

**The Coral Tree Café** steps up its innovative casual fare concept with yet another breath of fresh air

# The Adaptable Wine Bar



**The Coral Tree Café now sports a wine bar at its locations in Brentwood and Encino, CA. Proprietor Bobby Niksefat (far right) tastes wine with Scott Richards from New Zealand's Oyster Bay Wines.**

A former Los Angeles attorney, Bobby Niksefat had more than briefs on his mind when he came up with an original concept restaurant in one of the city's most upscale Westside neighborhoods.

"I found out that a restaurant chain was going through bankruptcy and the location was perfect for my idea," Niksefat tells THE TASTING PANEL. Taking away the need for table service was first on the agenda.

The birth of The Coral Tree Café in Brentwood, California, in 2002 signaled an eatery for the everyman (and woman). Further locations in Encino, Westfield's Century City shopping center (the highest-grossing food destination at the mall) and Topanga Mall followed.

The simplicity of ordering breakfast or fresh sandwiches and salads for lunch without having to wait for your server—or the bill afterwards—spoke as directly to the active businessperson as it did the parent-on-the-go.

"It's casual, honest food," Niksefat emphasizes, "with no rush to finish your meal."

The Coral Tree can be a dining setting or a cyber café to some, but now, two of the four L.A. locations are equipped with wine bars—with yet another unique angle. Armed with a special on- and off-premise license, the Brentwood café and the equally busy spot in Encino (in a prestigious center owned and managed by real estate mogul Robert Piken, a household name for some of the hottest properties in the area) can sell wine by-the-glass or entire bottles, at retail prices.

Dual refrigerators, temperature-controlled for whites and for reds, and a line-up of dozens of exceptional wines make the wine bar at Coral Tree Café a find. Just think about it: A wine that retails in a wine shop for \$20 would cost anywhere from \$35 to \$40—or more—on a restaurant list. Niksefat keeps his prices in line with retail (sometimes lower), giving the customer incentive to buy the entire bottle at Coral Tree rather than stopping elsewhere to purchase one.

"The snobbery is gone, the high mark-ups are non-existent," says Niksefat, opening a bottle of Caymus Conundrum and pouring it, generously, by the glass. ■■



**The Coral Tree Café offers fresh, made-to-order sandwiches and salads that pair beautifully with its selection of wines by the bottle or by the glass.**