and walls. Warm, natural wood tones then unify and ground this sumptuous, heady effect.

Greeting guests as they arrive in the lounge, a white-lacquered map of the Silk Road trade routes hangs above the bar, illuminated from within to highlight the myriad paths that wound from Venice to the nether reaches of China. Eye-catching pink couches and free-form curvilinear furniture lend a playful modern note to both the lounge and its 25-seat bar, while the visual-aural-olfactory sensations of an open kitchen gravitates guests toward the main dining room.

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Here serpentine banquettes enclose intimate small tables for two, larger group tables stand alone or neatly wrap within circular booths, and a separate private dining room seats 14 for more formal events. Clear acrylic tables paired with sherbet orange chairs strike an ultra-modern tone, then find balance in the rich organics of their table settings – simple bamboo mats in black or white; plates that affect hand-hammered copper; and peripherals of textured slate.

Silk Road's crowning aesthetic device is its perennial light. Bookended by walls of glass, the space is filled with streaming sunshine in the daytime, dazzling city lights after dark. Through subtle décor and mood adjustments, Silk Road transforms as the day evolves, from fresh and vibrant at daybreak to chic and sexy at nightfall. Not least, Heierling's impassioned commitment to history, culture and culinary excellence transforms great meals into emotional and sensual dining journeys.

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